

Autobiography Written in My 40s by Ben Huot

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4th Generation Writings

By Ben Huot

www.benjamin-newton.com

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My Life and Faith and Mental Illness

But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth.'" Deuteronomy 8:3

—Jesus Christ when tempted by the devil in the wilderness, from World English Bible, Matthew 4:4

I have not had the easiest life in some respects while in others I am living the dream.

I am an American citizen and lived in America all my life. This puts me in a very special category like that of a lottery winner. I also have a great family and I have had God in my life from the very beginning.

On the other hand I have had some difficulties some of which very few people have. I had large warts as a child, I served in the Army as an enlisted soldier, and I have Schizophrenia, which is the most severe mental illness you can get.

I also have had to go through a psychotic episode, be in a locked down psychiatric ward of a hospital a week and a half, live in a group home with other mentally ill people a year, and I even lived in a retirement home for several years.

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The army was the real life changer for me which, looking back on it, actually was useful training and prepared me well, for both my future and the future of America and the world. The positive things it gave me were more things to write about and a pension.

There are numerous downsides to having Schizophrenia, which was caused by a combination of both my genes and my experience in the Army, as decided by the Veterans Administration.

Schizophrenia affects me personally by making me very paranoid of other people. I think people are targeting me and I think people are talking about me badly. I know on a certain level that this is not likely true, but it still is very real to me. This is what makes it impossible for me to work a job, which is the basis for disability status from the Veterans Administration.

I also have to take a medicine that always makes me very tired and slows down my entire physical body, so that I never feel rested no matter how much I sleep. This medicine also makes me much more likely to get heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Another part of my disability from the Veterans Administration is chronic allergic conjunctivitis. This condition is commonly called pink eye, because it causes the white part of the eye to get irritated and turn pink. For me, this is caused by a combination of stress and sensitivity to toxic chemicals, like household cleaners.

The eye problem seemed to me very severe at first, but later I seemed to be able to get it more under control, once I was on my first anti-psychotic medication, in the hospital.

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So I, like many people in the world today, find life a very frustrating experience, because we see everything falling apart and yet no one knows how to fix it. There is more temptation and evil in the world than ever before. We seemed to solve every problem and yet we are more unhappy than ever before.

This is because we have given up on the difficult task of following God in our lives. Many suffer more than ever before, so many blame God for this. But we know this is not true, because people are clearly the cause of all the suffering that we can find the source of.

The key to happiness is having peace with God, which will allow us to find peace with ourselves and our world. One of the biggest barriers to faith today is the issue of control.

We do not want to accept God's gift of grace. This grace comes with eternal life, being filled with God's Spirit, being part of a community of believers and spiritual gifts like wisdom or encouragement. We do not want to accept this because we know it is not a one-time simple prayer, although it starts that way.

Faith is a journey through your entire life where you continue to surrender control of your life over to God. We learn very quickly today not to trust anyone or anything and so it seems unwise to let God in control of your life. It gets even more difficult when you are told you might suffer worse, because you are saved, not less.

I have found it hard to trust God, as I find it hard to trust anyone, both because I have Schizophrenia and because I know enough of how the world works and see the direction things are going in. I believed that God wanted me to join the military and a lot of pain

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went along with it both then and later, both physical and emotional.

But God did get me out of the military before I got hurt really bad, like many soldiers who served in combat, in that time period. I screwed up many things in the military, but I always gave 150% and did whatever I was told instantly. That got me an honorable discharge and later a pension.

But none of this would have happened without the direct divine intervention of God. That is the most rational explanation.

Anybody who served in the military knows most people want to leave not long after they get in and you cannot get out period until your enlistment ends and sometimes not even then. Even getting out with a mental illness requires a US congressional representative and we did not put any pressure on the military or the Veterans Administration to make their decisions.

Just as we need food and sleep so also we need God in our lives. If we do not follow God and put Him first in our lives we will get ourselves into many different addictions like food, work, or worse. Only God can fully satisfy this hunger we have for Him in our lives. We are not designed to be fully autonomous. We were designed to be in a symbiotic connection with God.

It is painful to follow God, but it is more painful not to. You will suffer no matter what in this world. But you can have peace with God, yourself, this world and in the next. Following God is hard work and requires the ultimate commitment, but so does anything worthwhile.

My Life and Philosophy

Philosophy to most people sounds boring and useless. Philosophy has been an important part of my life because it has forced me to think through things better, gave me something more to write about, and explained how I already thought. I think philosophy has helped counter my paranoia by studying it for many years.

I first discovered philosophy in the writings of Tolkien I was reading that his son Christopher published after his death. Tolkien got interested in philosophy at the end of his life and so some of his later less well known essays and writings were on philosophical aspects of Middle Earth.

My second encounter with philosophy was when I was in the military which has its own kind of paradox in how it works. The military has many paradoxes one of which is that the Army is both very formal and very informal at the same time. Another is the hurry up and wait metaphor and that combat is 80% boredom and 20% terror.

When I went to college I first studied business administration as I had wanted to find a useful degree that I could make money with. I found that very bring and difficult too. I did well in economics and very poorly in accounting and then my math ability fell apart. I eventually switched to journalism because I was always better at writing and at the time that seemed practical too. This was just before I was diagnosed with Schizophrenia.

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During this time I studied Chinese Literature, Existentialism, and some feminism classes including one that treated Simone de Beauvoir as a philosopher. The first class I took as a business breadth requirement, the second because I needed to make up credits and the third because I was registering late and I was told Beauvoir was married to Foucault. Foucault was actually gay but also a leading French intellectual of a later era. Someone played a joke on me.

The Chinese Literature class introduced me to Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism across Chinese history. It was a year long course covering from the very origins of Chinese writing to the May 4th movement and the Avant Garde era. Literature was my favorite course in high school apart from a single class called Humanities.

I quickly realized that I understood Confucianism well because my mothers family like my grandmother and uncles from her side of the family really followed these ideas to the letter. Part of this was that my grandfather grew up in mainland China near Nanking as the son of an American missionary. Confucianism is about manner and social hierarchies. It also promoted education and reform in government.

Taoism was the first philosophy I really took to as not only was it downright humorous but also because I could relate. I left the military early but had not yet realized that I was mentally ill. My discharge says Schizoid Personality Disorder on it and I was under the impression the reason I left was because of an eye condition and that was just a formality. I believed that I had failed in that I did not serve my full tour.

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Taoism is the yang as Confucianism is the yin. They are related by paradox. Taoism is everything Confucianism is not. It is easiest to understand Taoism if you read about Confucianism first. Some of the best texts to read about Confucianism are not the ones written by Confucius or Lao Tze but Chuang Tzu and Hsun Tzu.

Whereas Confucianism was about government and business and the outward appearance, Taoism was about poetry and drinking wine. The closest thing we have in contemporary American society to Taoism is the hippy or the green party. The Taoists never thought of changing government. They focused more on dropping out of society and avoiding the government.

Most Taoists were actually scholars who did not become officials because they failed their government service exam. It was a face saving way of dealing with being rejected but also educated. But it was also much more. It was so respected by the Chinese government that they even tried to make it a state philosophy but it just didn't work that well for that.

My next philosophy course which I took to make up credits was on Existentialism where we read short pieces from everyone from Camus and Sartre to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. We also read Dostoevsky and Schopenhauer. I wrote my final essay concluding that the lack of individual thinking in society means we are no more than quantum particles.

I really identified with Kierkegaard because by now especially after both military training and after learning about Taoism I was obsessed with humility. I also thought a lot of Camus as he seemed to see life as enjoyable and later his absurdist philosophy has made more and more sense as the world gets crazier and more destructive.

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I later took a course after registering late and this was the only course available in philosophy, which I realized I might have some ability at this time, other than Nietzsche which I would definitely liked better, looking back on it. Beauvoir is very thorough in her writing and very ambitious. She covers everything you can think of about feminism in just the introduction of the Second Sex, which is one of many long books she wrote. Just before I had my psychotic episode I literally ripped some of her books in 2 and burned some in the fireplace. I felt great joy in doing so.

Beauvoir was one of the lovers of Sartre and much of her work was based on his philosophy which was really two entirely different philosophies. His great philosophical work in academia was Being and Nothingness which another student in the class who had taken a class in his work described it as a poor restatement of Hegel.

This was very inaccessible to the average person but Sartre also wrote many short stories that were much easier to understand and one famous one was called No Exit which is summarized by "Hell is other people". He also wrote Existentialism is a Humanism which is a good simple defense of Existentialism explaining how it works well for both atheists and Christians alike.

I went on to study philosophy and religion for about 10 years trying to find a different way to be Christian and express this through Asian philosophy. I was inspired by someone I met at a church while serving in the Army in Hawaii who told me he was trying to create a Christian kind of martial arts.

I also was very dissatisfied with the leading ideas in the Church at that time as I saw they were very ineffective in reaching people

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in my home town. I also think they were were too reactive and had no vision for the future.

I also detected a lot of arrogance there too although I am not sure where I got that from. I actually liked my church a lot that I grew up in. I was officially registered as a Quaker on my Army dog tags, which was written as Protestant Other at the time. Some of their major ideas are what have inspired me to take a more indirect and academic approach to evangelism and apologetics.

Towards the end of this decade of study of philosophy I discovered that Christianity actually was centered in modern day Iraq and Syria, as the major population of Christians, up until the year 1000 AD. These were called the Syriac Churches whose members were an ethnic, religious, and linguistic group as different as the Arabs are from the Jews.

They were the descendant of the ancient Assyrians, they spoke and wrote in Aramaic, the same language Jesus Christ spoke, and they were some of the earliest Christians. The reason why there is so little information we have on the ancient Middle East is that they destroyed most of their own history and literature as they believed it was contrary to their new faith, Christianity.

They also are forgotten in modern times as they were persecuted for centuries because they supported the Mongols when they took over the Middle East. They were victims of a massacre of multiple Christian groups during the time between the 2 world wars where 2/3's of their population were destroyed.

They are the ones who preserved the ancient Greek ideas and passed them to a few Muslim intellectuals. These ideas were then taken up by Latin Christian medieval philosophers and along

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with the Byzantine contribution of critical Greek-Latin dictionaries this helped bring in the European Renaissance.

The Church of the East (centered near modern Baghdad) also tried to bring the Gospel to India and would have brought it successfully to China, except that China was trying to bring back Confucianism (Neo-Confucianism at that time). The Chinese Emperor decided to outlaw all foreign belief systems including Christianity and Buddhism. This evangelical effort was started because it was against the law to evangelize in Late Antique and Medieval Persia both under the Zoroastrian and later Islamic dynasties.

I spent the last 10-15 years explaining these things I learned and I have made 3 different attempts at explaining it and I think it turned out best in the third attempt. This is what you see on the website today. While I started in July of 1998, I am still working on it today. I started my 3rd attempt in about 2017.

The End of the World as We Know It

First of all I want to distinguish between the end of the world as we know it and the return of Christ as prophesied in the Bible. Just because we evolve into the future as a society that loses the abilities of modern medicine, modern plumbing, and electricity does not mean God is coming back soon in the flesh. God never promised us America and America is not described in prophecy (unless it is either the evil empire of the devil called Mystery Babylon or the mountains that people flee to escape the devil - beast).

I am not deriving anything from prophecy that is not really clear. The only thing I think we know for sure about the return of Christ is that no one knows when. I also believe it will be in a time of peace. This is because Jesus describes His return as coming like a thief in the night to your home. Many much more brilliant people than myself (with much more time on their hands and a much better researched case than anything I wrote) predicted various times (with tremendous scriptural support) and all were dead wrong. I am definitely no better than them.

The end of the world as we know it is likely to coincide with global catastrophe (otherwise known as Global Warming or Climate Change). There are some strong similarities in the Bible between judgments of God and ecological disasters. The punishment is entirely self inflicted and is the direct result of the sin of

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gluttony. We all are living like kings did several hundred years ago (in America today) and having too many kids in the third world and the world cannot sustain it forever. It is also hard to get to other planets and the cost would be much more and the benefit of that would be less than cleaning the entire earth.

I believe the modern world system, led by America is Mystery Babylon. I believe the mysteries refer to modern technologies the world depends on that would be described as magic any other time in recorded history. The internet and computers, fossil fuels like gas and coal, and the final mystery is Bitcoin.

I definitely believe there is at least one conspiracy theory going on and this is supported by the Bible in the prophets. I also think there is a big connection between the church and the devil at this time because the Bible keeps on talking about adultery which is not just a sexual sin but one of betrayal of one committed to a relationship. There is also descriptions in prophecy about time being accelerated which could easily refer to how modern life is changing faster and faster.

I do not believe Christ's return is imminent. I think it is likely humanity could survive in some form for thousands of years in the future. The end of the world as we know it is not the end of the world.

There are 3 major technological revolutions throughout recorded history. They are, in order: Agricultural, Industrial, and Information. We are at the beginning of the third but they are stacked onto each other, so the later ones need the previous ones, both directly for resources and technology, but also ideologically and conceptually. The biggest changes in the Information revolution

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are not technology but social changes which we are just at the beginning of.

The problem with modern society, apart from the lack of morality, is that it is a very unstable and brittle system. It is a dead end as we are running out of energy and resources and we need them more than ever. Our ideology wants things that require more energy continually every generation and unless we find a huge amount more energy, we won't be able to keep things running. Even if we did get exponentially more energy, we would still be at the same place a few generations later. Our problem is not that we need more energy but we need more self control.

The system is also self destructing at a technological, social, political, and personal level so that what we think of as a civilization will not be the way the system will run in the future. We take many things for granted because the agricultural revolution was so successful and we survived the industrial revolution, but past success does not determine or guarantee future success.

I am an Eagle Scout (from the old Boy Scouts) and taught emergency survival at a Summer Camp when it was just boys. I also served in the Army as an enlisted soldier and made it through all my training successfully. I also studied about disaster survival and bought supplies for 6 months during the 2008 Economic Crisis.

I have also tried to put together a portable civilization in my writings and have combined Christian Existentialism and Philosophical Taoism into a different way of thinking about life. This is to try to preserve some of the wisdom of the past for what some in the disaster survival community call the long emergency.

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The long emergency is a way of understanding the likely way that society will change over the future decades of this century. The people in power are not stupid, at least the ones that really control most of what goes on in the world, not the elected figure heads we call politicians. They realize what is happening and have planned for it. The problem with announcing this likely scenario from a trusted opinion leader would mean everyone would instantly give up and everything would then fall apart immediately.

The other important thing to remember is that if things fall apart fast, the leadership will likely change, which is bad for us as well. Groups prepared for this might include kind groups like Mormons but they might not have enough weapons to fight off the other groups. So that is why the powers that be have decided to slow down the breakdown, so that most people will not notice until things the end of the process. This is the reason why law enforcement and the military have gotten so aggressive this century.

There are many things going on we are not aware of that are likely more important than the things we are aware of. We are terrified of the Cold War, Terrorism, China, and Disease. More issues will arise at convenient times to further distract us.

I read in a survival book that people have survived disasters who have no preparation and others have failed despite extensive preparation. Ultimately, if it happens when we are alive, we get to decide how much we are willing to endure to survive. There is no shame or lack of ethics in choosing to stop fighting and die. We will all die someday anyway and that is relatively soon in the grand scheme of things.

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Prepare for the future by learning as much as you can and thinking critically. This situation we are in now will likely get worse and then pass away. But there will be good surprises as well on just as great a scale. And who is to say we will not be just as happy and healthier in a slower lifestyle with less technology.

So you think you have Schizophrenia?

To get a diagnoses of Schizophrenia or any other mental illness you have to see a psychiatrist, not a psychologist. They need a doctorate in both medicine and psychology. This psychiatrist should have a speciality in mental illness and experience working with the mentally ill.

Generally not much will likely be done until you have a paranoid episode which is how most people find out they have Schizophrenia. Also many people are misdiagnosed because the diagnoses are often done by people without proper training, people over exaggerate what they feel to get money, and other people do not communicate to their provider well at all.

Schizophrenia is triggered by a stressful event, most commonly military service, but has a genetic component as well. Most families with members suffering with Schizophrenia have had one member with this condition each generation. You are most likely to get Schizophrenia in your 20s if you are male and 30s if you are female. It affects about 1% of the population worldwide.

Schizophrenia is a thought disorder not a mood disorder so instead of having amplified feelings your senses are amplified. The medicine basically sedates you as that is the most effective primary treatment for Schizophrenia. It feels like you are having adrenaline running through your system all the time and being

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on the medicine feels like you are also having something pushing you back down.

The medicines now are very effective at suppressing things like hearing voices, paranoia, and other delusions. They are not as effective in treating the other symptoms like depression, obsessive compulsive behavior, and anxiety. Other symptoms like exhaustion, weight gain, and increased chance of serious medical conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes are actually caused by the medicine. Newer medicines have fewer side effects but often are not effective with all patients.

People with Schizophrenia tend to have other characteristics like unique ways of sayings things, obsession with symbolism and religion, inappropriate emotional responses, lack of enjoyable experiences, and isolation from society. Some of the big things people often experience with Schizophrenia are poverty, being victims of crimes, and people not understanding how to work with you.

When you have your psychotic break, you will likely commit a petty crime. The police will then likely escort you to the police station, where you will be committed to the mental ward. This is usually until the admitting psychiatrist agrees you are no longer a threat to yourself or others. You will be in a locked down facility you cannot leave but you are also not in a jail. You will likely be with other mental patients and share a room with someone else.

You usually have to take an MRI scan before you can leave to rule out brain tumors. You will then be prescribed anti-psychotics to take with you when you leave. You will see a social worker who will try to help you but they likely will mix things up because they are overworked and not always fully qualified.

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Once you get diagnosed with Schizophrenia you need to apply for all available social services as soon as possible and find a temporary housing situation like a group home. You will need to fill out many forms as quickly as possible as wait times for most services, money, and housing are backlogged and you often can wait 2-5 years for many programs.

The key to surviving on SSI (state financial assistance) and community services is to pay for as little as possible. You can survive on this much money if you can make use of all the services available and avoid reoccurring expenses. You will need to make use of buses, donated food, thrifts stores, dollar stores, discount grocery stores, government paid or assisted housing, government medical insurance, and county health and mental health / behavioral health services.

The best way to stay healthy is to keep taking your medicine, get daily exercise, and find a way to connect with the community like through church or volunteering. You should also try to get a part time job if you can, but be sure you do not make too much money or that will disqualify you for government financial aid. Your biggest problems will likely be surviving on little income, taking your medicine, and communicating with other people.

Losing your mind is not the end of the world. You can do well in life, but just adjust your expectations to what is realistic, so you don't get discouraged. People expect very little of you when you are mentally ill. Survival is the only thing really required of you. See this as an advantage - you get to live a lower stress lifestyle (in fact this is necessary or the medicine will not be effective).

But you will likely have lots of time to devote to creating art or doing some sort of hobby. But reading or concentrating on any-

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thing is hard with Schizophrenia so don't expect to be able to continue your education. You will likely meet other people to form friendships but it is hard to find people nowadays for anyone so be realistic about your romantic future. Don't expect to be different than you are now in personality but do expect to have limitations because this is a serious illness.

Some of the things that can make it easier are family support, faith, friendships, taking your medicine regularly, regular exercise, getting a good nights sleep, and being as independent as you can.