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SUBJECT: titrating off psych meds

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12.1.12

I have been on celexia for four and half years now. Started right after the FBI came a knocking on my door. I needed it then. Too much was rushing around in my brain for me to handle. I needed help in reducing the intensity of my experience. The shock of coming prison breached the flood walls of my psych with all that I had been in denial. My consciousness was flooded with emotions, thoughts, feelings that I had kept compartmentalized in the dark basement. As I began looked around after my own private Katrina, I was having a hard time taking in all that became visible at once. Depression was a logical outcome of psychic overload.

About a year ago I halved the total from 40 mg to 20 mg. I do not remember a big difference between the two dosages. The impact of increased exercise, multiple support groups, meditation, and a profound spiritual renewal seemed to have made a real difference in how I handled my emotional ocean. So about a month ago I decided to see what it was like to be totally off the drugs. First to 10 mg then a couple weeks ago to 0 mg. By now the medicine is totally out of my system. I can say two things. One everything is more vivid (emotions, sensations, libido, thoughts, nature). Which is on the whole good. I have enjoyed really feeling moments of joy or lightness again. The meds take that away. But I am negotiating the lows as well. Feelings of heaviness or depression are back as well. But one thing meditation teaches you is that all these states are temporary (like everything else in the universe).

So I am negotiating the rough currents of life allot better then before. I can see why I benefited from having the drug for the first 2 or so years. I am not sure how much joy or lightness there was to experience in the last year of freedom and the first year of captivity. I know how much low times I went through. I needed to take the edge off those.

I also really like being able to cry easily again. Much to my own embarrassment tears were not far from the surface for others emotions and pains. I had repressed my own pretty far down. So while I was listening to a beautiful interview between to people who helped create this families organization of Jews and Palestinians talk about their dead loved ones (killed by members of the other religious group), I began to tear. Then choke up as the Palestinian man told his elderly Jewish female friend that he felt her dead son asking him to take care of his Mom while visiting the sight of his murder. It made me smile as my tears ran down my cheeks. There are very nice reasons to have the top bunk. This occasion gave me another.

Anger also is much easier. I run through an irritating situation and I get physically hot and sweat in seconds. It forces me to stay on top of my emotions and use my conscious mind to redirect thoughts that are causing me frustration. Otherwise I will only go back to old habits of repressing them altogether. The other issue to stay on top of is libido. Again the issue is more about how not to keep it within bounds as opposed to repression. While the content of my fantasies are easily kept within a healthy (and legal) range, the amount of time needs to be limited. My consciousness understands the limits of desire and addiction like I did not before.

So the experiment with going naked into the rough currents is going pretty well. We shall see how things proceed.

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mindful prisoner

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