

# Cold Turkey

## My experience with stopping medication

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Emily Dobberke, Reporter

I am a person with a mental illness. I do not say I am a mentally ill person for one reason: I am human before I am depressed, anxious, or struggling with insomnia. They do not define me.

The American Psychiatric Association defines mental illness as a health condition involving changes in emotion, thinking, behavior, or a combination of any or all three.

About two years ago, I got on medication for all my mental illnesses. The intention was the help me get “better,” which realistically means to stabilize my body’s natural imbalances.

About a year and a half later, I finally recognized a difference, but not in a good “I have finally made a breakthrough” way. It was the realization that I wasn’t myself anymore. These pills made me feel like someone had derived my body and I sat back silently to watch.



*Emily Dobberke*

So, I did what everyone tells you not to do: I went cold turkey. No more pills. It has been that way for about six months now and since then, a roller coaster of my life has erupted. I have been in a up and down state of happy to sad ever since I stopped taking them.

When I was first starting off without the pills, I thought that maybe, I could function without them and be “normal”. When the pills wore off, I kept catching myself in moments I call depressive episodes where one minute everything is good and the next minute bad thought course through my brain and push me into a sad state of mind where nothing seems to help me.

My mom is the main person to help me these two years. “I think the hardest thing to do as a mother is to sit and watch your baby be in pain and not be able to help, not be able to kiss the boo-boo better like when she was younger”, my mom said.

These depressive episodes are not the only things i now experience more often. I have more anxiety attacks and worry about small things. These anxiety attacks can be spawned from anything, even something as small as dropping a pencil. I will get this sudden feel-

ing of fear or failure in myself and my brain will blow it out of proportion, for lack of a better explanation. My brain will think of the worst possible situation in every scenario and, to cover up that fear, I often resorted to humor more than I ever did before medication.

There is a saying that there is truth behind every joke. That statement sticks closely to me. My jokes consist of the negative thoughts that my brain is telling me and turning them into humor to laugh it all away. Although these jokes are slightly unhealthy and self-deprecating, they help in a sort of way that any other form of coping ever did: they made me laugh.

Pills just didn’t work for me; some people, including my sister-in-law, have been on medication and it worked wonders. For me, it was the opposite. Although going cold turkey was insane, stressful and scary, I never once felt regret for ceasing my medication usage. The medication did teach me that in order to get my best help, I had to be open to trying every option and pills are just one way.

Know your options. Know your support system. But more importantly, know your body and the things that do and don’t work for it.