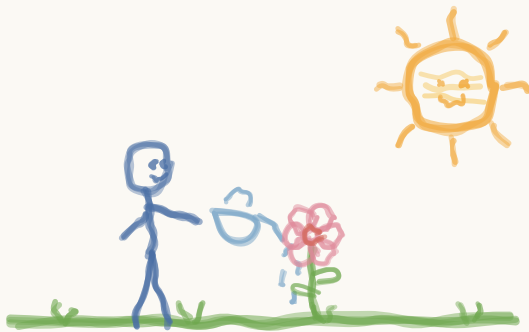


THE TURNING TOWARD SERIES

Turning Toward **Mental Health**

*The hinge between lived experience and developing the keys for
growth*

EXPERIENCED · OBSERVED · RESEARCHED



Jamison Todd Johnson

JULY 2026 · LEGIBLE TRACES

BEFORE YOU READ

If you are struggling right now

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text **988** (United States), any hour, any day.

Crisis Text Line — text **HOME** to **741741**.

SAMHSA National Helpline — **1-800-662-4357**, free, confidential, for mental health and substance use.

This series is philosophy and testimony. It is not treatment, and it is not a substitute for a professional who can sit across from you. Please let it be a companion to help, never a replacement for it.

*This piece speaks from lived experience,
from years of close observation, carried anonymously and with care,
and from study.*

. . .

*Dedicated to the reader. My true and real observer.
The one who makes me real. It's your eyes that make
these words come off the page. I have no one else to thank
for any of this. So thank you, whoever you might be
(relative proximity to me... I suppose) <3*

The Turning Toward Series

Turning Toward Mental Health

Turning Toward Depression

Turning Toward Addiction

Turning Toward Suicidal Thoughts

Turning Toward Anxiety

Turning Toward ADHD

& further studies to come

ITALIC ENTRIES ARE FORTHCOMING · READ IN ANY ORDER, ONCE
THEY ARRIVE

Turning Toward Mental Health

The hinge between lived experience and developing the keys for growth

EXPERIENCED · OBSERVED · RESEARCHED

Welcome to the fun part. Not the “fun” like, let’s go down a slide that ends in a pool because it’s hot out. Actually... that pretty accurately describes it, if you think about it.

This is the part where you get to see that I’m just another human like you or anyone else. I may write a lot, because I’ve read a lot, but I’ve also felt a lot of feelings that don’t have words for them. I promised my family, friends, and readers testimony, so here it is.

As I expand my education and begin to look toward the future, it became apparent to me that I would eventually need a dissertation in order to achieve the level of practice I desire, even with Jung at the core of my methodology — a methodology that has been greatly underappreciated over the years, in my opinion. And that isn’t just my opinion anymore. After his break with Freud, Jung was steadily pushed to the margins of the professional literature; early analysts dismissed his later work as too spiritual, too mystical, too “quasi-theological” to count as psychoanalysis at all.¹ It took until this century for the academy to formally circle back — an International Association for Jungian Studies in 2003, open-access journals of Jungian scholarship by 2005, graduate programs reconnecting his work to neuroscience and the modern mental-health crisis.²

Underappreciated, then revalued. Keep that pattern in mind. It comes up again.

I'm going to rely heavily on his methodology and my own experience of overcoming different obstacles in my life, and hopefully I'm going to hand you as many keys as you need to unlock your own subconscious doors. Eventually I will be working toward my masters in Depth Psychology, and then these little "thoughts about life" will turn into books, and series, and so on, and so forth, until the design takes me out.

How am I going to do that?

Well, there might be a few times I touch on the subject of divinity.

I'm the most analytical and logical person I know, trust me. Do you know how hard it was for me to let AI find the missing links in my thirty years of research? Do you know how much harder it was for me to *trust* AI with my edits? Half of my philosophy about depression includes the very screen you're reading this on...

I digress...

We'll get to that when we get to that.

Those who have known me closely, my wife included, have known and accepted that I was agnostic for many, many years.

A—gnostic.

Let's break that down real quick. The word was coined by Thomas Huxley in 1869, from the Greek: *a-* (without) plus *gnōsis* (knowledge) — and he built it deliberately against the ancient

Gnostics, the ones who claimed salvation comes not through doctrine or institution but through *gnosis*: direct, experiential knowledge of the divine, a spark of God carried inside every person, waiting to be recognized.³ That parallels what I believe, because I have always thought organized religion seemed to point toward the same thing. Where I don't fully align is where they seem to think that "we" are God — and yes, that's certainly true, but only because we exist within his design. A fragment doesn't get to claim the whole.

So look at the word again. I spent years as an *a-gnostic*. Without knowledge. The rest of this series is about how I walked the word backwards.

Let me get back to the point I was trying to make.

I've been agnostic since my first "experience" while meditating, about twelve or thirteen years ago. Prior to that, I thought when you died, that was it. It was over. You were nothing but the dust you left behind.

True.

That's so true. I'm not going to argue with that.

But I'll argue this. People are so confident life is a simulation. "The Matrix." So who made it?

It's also true, that nothing is something. There's that. It can't be nothing, because even in space, nothing is something. So going back to nothing? Is going back to something.

Right? Maybe?

It doesn't matter. I'm not here to explain the design to you any more than I already have. One of my largest philosophies about these things revolves around Jung's answer when the BBC put the question to him directly. *Face to Face*, 1959, filmed at his home in Küsnacht, eighteen months before his death. *Do you believe in God?* The old man hesitated. "I know. I don't need to believe. I know."⁴ The answer caused such an uproar that Jung spent the following months writing letters to clarify — not walking it back, but calibrating it. He didn't mean he knew some particular God of the confessions. He meant he had collided with a factor unknown in itself, inside his own psyche, and "God" was the oldest name on file for it.⁵

This quote made me laugh once, and I ignored his books while I read them for fun, to seem "cultured." But this time around, I've mapped my whole psychology career to building on his work. Partly because of the quote. Mostly because of the letters. A man who spends months making sure the world doesn't hear his certainty too simply — that's my kind of certainty.

How did I get there?

Easy. I used quantum physics and relativity as the lens that let me heal some of these conditions in my brain. I'm not going to get into details... here. That's what this series is about.

Philosophy of Psychology.

But what about when there's nothing left to "unravel"?

For me? I finally made my peace. That's all I'm going to say about that part, because that's all that needs to be said. I wish more people would agree that... that part is very personal, and very important.

But it's also important that we all consider something.

Every little phenomenon that's happened in your life or others'.

Every little synchronicity.

Every little stroke of luck — and that part certainly also comes from hard work, I'm not denying that's a way to explain success. (This is a “hurdle” that caused me a lot of grief for a long time, and we'll get to it.)

Every one of these has an earthy explanation as to why it occurs.

But what of it?

Nothing?

Even nothing is something.

. . .

I realized this while meditating. The art of “being nothing” in thought is pretty healthy. You come back with a better understanding of yourself, every single time. I highly recommend it, and there are a lot of great minds who think a great deal of the power of healing rests in your own hands. That's not wishful talk anymore, either — the clinicians built a protocol out of it. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, which is essentially systematic meditation with cognitive scaffolding, cuts the risk of depression relapse by roughly a third in people with recurrent episodes, and it has performed well enough in trials to be written into national clinical guidelines.⁶ Sitting still, on purpose, measurably helps keep the dark from coming back.

I'm not arguing against the power of pharmaceuticals. Some of them are very beneficial, and for some people they are the bridge that makes everything else possible. But at a certain point, a lot of these drugs need to be changed, increased, or switched completely, because the patient sees diminishing returns. That's not folklore either. The largest sequential-treatment trial ever run for depression — STAR*D — watched remission rates fall from about 37 percent on the first medication attempt to 13 percent by the fourth, and a stricter reanalysis of the same data found the slide even steeper.⁷ The clinicians even have a name for a remission that quietly unremits while the dose never changed: *tachyphylaxis*.⁸ The exact numbers are still being argued between the original investigators and the reanalysts — which honestly proves the point better than either side's figure does.

None of that is an instruction. If you are on medication, every change belongs in your prescriber's office, not in the implications of a philosophy essay. What it is, is a reason the search can't end at the pharmacy — and why I kept looking inward while the prescriptions did their part.

This has always bothered me, but we can get to what those do later. For now, just understand that I knew that wasn't all there was to it. So I meditated. Prayed.

“Existed.”

Whatever you want to call it. Sometimes for thirty minutes, sometimes for five. It didn't matter. I've been doing it since my cousin handed me books about it when I was a teenager. Took a long break for stupid reasons, but I came back.

Sooner or later you realize that while you're meditating, you're only talking to yourself.

So it's pretty easy to tell yourself there is no creator, because you're the only one talking.

But what if you have nothing left to ask?

Life can be pretty horrible. But what if you can always stay motivated to pull yourself out of even the worst situations? (That was the catalyst for my meditational experience — experiencing loss, over and over.)

What if you had nothing left to ask...

Who talks?

You think it's quiet? At a meditational peak?

Oh, it's peaceful. But you're literally standing at a door.

It is the wall between the ego and the Self — the collective thought of all things. I know how that sounds. I also know how old it is. Jung drew the same line between the small “I” that does the talking and the Self that contains it, fed by a collective unconscious we all draw from.⁹ The Upanishads drew it three thousand years ago — *tat tvam asi*, thou art that: the individual soul and the ground of being, one thing wearing two names.¹⁰ Plotinus climbed toward it by stripping away every thought until only the One was left. Meister Eckhart called it the *Grund*, the ground where the soul and God become indistinguishable. Emerson called it the Over-Soul. William James catalogued the doorway itself in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Romain Rolland described the “oceanic feeling” to Freud, and Freud — to

his credit and his loss — admitted he couldn't find it in himself.¹¹ Jung could. In one of those clarifying letters, he described his knowledge of God as a collision with a superior will inside his own psychic system, and closed with a formula older than all of us: God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.¹²

I stood at a door. It turns out half of recorded thought stood at the same one. That's either a mass delusion with suspiciously good attendance — or a door.

It's not peaceful there. It's loud.

As "hell."

It's confusing. But it's meant to be confusing. Look at some of the math I learned *just* to try to describe it.

I still couldn't quite pull it off... just one step short, it always seems.

That's life. I'll tell you more when mine runs out.

. . .

For now, I'll tell you how I overcame some of the most difficult hurdles a human can face. I'm going to try to show you as many keys for success as I can. I'm not a doctor, yet. But I know what a dark day looks like. I've read about many dark days, and I've seen even darker ones happen around me.

And I can write.

And you can read.

And maybe you feel better. Or maybe you don't.

Or maybe you start to question *why* you feel the way you do, and you start to ask more, and read.

That's how I got here.

So first, I'm going to tackle the big five, in exactly the order I overcame them:

Depression. Addiction. Suicidal Thoughts. Anxiety. Attention Deficit.

Now that I've typed that out... there's no order there. It definitely started with depression, and ended with attention deficit. But everything in the middle was a mix of all of them.

Who is to say I'm ever going to be good at any of this?

Who is to say that I'm not?

But if you're still reading, thank you. These next pieces will be more important and personal to me than any.

If you don't believe in souls, you're about to witness one on paper, in a few volumes.

In as few words as possible, like I'm someone who can keep to his word on that.

Once you "figure something out," it's hard to shut up about it.

Isn't it?

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