

THE TALE OF THE DARK CLOUD

by Cathy D. Slaght

Kristyl had finally, he desperately hoped, found a doctor that would alleviate his suffering.

For as far back as he could remember, it had seemed as if a dark cloud hovered right over his head.

There was a diagnosis for this sensation, Dysthymia, also known in layman's terms as Chronic Discontent.

Regardless of the terminology, life had been nothing but a series of disappointments. Even those closest to him eventually hurt him. It was so unfair- he was DEVOTED to family and friends, consistently offering criticisms when necessary (which was often) and explanations of why their ideas would never work.

Somehow this seemed to drive the ingrates away.

This doctor was his last hope.

FINALLY (and, although he was highly irritated at the wait, he had been able, as always, to mask his feelings) the receptionist led him to a tiny cubicle.

A computer screen blinked on, and the face of the physician appeared.

The input began:

1. What brings you in today? (Answer: Life seems hopeless.)
2. What have you tried, so far, to relieve this situation? (Answer: I have switched careers countless times, moved repeatedly, bought all kinds of STUFF, am divorced more times than I care to say, and have joined countless network marketing companies. Everything has failed to bring success/contentment.)

3. Are you receptive to the most up-to-date approaches? (Answer: All the way. Every night I stay glued to the internet for information and tune in to the tell-a-vision so Gin Sippy can keep me informed as to the state of the world. I need a few leisure enhancing beverages to get through this, though, and that's been getting out of hand for some reason.)

The doctor was writing a prescription. "YES!" he thought hopefully

The printer began to churn, producing a prescription that said "Go to New York City and jump off the Empire State Building" along with a bill for \$949.50 to be paid immediately.

Taken aback, Krystl asked - "won't there be some side effects? And why is this treatment so expensive?"

The reply: "This is an experimental approach- there have been studies on side effects that will be released in 75 years. Please sign all waivers- (a STACK of paperwork was being produced) As far as the cost of this prescription, expenses in pinpointing the exact building for a person to jump off are significant. Reps must travel the world, so there is food, lodging, and treatments to keep THEM from jumping off the buildings.

"BUT" said Krystl, "I have read about the HUGE profits the pharmaceuticals make...The face cut him off, saying "the profits are NOTHING compared to the oil companies..."

"Well," thought Krystl, as he got out his card to pay, 'doctors are here to help us, and care so much for our wellbeing..."

STAY TUNED FOR PART II.