

Pat Armitstead

How refusing Prozac changed my life



We have medicalised unhappiness and are in danger of losing sight of our souls. ANTIZAC is soul awakening and I will be prescribing it freely! **Dr Robin Kelly**

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Pat Armitstead
The World's First Joyologist
Joyology
www.joyology.co.nz
New Zealand

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The information shared is not intended to replace any medical care or intervention and has been crafted from the authors own personal experience.

The purpose is to guide people to look at a holistic and integrated approach to wellbeing that focuses on state management and inner resourcefulness. By merit of its name “ANTIZAC”, it does poke with good humour at Prozac, but by no means does the author deny the value of any medication to support the return to health.

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Summary

Suggested reading

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Bob Hall.

Bob was in the Clifford Green Ward of Fairfield District Hospital, NSW from 1970 to 1973. Yes, a total of 3 years.

Bob was the very first man I ever bed-bathed as a student nurse. I saw Bob every day I was on duty throughout my General Nurse training, whether I was rostered on his ward or not.

Bob, first they said you would not survive. Then they said you would be a vegetable. Then they said you would never walk again. You persevered in the face of all of that and turned up at my graduation ceremony walking on 2 sticks!

*Bob you taught ne what it truly meant to
persist and to be good humoured!*

Endorsements

*“Pat Armitstead is New Zealand's answer to Patch
Adams”*

Dr Ric Coleman, NZ

*"The best gifts come in small packages. ANTIZAC is a
slim volume containing an immense store of treasures:
wisdom, humour, love, courage, inspiration, enthusiasm,
positivity and zeal! Pat Armitstead lives the life she
describes in her book; she is the most courageous,
generous, giving, positive, loving person that I know,
forsaking all security to pursue her dreams while
enduring many life struggles.*

*Pat writes with complete authenticity and her inspiring
stories, hard-earned wisdom and practical suggestions
for living a great life are treasures for all of us. I
wholeheartedly recommend ANTIZAC as a great
antidote to the stresses of modern life. This wonderful
book is the perfect gift for your friends and loved ones.”*

**Dr Robin Youngson, NZ, Founder of HEARTS in
HEALTHCARE, and author of TIME TO CARE -
How to love your patients and your job”**

“The best happy pill in the world is choosing to use humor instead of medication to deal with life's challenges. This book is a wonderful way to take control of your life.... leading to greater happiness, productivity and well being.”

Scott Friedman, CSP, Motivational Humourist USA

“This is a little book with a very big idea. And a very good idea at that. It basically promotes a simple truth, which is both relevant and inspiring. I was always enamoured of the idea I found in my grandmothers Readers Digest “Laughter is the best medicine.” Pat practices this and tells lots of stories that prove it.”

Mike Hutcheson, Executive Director Image Centre Group

"Pat is one of the most positive, energetic people I have ever met. Pat's approach is always focussed on the particular environment in which she is speaking, training or entertaining. It's high time we focussed on proactive prevention of health problems and stress. "

Robyn Stent, former Health and Disability

Commissioner New Zealand

"In these times of economic uncertainty and monetary recession all some could have is their ability to smile and laugh at life. We know 'a good laugh is good medicine. A good sense of humour is the backbone of resilience.'

"Alan Little, NZ "

" I have no doubt about Pat's mission. It is an important message to business owners to find what gives people (employees, customers, suppliers) joy. It's the 21st Century folks. Why settle for anything else?

David MacGregor, Founder Idealog Magazine NZ

Nothing like replacing sappy office scowls with happy office howls because when morale jumps, creativity pumps.

Jim Blight, Radio Producer, Canada

To the best of my knowledge women do not have dreams of making love to clowns, yet historically they almost always say they are looking for a man with a sense of humour! Pat has a life with a cause! She is devoting her life to helping others understand the benefits both to themselves and to those around them of living a life filled with joy. I wish for two things; One, for you to read her words. Two, to take from those words something to

improve your life and the lives of those around you!

Andy Dunn, Graphic Designer

Not only has Pat proven that she is gifted, talented and gorgeous but she has done this in the most positive way I have ever known by sharing JOY. Thank you for inciting more tears of Joy beautiful Pat!

Belinda Heaslip

We are on the brink of something special something that benefits al. One of the greatest gifts we have is our awareness. To give the gift of awareness is what is required in this moment and I feel that this is what Pats message is doing. It is scratching the surface and presenting another way, a way that opens the door on many fronts, this is a “how to” open that door and have a dang good laugh along the way. Pat is one of the most positive exciting teachers I have connected with.

Angela Dickson, Australia

Forward

By Dr Robin Kelly

Human beings are meant to be joyful, light-hearted and happy. And yet at the start of the new millennium we, in the so-called sophisticated Western world, are witnessing an overwhelming epidemic of unhappiness like never before. In recent years we have medicalised this unhappiness – in 2008, more than 164 million prescriptions for antidepressants were written by doctors in the USA.

This in my humble opinion is silly – very silly. Because the roots of our problems are not chemical – rather they are to be found in our strained relationships with others,

our world, and ourselves. We are in danger of losing sight of our souls.

On the other hand Pat Armitstead, the world's first Joyologist, and my good and trusted friend, is far from silly. Playful - yes; funny – rib-ticklingly so; and wise – as the wisest owl; but silly she is not. This short book is packed with surprising and valuable insights into Pat's life's work, and with her generous tips to help us regain our birth-right of joy. She shows us how we can become truly happy by helping others.

Moreover, she shows us that if we make a commitment to be joyful and to share this joy with others, our lives flow more smoothly as we experience true spiritual health and wealth.

Pat Armitstead's ANTIZAC will sit proudly for many years to come in my waiting room bookshelf.

I will prescribe it freely.

**Dr Robin Kelly – NZ author of the award winning
'The Human Hologram –Living Your Life in
Harmony with the Unified Field.**
www.robinkelly.co.nz

Preamble

Once upon a not so joyous time I was subject to a series of life events that were not altogether pleasing to me. Those who know me will get the understatement in that sentence. I coped with most, even the cancer which robbed me of half my body weight (actually a good look!), but when, on top of everything else, my partner of 20 years left I fell to pieces. You see....I thought we would grow old together and be creatively crotchety in a rest home! Or something....

He came home one Friday evening and said "*I have just met a girl who is like no-one I have ever met before*" Six months later he was gone! He said to me on leaving: - "*No, I don't love you and I never loved you!*"

In that moment I shattered.

I thought... "if that's true then everything I have ever known is not true." I disintegrated....

Interesting that 10 years on I did an NLP practitioners course and loved the short sentence...BELIEVE NOTHING TEST EVERYTHING, for it showed me how I had believed so many things in the past, that were not actually the truth. The creation of my own prescription ANTIZAC came in that first 12 months after he left.

My doctor at the time wanted to medicate me for my depression and I said to her " *I don't want to be medicated...please help me deal with my grief*". The answer was not within her scope and so began a search.

The JOY journey ensued from that point. I journalled and committed that whatever showed up in my life I would go to it. This became a journey of enlightenment, with insights for me on becoming the observer and not the judger....of self and other!

I have a dear old friend in a rest home in Orewa. His name is Fred. Each time I visit he says to me on leaving: - *“Pat, you know, the self help industry has a lot to answer for. There was never anything wrong with us in the first place!”*

This e-book reflects my observations, beliefs and insights that provided safe passage and the most extraordinary series of life changing paradoxes and synchronicities. A chance encounter with somebody had the ANTIZAC term arrive and I crafted the meaning to go with each letter.

Chance encounter? Here we need to reflect on that for a moment. You see, the next few years turned out to be so loaded with ‘chance encounters’ it got to be very funny! In fact some of what I will share with you is a succession of paradoxes and synchronicity. Carl Jung referred to synchronicity as a glimpse into the underlying order of the universe. He coined the term *synchronicity* to describe what he called the "acausal connecting principle" that links mind and matter. He said this underlying connectedness manifests itself through meaningful coincidences that cannot be explained by cause and effect. Such synchronicities occur, he

theorized, when a strong need arises in the psyche of an individual.

I add to that the fact that in order to receive and be open to the synchronicities we need to be present! I began to make meaning of the losses and became increasingly

It was at the **point of choice** in refusing anti-depressants that my life changed.

This is NOT to recommend to readers that they must copy my actions.

However they can absorb the core ingredients of the ANTIZAC prescription as an adjunct to medical advice.

aware of myself and my life. Some of that is contained on this book.

You can read the full story and detail in my forthcoming book Joyful Empowerment!

**Have you enjoyed what
you've read so far?
[Buy the rest of the book here](#)**

ANTIZACWith an impish grin Pat Armitstead says *“This is not a bitter pill to swallow and most interestingly, no prescribing rights are required! A non chemical alternative to Prozac it is intended to heal what ails humanity right now.”*

What ails people the most in Pat's opinion is not their illness per se but their habituated negative ways of being.

Petrea King, Founding Director and CEO Quest for Life Foundation, said once during a presentation at the NZ Mind Body conference 2008 that what ailed her “*was not her multitude of surgeries to her limbs as a teenager or her battle (and win) with leukaemia.*”

She once went on a trip and pulled all the ligaments in her knee. She walked on that leg and told no one for 3

What ails people the most in Pats opinion is not their illness per se but their habituated ways of being.

weeks. She “*did not want to be a bother!*” That is sick she said and that is what ailed her!!

Offering solutions to an ailing community is about raising consciousness, developing our intuitive selves and offering into “what it is we see” as a result of that enhanced perceptiveness. It is about being a contribution. It is also about seeing people as great.

A is for Amuse, and by this I mean being the source of good humour. To be good humoured is to be appropriately responsive. The old adage “Humour in humour out” is all that is required. Identify your humour style and get confident around using it. Be the source of goodwill.

N is for Nthuse! Be the change they want to see. Exude the energy and radiate the joy. Affirm their needs and provide hope and encouragement. Give everybody an A! (* see *ref below*)

T is for Trust. People perform to optimum when they are being rewarded for doing what they love in a high trust environment. Practice the virtues of integrity

I am for Intuition. Foster your own and your teams intuitive nature. Reward the impromptu and unexpected acts of kindness, generosity and insight. Congratulate people for coming from first thought; the source of all genius is spontaneity!

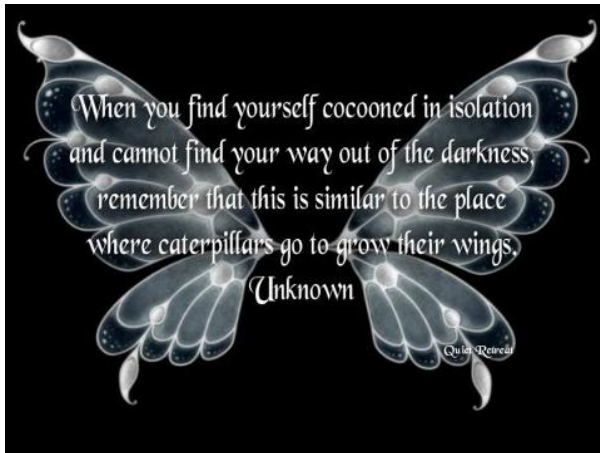
Z is for Zeal. Enrol your team in a sense of eagerness to achieve the wellbeing of themselves and others. Have that roll out like ‘excessive fervour’ and willingness to do all that it takes to achieve.

A is for Attitude. An attitude of gratitude is very attractive. It attracts abundance. Make the “customer experience focal point” one of gratefulness. You could even adopt a virtue a week (there are 100!) and have them as the weekly practice. Both staff and customers will appreciate the experience.

C is for Creativity. Each of your team has individual gifts that are not part of their job description. Find a way for them to be utilised to bring some joy to the workplace. To be recognised and honoured for individual contribution is pure joy and that energy is what your customer will receive.

ANTIZAC’s “instant release formula” paves the way for transformation to occur.

Before my tour through Russia's orphanages with Patch Adams in 2004 he said " *Don't come because of me Pat. Come because you want to find and spend your clown self. Come because you want to experience the disparity between rich and poor. Come because you would like to make at least one Russian friend.*"



Chapter 1.

Once upon a not so amusing time



Once upon a not so amusing time I took the letter “A”.
A is the first of the 7 letters in ANTIZAC.

In the prescriptive world of the Joyologist it stands for
Amuse.

The dictionary says of amuse:-

1. To occupy in an agreeable, pleasing, or entertaining
fashion.

2. To cause to laugh or smile by giving pleasure:

I have seen that “We swing between grief and joy most
of our lives as we respond to and deal with the life events
that ultimately shape us. The trigger for hope as we
move through those times that test us is laughter.”

We are all born with a sense of humour or the ability to
experience and deliver humour. Some people are more
inherently inclined to be humorous or good humoured.
Others have a very targeted sense for humour and can
quickly engage in witty repartee. I believe to be good
humoured is to be appropriately responsive. Or not!!

Finding your sense of humour when the universe appears
to be conspiring against you requires mindfulness. And

Candice Pert in her book, **The Molecules of Emotions**, found that emotions are registered and stored in the body in the form of chemical messages.

being present. Simply put
...Humour in = Humour
out!

So...why Amuse?
There is Health in
Humour !!

Laughter is a great medicine. Like intense exercise, laughter increases brain levels of serotonin and endorphins that can calm and relax the mind. Every year there is more evidence that your thoughts, moods, emotions and belief systems have a fundamental impact on the body's basic health and healing mechanisms. Better understanding of the interaction between emotions and these chemical messages are the key to maintaining a strong health connection between the body and the mind. It is through the emotions you experience in connection with your thoughts and daily attitudes, through the neurochemical changes that accompany these emotions, that your mind acquires the power to influence whether you get sick or remain well.

Reduction of stress hormones

When you're under stress, your body undergoes a series of hormonal and other body changes which make up the "fight or flight" response. Even though there's no physical threat to your life, your body reacts as if there were. If you're under stress day after day, this preparation for a vigorous physical response (which never happens) begins to pose a threat to your health. Anything, which can reduce the level of stress hormones in the blood on a regular basis, helps reduce this threat. The research on stress related hormones and humour has shown that laughter reduces at least four neuroendocrine hormones associated with the stress response including adrenaline, cortisol, dopac and growth hormone.

Norman Cousins drew the attention of the medical community to the pain reducing power of humour in his book, Anatomy of an Illness. Norman had a spinal disease that left him in constant pain. But he quickly discovered while watching comedy films that belly laughter eased his pain. In his last book, Head First, The Biology of Hope, he noted that 10 minutes of belly laughter would give him two hours of pain free sleep.

Numerous studies have now confirmed that humour does have the power to reduce pain in many patients.
"The chemicals that are running our body and our brain

are the same chemicals that are involved in emotion. And that says to me that we'd better pay more attention to emotions with respect to our health. "Candice *Pert-Molecules of Emotion*

Even more interesting is the fact that even if you pretend laughing or act happiness, your body produces happy chemicals. The brain does not know the difference!

The Worlds First Joyology Department

Some years back I conducted 2 pilots at the Anne Maree Rest Home in Auckland. The residents did a 20 minute Yogic Laughter workout every day for 90 days and were accredited as New Zealand's First Laughter facility. They went on to achieve a world record for laughing continuously for one hour on World Laughter Day. This was a great rest home but the residents were very much passive recipients and the general energy was very low as it is in many rest homes.

The residents used the laughter exercises to make light of their situation and the less amusing things that comprise living in a shared situation. The energy levels were lifted and sustained by the residents over this period. Stan and Glad Rafferty, pictured, were both at the very first

session and afterwards Stan approached me with thanks for the session and offered to introduce me to his wife, Glad.

As we came closer to Glad Stan turned to me and said “Pat, *hasn't Glad got beautiful eyes!*”

I was so moved, thinking if I have myself a man and am still alive at 97 and he thinks I have beautiful eyes....I would be one happy woman!!



I put my arm around Stans shoulder as I leaned in to greet Glad.... whom I later learned had been mute for 2 years.

Glad saidvery slowly and loudly...
." Take... your.... hands.... offmy ...husband!!"

The staff were just beside themselves. They could not believe she had spoken! Major message there folks! Don't be fooled by appearances!

Types of Humour

Tom Hopkins, US speaker and perhaps the worlds best sales trainer says you can learn to laugh even if you have a Ph D in pessimism! Understanding the different forms and types of humour helped Digital Equipment Co in Colorado boost productivity by 15% and halved the number of sick days over a 12 month period. You too can experience the same sorts of benefits in your business and your life.

Humour comes to us in many forms.

Satire, irony, sarcasm, wit, parody, farce, surrealism and play.

Satire :- exposes, mocks, sends up and attacks the pompous, hypocritical and immoral. It also exposes negative habits. The painful realities of life are combined with pleasurable experiences.

Irony :- on the other hand is a remark that is the exact opposite to what you are thinking ! Sarcasm is the

lowest form of wit “so they say”, is based on ridicule and vindictiveness and quickly builds communication barriers.

Wit :- is perhaps the most admired and sought after form. Based on intellect it is a brilliant cognitive association between an idea and an attitude, or a situation and a person. People with a natural wit have very high intelligence. Those with a practised wit have normal intelligence and have consciously trained their humour mind.

Parody :- is another name for spoof, and impersonates and mocks well known writings such as plays and books. The actor John Cleese has perfected this art form in the many training videos he created, which provide a wonderful example of laughing as you learn.

Farce :- is simple. A ridiculous idea is taken as being true, then acted on logically. It includes slapstick and burlesque. Embarrassing moments and bureaucratic bungling are the food of farce.

Surrealism :- happens when you combine outrageous exaggeration, impossible contradictions and zany assumptions. The most improbable are brought together, creating verbal fantasies and brilliant mental images.

Play :- finally and perhaps the most delightful is the notion of play. To be playful and serious at the same time, that is have serious fun, defines the ideal mental state. Play removes uncertainties, allows for errors, cuts through embarrassment, criticism and rejection and opens up the scope for risk taking and creativity.

To be good humoured is to be in the moment, responsive and demonstrate that you have some empathy for the other person. It is about choosing to be positive and looking for positive ways to problem solve and get things done. Humour fosters creativity.

Isn't it interesting that we will leave the workplace and often pay large sums of money to be amused and entertained "after work" as a means of de-stressing and relaxation. Many amusing and memorable moments can be created at work with minimal budget and set the scene for increased productivity as a result.

Humour in Leadership

There's a myth about mirth in business.

It goes something like this. You can't be funny and be taken seriously; or you are in business to make money not have fun. I am sure you recognise those two lines, however humour in business is not about clowning. It is about demonstrating that you are a warm, responsive, intelligent and considerate person. In the world of comedy humour means creating maximum laughs per minute as a measure of success. In

business it is about creating a positive receptive and cheerful mood with successful communication the end product. The paradox is that low morale and decreased productivity can affect your bottom line

Humour can expand your perceptions and boost creativity. When this happens you boost productivity. You boost it by creating an environment that accepts humour as a tool that is a toy, engenders positivity, and can be used in attack or defence. When applied with discretion it becomes a powerful ally, balancing empathy and aggression, and embarrassment and vulnerability. People can learn to capitalise on the humour they have within them to foster relationships with colleagues and with clients. People remember and feel good about enjoyable encounters.

As a leader you can use the cognitive properties of humour to lift morale, enhance decision making and improve problem solving. Humour patterns can be identified and developed to the point of being automatic.

De Bono says humour is a more significant process than reason and helps us switch from one way of thinking to another. This is of particular value today in New Zealand with industrial laws and the notion of stress at work. Laughter releases endorphins and leaves you with a heightened sense of well being which can last up to two hours. People who are stressed/depressed have problems concentrating even for short periods of time. Laughter provides a release and a shift in state! Some of you may relate to this when I say that often people who are extremely stressed or moving through grief and loss can actually find it very hard to read.

Mental acuity can be heightened with the practised application of good humour. In 2004 I did a ten week Improvisation Acting Course. I learned to be in the moment, to trust my intuition and to have fun with my own humour. My

first engagement following that course (and for which there was no prior briefing) earned me \$5000 in one day. In 7 minutes actually! I had to answer 7 questions in 7 minutes...and I did! *More on this later in the book!*

I attribute that success to my capacity to remain good humoured and therefore confident, even though under intense pressure. I also trusted first thought!!

Humour is the single most effective human resource, acting as a safety valve and allowing us to inform, educate, enhance personalities and entertain. As a result we boost morale and productivity and therefore profits. Maybe you can start your days with humour like a colleague?

She dressed like a hare for an Easter function, and has since taken the photo, enlarged it and placed it in the foyer with a sign that says, in *almost traditional* Maori welcome“Hare am I’... There are no doubts about the humour that lies within that business!

Humour/creativity boosting ideas

1. Start a laughter club
2. Send amusing memos...start using puns
3. Collect affirmations and share them daily
4. Buy amusing cards and send to lighten someone’s day
5. Send 3 pieces of congratulatory mail a day
6. Compliment one person a day Focus on catching people doing something right
7. Be silly just once a day
8. Play with your children

9. Play with someone else's children
10. Welcome all your key people to work each day
11. Use monthly awards to note contributions
12. Celebrate different cultures
13. Have balloons in your drawer at work
14. Have a lolly jar
15. Brainstorm with your peers once a week for ideas
16. Start a mastermind group
17. Create a ritual around tea breaks – maybe cultural examples
18. Send yourself a card and act surprised when it arrives

**Have you enjoyed what
you've read so far?**

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