

WHEN IT FEELS SO BLUE, SEEK REFUGE IN THE YELLOWS

ECHOES

OF



THE

MIND

A COLLECTION OF SHORT MENTAL HEALTH STORIES FROM YELLOW VS BLUE'S
TALENTED COMMUNITY, PRESENTED IN A STORYBOOK FORMAT



YELLOW VS BLUE

WHEN IT FEELS SO BLUE, SEEK REFUGE IN THE YELLOWS.



ECHOES OF THE MIND

Your best friend in your blue days

Echoes Of The Mind

[When it feels so blue, seek refuge in the yellows.]
By: [Yellow vs. Blue Talented Community of Writers]

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Yellow vs. Blue's business address:
71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2H 9JQ

Website: www.yellowvsblue.org

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Message from Yellow vs. Blue

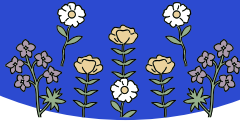
This book is a compilation of stories from contributors, members of our community, all aimed at providing support, guidance during difficult times. It serves as a reminder that you are not alone in your struggles, offers tips and strategies for coping with mental health challenges on a daily basis.

The ultimate goal is to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues and help turn those blue days into yellow ones.

If you found these stories helpful, please consider sharing them with others who may be going through similar mental health struggles, you can help them feel less alone, more supported in their journey.

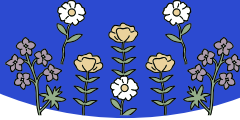


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"The mind is everything; what you think, you become."

-Buddha

"It's not about perfect. It's about effort. And when you bring that effort every single day, that's where transformation happens. That's how change occurs."

-Jillian Michaels (2015)

"Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it."

-Tori Amos (2017)

"You don't have to be positive all the time. It's perfectly okay to feel sad, angry, annoyed, frustrated, scared and anxious. Having feelings doesn't make you a negative person. It makes you human."

-Lori Deschene

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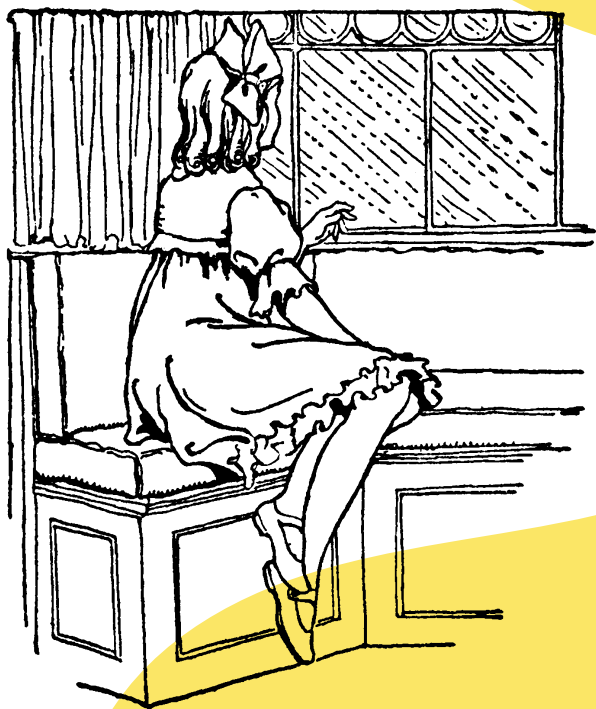
Yellow vs. Blue

S T O R Y



Last Straw

By: Clàudia García-Núñez



Yellow vs. Blue

"If you ever get a second chance in life for something, you've got to go all the way." — Lance Armstrong

The *"last straw"* implies the existence of other events or things that have happened that you have been setting aside until the aforesaid *"last straw"* happens. Figuratively, it feels as if you've been weighing flour on a cooking scale and it has been falling slowly from its package, almost grain by grain, until impatience gets the best of you. The moment you add just a pinch of more strength, a whole lump of flour topples the scale, scattering all over the kitchen countertop. Like this, in just a second and just like being slammed by a wave, it makes you collapse on the metaphorical sand, rendering you powerless. You never realize which straw is the last until you do. And it starts like this.

It's a grey afternoon, surprisingly warm for Autumn, and although a few birds are chirping, you can't hear them because inside of you there's a storm. It feels like the emptiness of the cloudless sky is in your eyes. Your body is a living conflict of interests between the void that's become your stomach and the massive black hole that took over your brain and has been swallowing down every possible thought and detail that has been bothering you from the start of the week. You can almost hear the thunder pumping blood and feel the lightning piercing your head.

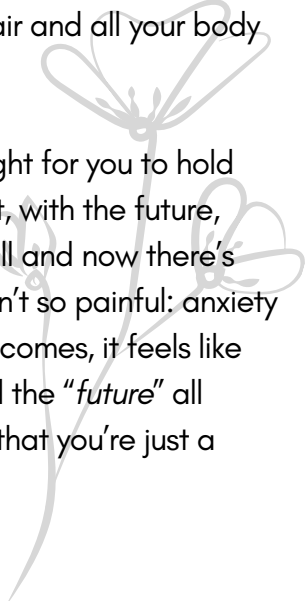
Echoes of the Mind



Words get stuck in your throat and even when you try to gulp them down they must be released anyway – a scream, a cry for help – because there’s suddenly no air around you and you feel like a tiny fish out of the water: wobbling around, struggling to breathe and feeling like you need water. In this case, though, you are not looking for water because there’s water everywhere you look: there’s a flood coming from your eyes that makes your vision blur and bathes your cheeks, drowning you by the minute. And yet you still feel like a fish in desperate need of being able to breathe just like you were doing five minutes ago, before you got swamped by a wave of fear. Your chest is tightening and your heart is getting smaller, it is aching and breaking.

You want to be able to “*just relax*” and stop everything for just three seconds but time is moving faster and your breath quickens not to leave you behind and there’s just so much you want to say but there’s water, there’s no air and all your body is aching in pain.

In the midst of that, there isn’t any thought for you to hold onto. You’ve been obsessed with the past, with the future, with the “*what ifs*”, with the anxiety of it all and now there’s only the moment. It’d be hilarious if it wasn’t so painful: anxiety makes you overthink but when the attack comes, it feels like “*nothing*” and “*everything*”, the “*past*” and the “*future*” all collide and you’re hit with the realization that you’re just a human being.



Yellow vs. Blue

One tiny body trying to hold huge concepts in your arms and grasping how you can't; they were made for the universe, not for you. But it turns out there are words and you're not alone. There are hands that reach for your hands without touching them but with the intent to. There is a relief, there is the most obvious statement; a voice saying:

"Breathe"

"That's right. Breathe in, breathe out,

breathe in...and out...

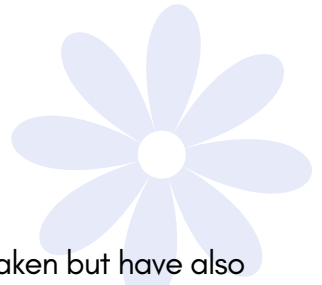
in...and out...

...in...and out...

in...and out..."

Maybe that's your voice, maybe it's someone else's but it is the only real thing that stands out from all the other thoughts. It's like a tiny precious glass in the making and you want to give it life by breathing.

All the words and thoughts you had deemed insignificant have exploded into that situation. The stress, the hurt, the talks you had wanted to have but had been storing in your mind for "another time" have decided on their own accord that "one more day" is too much for you to keep.



That unconscious decision you have not taken but have also taken is perdition, in a way. It's salvation in another. Nobody has told you before but it all depends on how you take it. You just feel numb and tired but you can feel neither anger nor hunger, fear nor tears coming; you're only being (vulnerable and small). "*So many feelings*" is the most intelligent thought that you can muster.

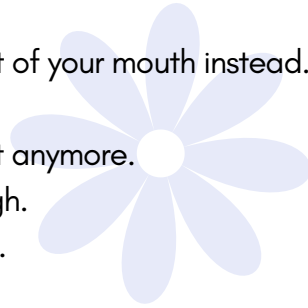
"I hate this" is what comes out of your mouth instead.

I hate this but...

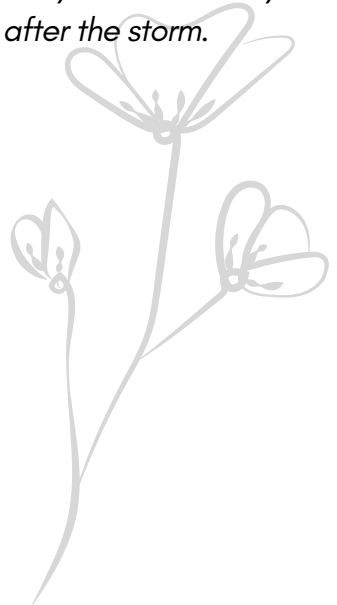
I hate this but I couldn't take it anymore.

I hate this but I made it through.

I hate this but I will feel better.



The wind and rain from your own particular storm have ceased and the dark clouds have passed by. It's not a sunny day but it's the dependable calm after the storm.



Yellow vs. Blue

S T O R Y



Echoes of the Mind

A Boy Who Became A Man

By: Imed El Mokhtar



Yellow vs. Blue

"Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also harder to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say, 'My tooth is aching' than to say, 'My heart is broken.' — C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

A boy is born, he learns how to walk and gets himself into an accident that will send him to a 6 months coma and a heart arrest for seconds. This coma, however, has awakened his consciousness, so at two years old, the boy is entirely aware. He will forever remember everything he sees and does from that point on. This boy, however, was a bit different from most kids. He was only interested in stories. He loved dinosaurs and could name them all by heart.

He loved animals and spent hours watching documentaries. He loved cartoons, and Disney movies for all the emotions they made him feel ... he felt less lonely.

The boy was timid. He could only communicate superficially and would write letters to those he wished to convey important messages. As you can probably imagine, making friends with this boy was an arduous task. Few ever could relate to him nor talk with him about the things he was passionate about. So he would spend his days alone.

Echoes of the Mind

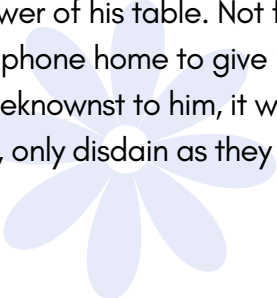


Sooner than most people, the boy understood the silliness of expecting what you want or need from others which you can provide for yourself. And so, his path to self-sufficiency began.

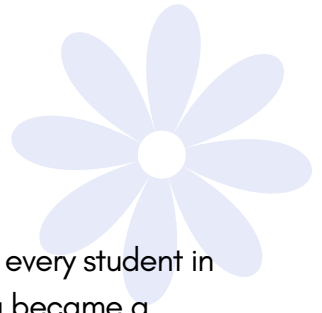
He read stories before bed, talked to himself, and made worlds inside his head where he could escape and be who he was with imaginary creatures. However, the world had only begun testing him. When he joined the middle school, he was distraught to realize that being quiet would result in rejection and marginalization. Young teenagers' insecure and developing hearts were merciless to him. They bullied this little boy who only wanted peace and a place where he could belong. They made him claustrophobic by locking him into the broom closet for 5 hours.

Beaten, humiliated, insulted, sneered at, laughed at, rejected, betrayed ... exposed too young, too soon to the ugly side of mankind. They made him less trusting, for those who pretended to be his friends betrayed him on every occasion.

One day, he found the phone of his classmate in the drawer of his table. Not finding him, he proceeded to take the phone home to give it back the day afterward. But, unbeknownst to him, it wouldn't be gratitude that welcomed him, only disdain as they thought he stole it.



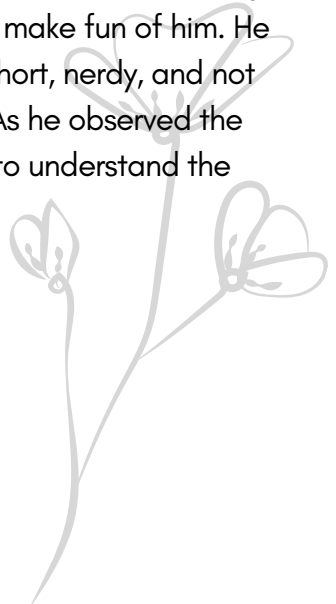
Yellow vs. Blue



The next day, he could feel the disgust of every student in the school. What was first standard bullying became a complete shutdown. This isolation has caused him to do poorly at school, where he once used to have good grades. Friendless, with parents that only cared for his grades, the world closed in on him.

He thought it would be different at high school. Then, finally, he could be someone that would be good at something, anything that would redeem him. Alas, it just followed him like a curse. Falling into despair gradually, he decided to opt for a different strategy. Since he had no social skills, no sense of humor, and no common ground with the others, he decided to be quiet and observe.

He would accept the invitations of his classmates to hang out, even though he knew it was only to make fun of him. He was the mascot. He stood no chance: short, nerdy, and not putting much importance into his look. As he observed the behavior of his surroundings, he began to understand the nature of his oppressors.





What do they talk about?

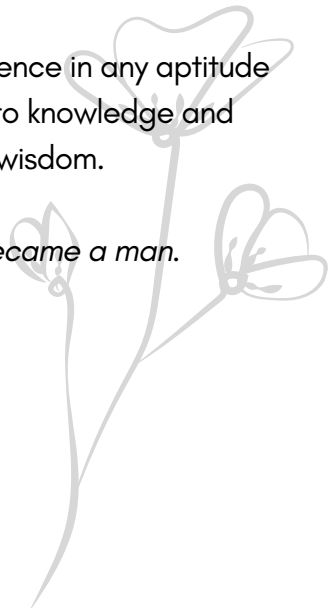
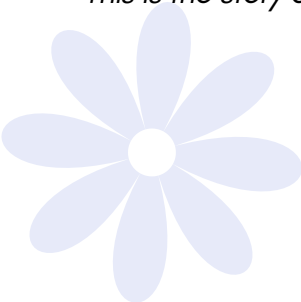
What do they think?

What do they feel? Why do they feel it?

When he reached 16, his mother finally realized there was something off. After numerous sessions with a therapist, he was diagnosed with clinical depression that lasted 7 years. The depression began to eat away at his morals, rendering him vulnerable to psychosis and anti-social deviation. However, he would not be broken. This time was different after the boy had learned how to be content by himself. He learned to remain calm. He learned to hold his tears in front of the overwhelming opposing force. He learned that his bullies were not bad people, just misguided with no idea what to do. It was a bully-or-be-bullied environment, and he drew the short straw.

Having neither self-esteem nor confidence in any aptitude or skill, he decided to dedicate himself to knowledge and truth, where he would find sanctuary in wisdom.

This is the story of a boy who became a man.



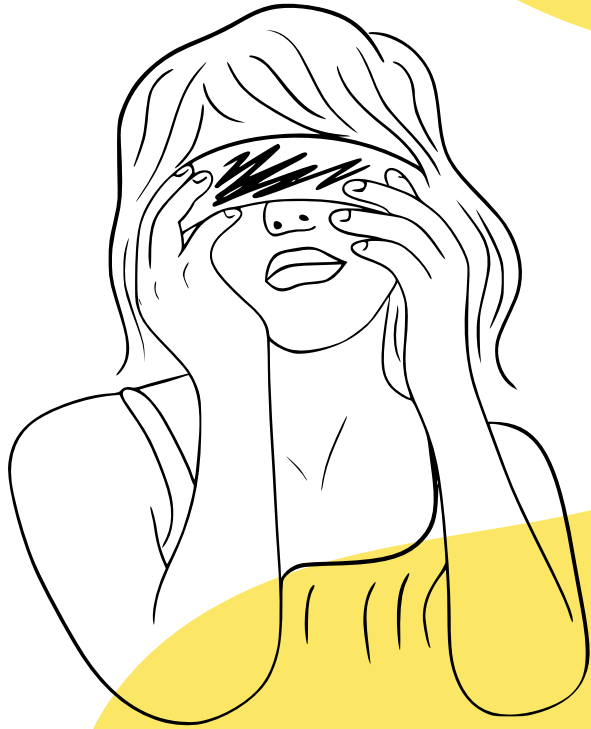
Yellow vs. Blue

S T O R Y



Stay Longer

By: Yasmine Ansari




Yellow vs. Blue

"Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain." — Vivian Greene

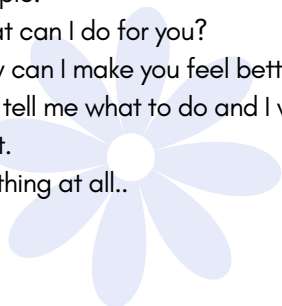
I t's true
I am not a princess
I do not expect to be treated as
such
I have been playing the role of the
knight for so long
That I do it so well.
I do not wish to be saved
Not anymore at least.
I believe that I am saved
That I am not in danger
That I am not in pain.
But somehow
I still am and am not.
When you live in a state for so long
It becomes your norm.
I know I am not in danger at the
moment
But my experience taught me that
At any moment
My life can shift miserably.
I am not in pain physically
But sometimes I wish I was
Because it's the only way
To distract the agony that breaks
my ribs.
I am not in danger

I am not in pain
Right?
But every noise startles me
And every male stare scares me.
Every cold embrace breaks my heart
And every goodbye feels like a
break up.
Sometimes, I feel untouchable
Unbothered
So high in my own space
That no one can access me.
But sometimes
Every whisper
Every gesture
Can throw me under a million mile.
It's so easy for me to jump between
these two dimensions
That it became too easy to mask
them.
I am comfortable in my own skin
love myself
I love my mind
I love how I do things
I love that I get to experience many
things in so little time
I love change
I love my mood swings

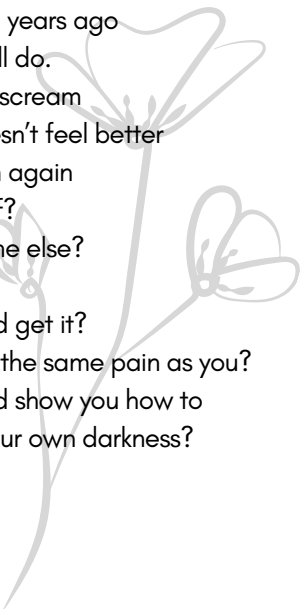
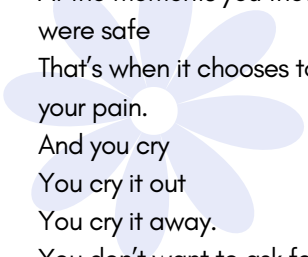
Echoes of the Mind



I love my thirst for adrenaline
Can you tell lies?..
I will start with one,
I don't like my thirst for
adrenaline.
Actually, it's the most disgusting
desire I can feel.
It comes in hot impulses
Everything I have and know
Suddenly loses its meaning.
Like it doesn't matter anymore
Like I don't matter anymore.
But it does
And I do
And I keep on trying desperately
to convince my mind
And it gets so loud and so messy
and so angry and so intense
That it takes all the strength in
my body To say no.
Most of the time I win
But it makes me feel worse.
Now I feel bored
The kind of boredom that makes
words and people not interesting
Even when you love words and
people.
What can I do for you?
How can I make you feel better?
Just tell me what to do and I will
do it.
Anything at all..



And there are only rude, dark and
wrong options offered
I choose sleep
I choose to run away
I choose to turn off my feelings
But not my thoughts
You can't run from the devil
It always catches up to you
At your weakest moments
At the most inappropriate moments
At the moments you thought you
were safe
That's when it chooses to bring up
your pain.
And you cry
You cry it out
You cry it away.
You don't want to ask for help
Because it's embarrassing
To cry about something that
happened years ago
But you still do.
You try to scream
And it doesn't feel better
So you run again
To yourself?
To someone else?
To whom?
Who would get it?
Who feels the same pain as you?
Who would show you how to
escape your own darkness?



Yellow vs. Blue



I take my pills
Every day
For the sake of everyone.
It still feels a bit weird
To have to take pills to have
normal conversations
To feel normal doses of feelings
To entertain friends normally
To have a normal social life
To have a normal, healthy
relationship.
I even find it ironic.
Sometimes, I dissociate so hard
That my life becomes a movie
And I am watching
And I find the main character a
hypocrite.
It almost feels like playing houses
Like she got pretty dolls
And a pretty car
And a pretty house
And she goes to pretty places
And she does pretty things.
Sometimes she is happy and she
shows it
Sometimes she is empty and she
doesn't show it.



In both cases
She continues to play
Because it is not normal to stop
playing
It is not normal to quit the game
It is not normal to leave
Suddenly
When everyone is busy playing too.
So she stays
And she hopes that the moments
when she actually likes the game
Stay longer
And she hopes that the people who
give the game meaning
Stay longer
But most importantly
She wishes that she wakes up one
day
And suddenly
With a divine miracle
She begins to actually like playing
the game
Until it doesn't feel like a game
anymore
Until it becomes so real
So she can too

Stay longer...

Echoes of the Mind

S T O R Y



Yellow vs. Blue

Talk Me To Sleep

By: Rania Mejri

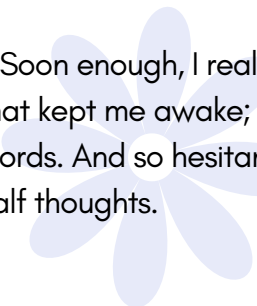


"My father taught me not to overthink things, that nothing will ever be perfect, so just keep moving and do your best."
- Scott Eastwood.

Back at the time when I have struggled with sleep, my waking hours have felt like a fleeting dream, and only nighttime felt real. My mind was a jumble of words, of never-ending to-do lists, and of plans left undone. Each night, I wrestled with my thoughts, eyes wide open and ears taking in every sound. And at the edge of dreams, a ray of sun shone through my half-drawn curtains and the day started again.

I saw the people around me as a distraction so I pushed them away, and took the company of good friends as a chance to play pretend at having everything figured out. In reality, I was barely there, my mind screaming at me to rest, and my head too heavy to keep up. But the moment I laid it on a pillow, all the dreams ebbed away and the tasks of the day rushed in like the tide. Cold, unforgiving, deep blue.

Soon enough, I realized that it was not the unfulfilled plans that kept me awake; it was the need to speak those unsaid words. And so hesitantly, I spoke. At first in half sentences, in half thoughts.



Yellow vs. Blue

And eventually all at once. My voice went hoarse of speaking, but the relief of being heard, of unleashing those “what ifs”, gave me the freedom to toss and turn in bed and revel in sleep. And when morning came, I let the sun bathe my face in yellow rays.

The comfort of taking a break from the repeating tasks of daily routine became a sanctuary, the shores of which I reached only when I spoke of my fears out loud, jettisoned the heavy load that almost drowned me, and asked for an extra pair of hands to help me row the boat through the storm and touch solid ground instead of floating between sunrise and sunrise and risking being submerged under every moonlight.

So now I keep those sympathetic ears close, those people that I call friends seem to offer the same services I give to them when they need to vent. Friendship turns out to be a two-way street, who would've thought? I thanked a friend once for listening to me complain about something that kept me going in circles, and he said “I only ever realize what I'm doing when I tell it to people. Most of the time I feel lost-am lost. But when I put it in words, somehow it all makes sense.”

Yellow vs. Blue

When we put it in words, it all makes sense. That's what words are for. That's why we tell stories, why we write them - to make sense of it all. So no wonder my anxieties lessen when I talk about them to someone who listens. The anxieties don't vanish into thin air, no. They are still there. There is a deep blue sea that meets a sunny beach.

I don't need answers to my questions. I just need to know that my questions make sense. The questions that run through your head over and over again, might not even have good answers, or maybe the answers raise even more questions, but knowing which questions keep you awake feels as good as knowing the answers. Saying them out loud reduces the shadows they may cast on your thoughts.

So speak out, find someone who can listen: a friend, a family member, a therapist, or the internet. And let out that dam that builds pressure behind your eyes, and fills your head with doubts. Let the stream of words gush out of you. Let it flow and flow, and out of the deserts build a forest around you, strong oaks and resilient willow trees. Relationships that keep you standing, withstanding the wild winds; and keep you rowing, allowing you the chance to rest your head at night and dream. *Out of yellow and blue comes green.*

Echoes of the Mind

S T O R Y



Art Could Help Too

By: Hend Mansour



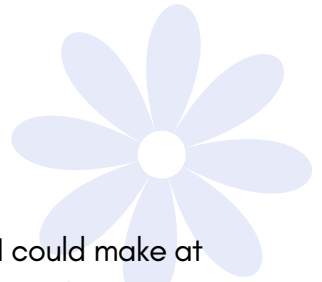
Yellow vs. Blue

"When I wake up in a bad mood, I try not to stay in one. Learn to make the best of what you have." — Faith Hill

This is it, another morning, another rising sun, more birds singing and here I am, stuck in my bed, unable to move. Yet again, I feel foggy and I hate it. This lingering feeling of emptiness that is taking too long to fade away, this strange feeling of non-belonging or something, I don't get it myself. I get this weird yet familiar sensation of being a soul haunting a hollow body, daily, and nothing changes.

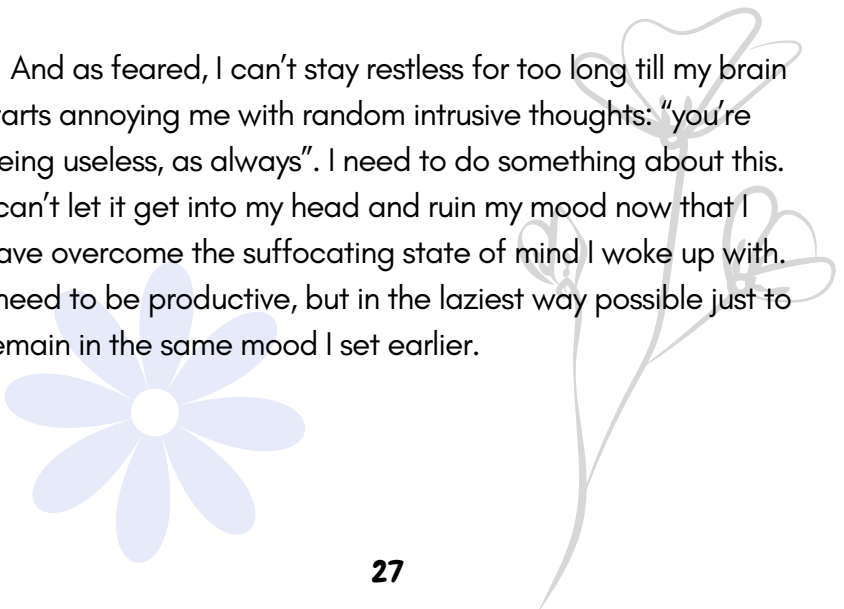
This is it, another day just about to start and I can barely lift my head from my pillow. I try in a last helpless attempt to go through my agenda for the day to encourage myself to move and start getting ready: wash my face, wear something decent and warm enough, have breakfast, do I have enough gas in my car? I don't like this dress, and the report I need to submit before the deadline...

These thoughts keep on echoing in my head like some foreign chants and start to lose their meaning bit by bit until all that's left of it is a faint buzzing in my ears. "Yeah, no..." I tell myself, I am not doing that today, I can't afford to lose myself any further in this madness. Today, I rest!



And that was probably the best decision I could make at that moment. I called in sick at work, because why not; I am not feeling okay deep inside and that matters as much as any other physical aching. My mind is sick and needs special treatment. First things first, and this is a priority, I need to rest more, even if I can't fall back asleep. I at least need to lay more minutes in the warmth of my blanket and enjoy the few rays of sunlight that are sneaking through the curtains. It's funny how the annoying birds chirping became melodic all of a sudden, and my pillow softer and it's as if a bugging weight was put off of my shoulders, I feel stupid for not realizing sooner how much I needed a day off, not just a regular Sunday, but a whole day off in the middle of the week, just to breathe. I take some time in my bed to read some short stories and watch funny videos of cats being silly for no reason.

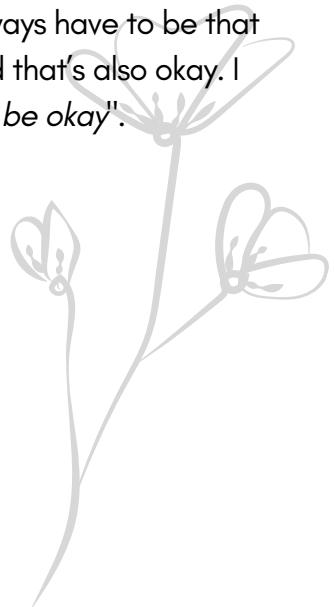
And as feared, I can't stay restless for too long till my brain starts annoying me with random intrusive thoughts: "you're being useless, as always". I need to do something about this. I can't let it get into my head and ruin my mood now that I have overcome the suffocating state of mind I woke up with. I need to be productive, but in the laziest way possible just to remain in the same mood I set earlier.



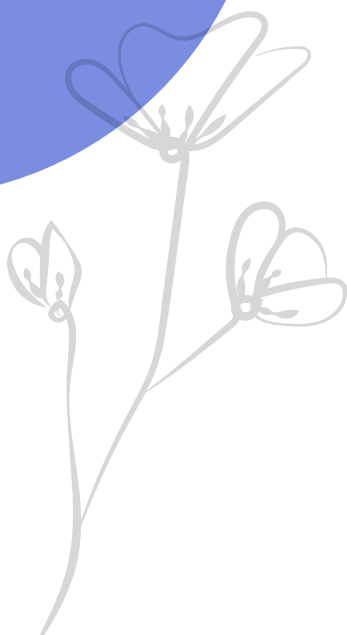


Art therapy! I tell myself, that's what I do best, even at my worst. Even if I'm just scribbling and sketching lines and shapes that look like absolutely nothing, but I can release all these negative thoughts doing whatever with the crayons, the paints, and anything I can put my hands on. I can lose myself for hours and not realize a thing until it's past midnight and I'm starving. I can somehow shut all these voices that love talking unceasingly in my head even when I'm trying to get a full night of sleep, I can create universes and roam freely in them, but what's more important is that I can't hear anything, and that's more than enough for me, even more enough than the satisfaction I get staring at what I made.

It doesn't always have to be perfect. I'm flawed, and so is my art, and that's totally fine. I don't always have to be that productive and contributing citizen, and that's also okay. I need to remember that "*it's okay not to be okay*".



**SHORT
STORIES**



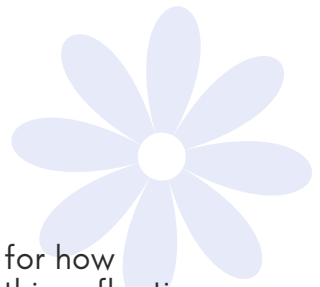
Yellow vs. Blue

1

Am I a Failure?



By: Anonymous

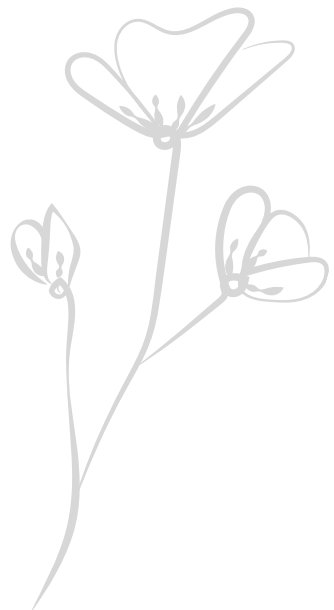
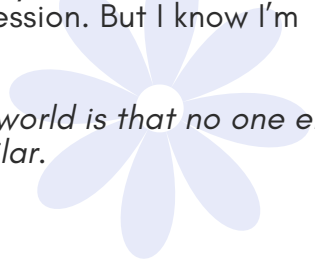


Everyone started to give up on me for how gloomy I had become. That pale, thin reflection in the mirror with baggy eyes looked nothing like me.

Having survived the grip of a serial harasser, I spent weeks doing nothing but lying in the bed and crying.

I can still remember those loud, blaming voices inside my head: you're a failure. Every act you do is shameful. You're not worthy of love. Little did I know, I was suffering from depression. But I know I'm healing, slowly but surely.

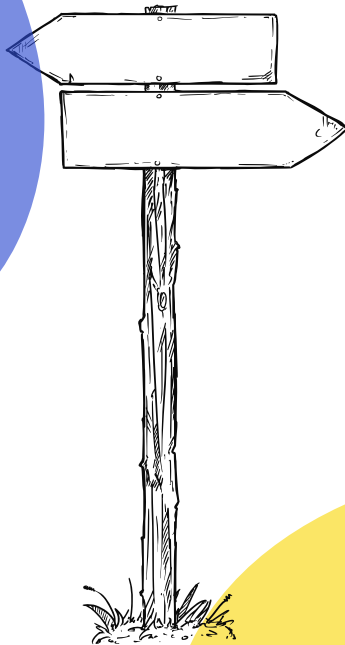
My greatest wish in this world is that no one else experiences anything similar.



Yellow vs. Blue

2

The Heart's Dilemma



By: Ahmed Abdelraheem



Can I share with you what I feel?

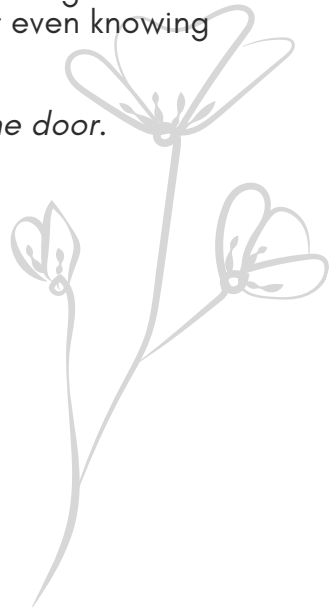
My hands are cold, and the sound of my poor closed window fighting the wind breaks the silence. My chest is cold like I'm getting a fever, I have a lot to do today at work, and after...

Standing behind the door ready to go but my heavy cold heart makes it impossible to move, to open this giant million tons gate and go, it's safer in here where there are no people, no harsh words, no chances of receiving hate or aversion again.

However, cautiously, I manage to grab the handle and make it to the step of the door thinking that giving too much care about troubles might bring new trouble, here I go!

But should I just ignore that trembling heart like it's a wet bird during a storm? Not even knowing why!

I went back in and closed the door.



Yellow vs. Blue

3

A Story of my Life



By: Anonymous

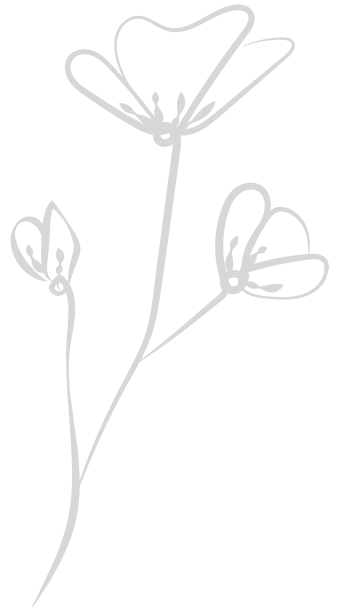


Two years after losing my leg, I found my purpose in family, friends, and learning.

"*You are stronger than you think*" this is a quote that E.A. likes to say to remind himself of the obstacles he's had to overcome, when he faces challenges today it brings him back to a time when the stakes were higher.

Two years ago, a 23-year-old successful site engineer called E.A. had a car accident that was a turning point in his life.

After waking up at the hospital, I was shocked when I found that I have one leg, I asked my mother: what happened? She was crying severely and my father didn't want to look at me to hide his tears. Then the doctor came and told me that I had a severe injury in my leg so they decided to do surgery to cut my leg and I had severe damage to my right forearm and both wrists.



Yellow vs. Blue

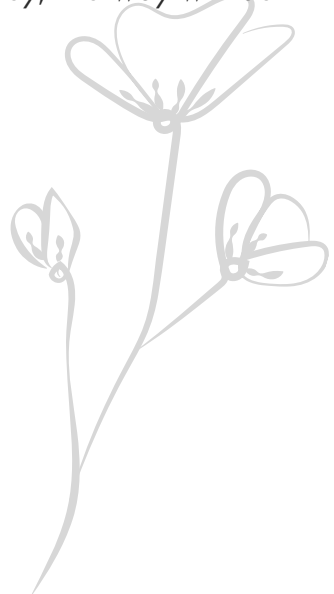


I spent weeks at the hospital undergoing physical therapy and rehabilitation. I had an incredibly tough time in the hospital. The feeling of helplessness often angered me, and not being able to do simple things by myself was frustrating. With confidence, perseverance, and the support of my family and friends, I made it through.

After my rehab, I was fitted with a prosthetic leg. It took a lot for me to get used to it. I started making changes in my life after the accident. I ate healthier, stayed in shape, and made sure I was both as mentally and physically healthy as possible.

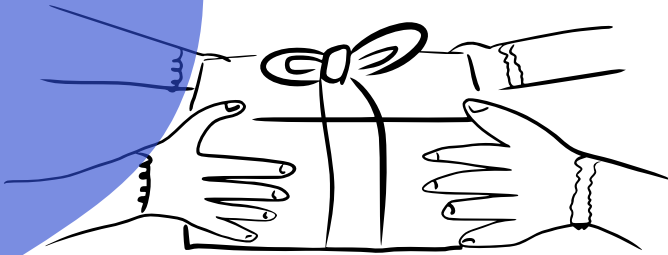
As I recovered, I officially retired from my job as a site engineer and decided to make a career shift to programming. Now, I am studying programming at the Institute of Information Technology. I found I was into web programming and I believe in the saying of Rumi:

"When you decide to start the journey, the way will be shown to you".



4

I've Got News For You



Yellow vs. Blue

I will share my story with you.

From a very young age, I suffered from suicidal thoughts and wishing not to wake up the next day. At the time, I didn't know I was depressed and since my mom died when I was 11 years old, I always told myself I can't tell anyone my true feelings because they're not my parents! Why must they be bothered by some kid they didn't bring to this world?

So, I always faked smiles to hide the pain and the overwhelming feelings I used to get. All of this stemmed from being different in terms of my eyes because I was injured when I was a toddler. It had a huge impact when I started noticing that people are treating me differently because of my eyes.

As I grew older, I thought things would be easier, but they only became harder! I never thought that someone would love me. I never felt worthy of being loved by any man. I thought I'll always be alone. I did date some people and when I told some of them about my situation regarding my eyes, some would leave me and never look back, others would stay but eventually leave!

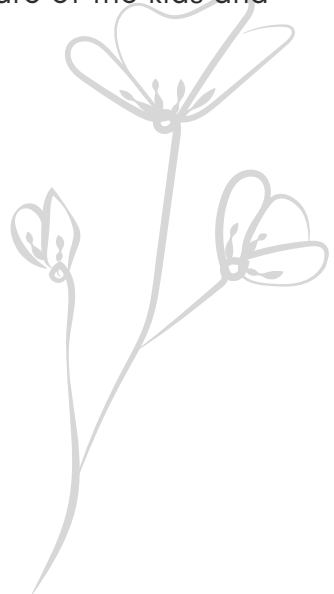




It made me feel sad, sadness that lasts for months! During that time, I'd contemplate whether I should try to kill myself again or not. I tried too many times but I would stop myself when I thought about my family! I then had a daughter, and I became a single parent...

Another blow to my already messed up mentality! But I used that as motivation because I did not want her to experience the same things I did when I was a child! So I worked hard in college and made sure that I passed with good marks! That time, when I felt overwhelmed and not worthy, I'd make sure I studied, exercised, went out with my friends or watched a good movie, and also prayed! That helped me a lot.

Now, I have a support structure. I have two kids with a supporting partner. Whenever I feel I'm about to get those feelings again, I share them with him. He always makes sure that we do things that will take my mind off things, or take the kids with him so I can have some me time because now with the covid19, it tends to become hard, especially for moms who are working from home and also have to take care of the kids and house chores.



Yellow vs. Blue

For anyone out there who's feeling they aren't worthy or don't deserve to be alive, thinks no one would love them, I've got news for you! There is someone out there for you regardless of how you look. Whenever you feel overwhelmed with everything, take a step back, and reflect on the good things that had happened in your life before. No one was born by mistake, God wasn't bored when he placed you in this world! We all have a purpose in life, and I know it's easier said than done but remember, when you feel overwhelmed, try to do things that bring you joy.

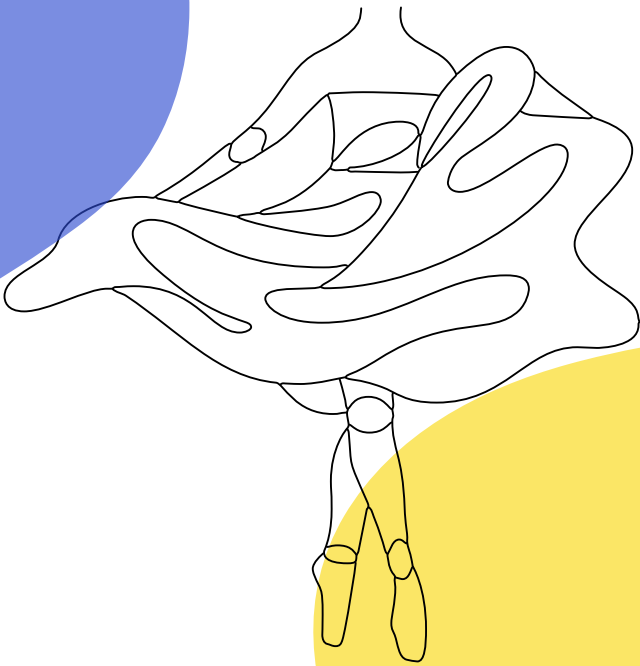
For instance, with me, when I decide that today I'm going to end it, I dress up, wear my nice clothes for the last time as I used to tell myself and you know what, I'd appreciate myself in the mirror and I suddenly become happy again! Why would I kill such a beautiful human being?

I hope reading my story gave you some hope and light, if not, seek help. There's no shame in asking for assistance. The reason we have so many people in this world is that God knew we would need each other since he can't be with us physically. God bless.

Echoes of the Mind

5

Shall I Have One More Dance?



By: Elia Apetroaie

Yellow vs. Blue



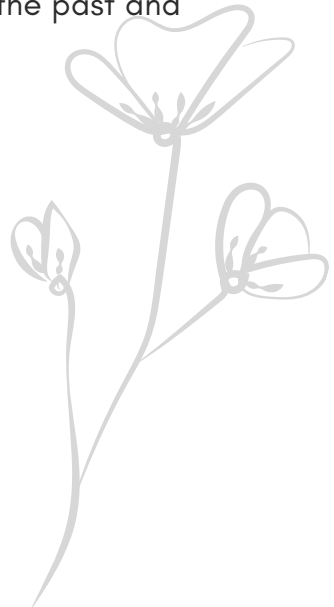
Imagine your life changes in a couple of moments, and everything familiar to you becomes, all of a sudden, an unknown territory. The perfect ground for anxious and depressive states!

When your life takes a wrong turn, and you find yourself incapable and hopeless. Countless thoughts came through my mind. Will I ever be able to dance again? I was so stupid, I should have never done that! I can't even go to the bathroom alone! I only make stupid mistakes. I should have known better!

This is the story of a dancer that broke her ankle at a dancing festival while walking, not even while dancing.

The moment I found myself on the hospital bed, I knew I had two choices. I could either sit there (it's not like I could have moved or anything), feel sorry for myself, blame myself, and torture my mind with persecutory thoughts, or I could accept the situation as it is. I wasn't able to go back to the past and change the events.

So, what did I choose?



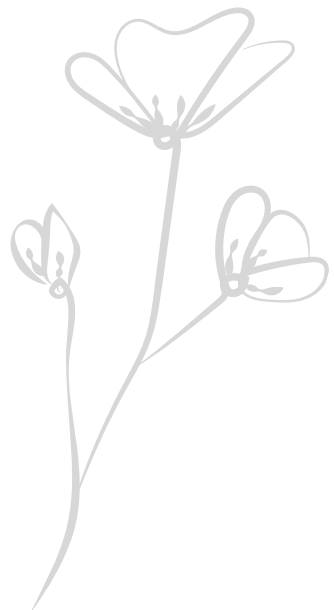


I accepted. I deeply accepted my condition and life's course. I knew that if I wanted to recover properly, I didn't only need medications and doctors around me, but a healthy spirit and a clear mind. So, I took this event as a lesson. I was always busy, always going from one place to another, rarely taking time for myself, to rest and stand still.

This was life, telling me to STOP. Take a break, and reevaluate your values, your beliefs, and your goals. *"What is this event teaching you?"*

Whenever life says STOP, it may be a great lesson of self-love, PATIENCE, and trust.

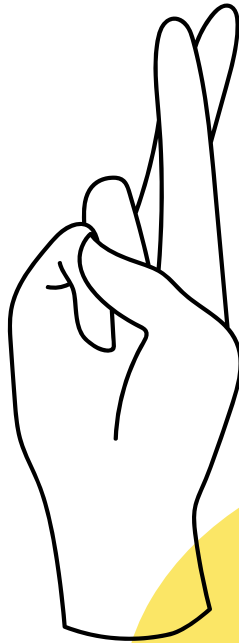
It's the time to go back to yourself and cultivate self-compassion, rather than blaming and throwing stones.



Yellow vs. Blue

6

My Sun Did Rise Again



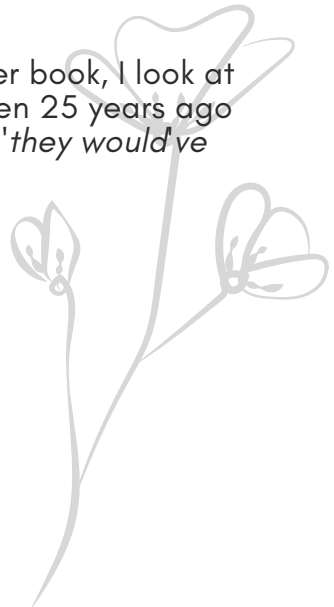
By: Anonymous



Losing one of your parents is tough, especially when you're very attached to them. 5 years ago when I was 19, I lost both of my parents in a car accident. Suddenly, I was alone in the middle of the way, not knowing where I should go. I was in trauma. I didn't talk or even cry for like two months. I thought I will never laugh again, but then, I had a wake-up call when my friends told me I didn't attend the final exams and that I'd become 50 kg of misery and depression. I used to be the funny, clever young man who always helped his friends when they went through difficult times.

They managed to convince me that my days shouldn't be spent like this and that my parents wouldn't have liked to see how I look now. I did let myself cry, a lot, and decided I should go back to life! From my friends to the activities that make me happy, I decided that I should get busy living, working, studying, and traveling; life still got a lot of beautiful events in what is coming.

Now holding my second-best seller book, I look at the picture hanging on the wall, taken 25 years ago of this beautiful couple, and I smile "*they would've been proud*".



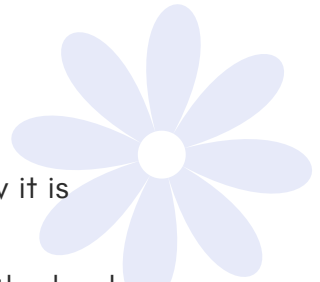
Yellow vs. Blue

7

Homesickness or Depression?



By: Ismirelda Forst



Hi there, I would like to tell you how it is moving to an unknown place.

I grew up in the Netherlands. The Netherlands, as small as it might be, is considered a multinational country. I have seen this from the moment I entered elementary school; I shared the classroom with people from all over the world. This made my stay in the Netherlands fun and interesting.

Given my cultural background and living in a country as diverse as the Netherlands, I thought moving to an unknown place as an adult was going to be more or less easy. For that reason, I decided to move to Mexico after my studies. I desired to learn Spanish in Latin America and get to know a different culture.

Arriving in Mexico, I was surprised by its beauty and the kindness of the people; this gave me the confidence that I would adjust easily. However, it did not exactly go as I planned. Living in a country where you do not speak the language fluently can be difficult. Living in a country without your friends and family can be lonely. This, I experienced in my first few months living in Mexico. On top of that, going through a pandemic made the situation more difficult than it was.

It was not easy to go out and meet new people. It was not easy for me to always communicate with others in Spanish. For this reason, I was often alone. During this period, I started to miss my friends and family because it is always good to have people around that care about you and with whom you can spend time. Adjusting to a new lifestyle was more difficult than I expected, despite the international life I was accustomed to in the Netherlands. But was this just homesickness or something more?

Yellow vs. Blue



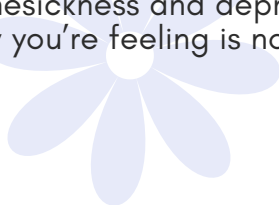
In Mexico, on the days I felt most lonely, I would wish to change the situation but instead of taking action, I just kept feeling sorry for myself. I wanted to give up on my journey and move back to the Netherlands.

These negative thoughts grew stronger and stronger and I would find myself isolated from the few people that I had around me; as ironic as it sounds. This made me realize that maybe it wasn't just homesickness. Because, why would I push away the people that tried to make Mexico my home? Next to that, I was surrounded by many great opportunities, but instead of feeling good about them, I lost hope in everything.

The turning point came when I saw that I was no longer taking full advantage of the beauty of Mexico. Instead, I would be crying or staying depressed at home. I realized this was not how I wanted to spend my time in Mexico.

So, how did I turn things around? First of all, I started to be grateful for the opportunity I had and the people that I got to know in Mexico. My life might not be the same as it was in the Netherlands, but any new situation begins with baby steps. I started to appreciate what I had and to enjoy it to the fullest. I had to learn that life is not about having the greatest quantity of friends around you but it's about quality.

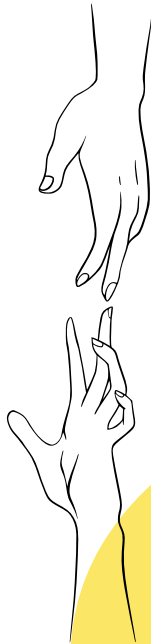
Life will not be what you want it to be until you can exactly describe how you want it to be and start taking action today. There exists a fine line between homesickness and depression. Don't let others tell you how you're feeling is nothing.



Echoes of the Mind

8

You Helped Me Overcome My Fear



By: Anonymous

Yellow vs. Blue

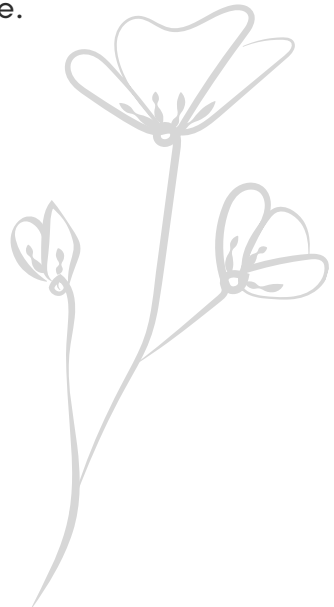


Three months ago, I decided to take a step I wanted to take but my fear always prevented me. I expressed my feelings to a girl I had a crush on.

At midnight, I opened my phone. I started to write a long message describing my feelings towards her. I told her everything: the first time I liked her, how that connection happened, why I am sending her this, why I can't hide my feelings anymore.

I sent it, and straight away, I found that something noticeable happened to me. I was scared to death.

I felt I made a terrible mistake. *"she will hate me"*. When her friends know, they will make fun of me. My family will offend me. Was that harassment? *"How bad am I, shame on me,"* My conscious mind told these avowals. Years of traumatic memories were flashing in my head, and I felt like carrying my head, heavy. I couldn't endure these dreadful feelings. I thought this would be the end of me.



Yellow vs. Blue



Fortunately, since I started my mental healing path months ago, my therapist taught me what to do in such situations. Thus, I was able to pause for a while, reflect, and try to figure out exactly why I felt. When I told that girl that I like her, I was doing an unusual thing for myself. It wasn't just I was afraid of getting rejected. This cycle of agony didn't occur because of that, but because I manifested my humanity. I had a traumatic childhood. people were treating me harmfully, I was three years old when I had my first sexual assault, and at seven years old, I was bullied for the first time by schoolmates.

Those events made me always feel inferior and ashamed. I never thought I deserved to be loved. When I expressed my feelings, I rejected these beliefs about myself. I devastated them and added new facts that Identify who I am. "I have feelings." I wrote in my journal. "I have the right to love, worthy of a love like everybody. My opinion, voice, and feelings matter, no one has the right to make me hide them again."

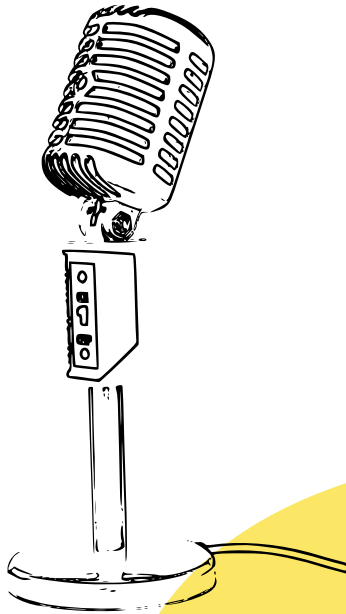
Till this moment, I didn't hear anything from her, we didn't meet again, but, whatever life will bring, I am grateful to her, because, without her, I couldn't have defeated that conflict. It paralyzed me for years. She helped me to revive my wrecked humanity again.



Echoes of the Mind

9

It Is Never Too Late



By: Marwa Soliman

Yellow vs. Blue

Crochet is an amazing process of creating beautiful projects from only yarn and a hook! 4 years ago, I turned my passion for Crochet into a profitable business and founded my small brand.

When I finished every project, it gave me quite a good feeling, especially after seeing my knitting and crochet projects on others wearing them!

Unfortunately, life does not always go as we want. My fingers started tingling. I felt severe pain in my right wrist, and then my thumb lost all its strength. I had surgery on my right wrist because I had wrist ligament relaxation. After the rehabilitation, I discovered that I could not hold a hook anymore, not even a pen! *It was a real shock.*

I became depressed because I lost my job and my passion in life. I felt helpless, unable to do anything, and I isolated myself. My family supported me and they reminded me of the many other blessings that I have, and that this is not the end of the world, that I can find many other jobs that do not require the use of my hands, but I have to find my passion in life again, and do the thing I love.



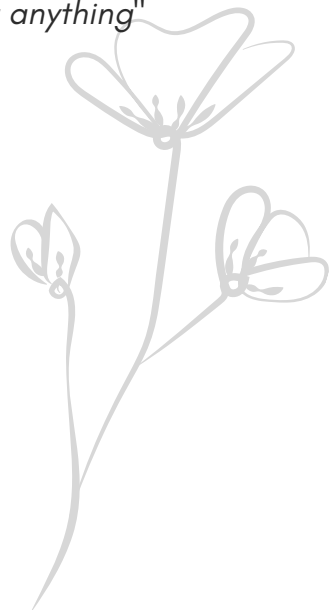


My friends always told me that I have a nice voice. I decided to make a career shift into voice-over, but thinking about changing careers makes me feel paralyzed and overwhelmed with self-doubt. Making a transition is undeniably scary, disruptive, and difficult.

My best friend advised me to enroll in a voice-over course and told me "It's never too late to start a career in voice-over". Fear around career shifts sucks, but I don't have to let it control my life. Instead, I used it to develop resilience, courage, and grit. I attended the course, it was amazing, and the instructor encouraged me a lot and told me that I have a beautiful voice, and he offered to work with me on an audio project.

It was a great opportunity to enter the voice-over field and since then my life has changed and I have been working as a freelance voice-over actress.

"It's never too late to start anything"



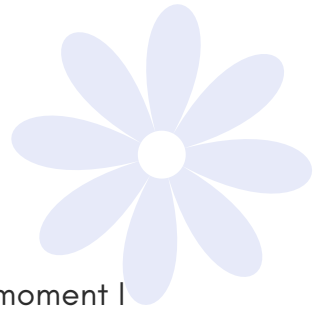
Yellow vs. Blue

10

Trapped But Warmed



By: Ahmed Abdelraheem



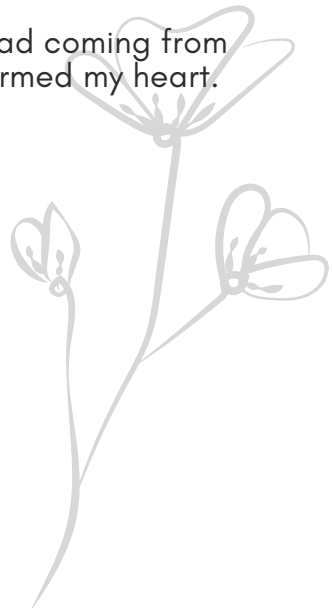
A minute after midnight, that's the moment I realize I am extremely confused. I come out from my small window to a bigger window, watching the last steps of tired passersby laden with muffled cries of pain.

I sip my coffee, the light breezes made it cold as depression made my soul. I look lazily to the sky, sometimes I see a moon, sometimes I see fog, sometimes I see hope, sometimes I see nothing, and while time passes, the breezes are drawn more and more between the folds of my soul.

I wonder why everything in my head should be so complicated?! Why does my mind like the game in which the headache always wins? Why am I trapped in this depression?! My coffee is about to finish.

The minute hand of the clock is approaching a step forward, and my mind has not yet paid attention.

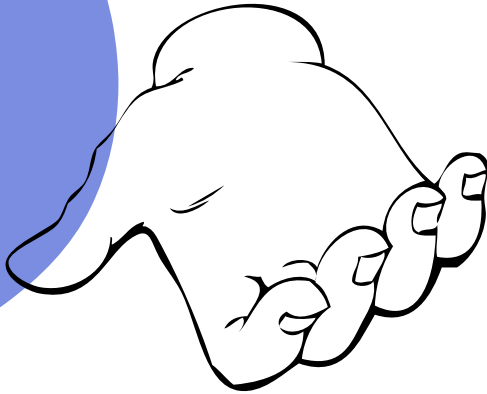
But that smile that crossed the road coming from that child watching me curiously warmed my heart.




Yellow vs. Blue

11

Don't Stand-By, Help



By: Anonymous



I had a college roommate who liked to dress in Lolita style daily. In my memory, she was this super cool girl with such a unique dressing taste, and I had always admired her courage for being and staying unique until I heard that she attempted suicide during her last year of college. Luckily, she was rescued in time, but she is still in recovery from depression, almost 5 years after the accident.

I learned later that she experienced school mobbing during the years we were studying together. The mobbing reason was easy but ironic: she was dressing differently. Back at the time, I did not think that much of the reason why she did not have any friends, but since we had different hobbies I never tried to listen to her stories when she sometimes rushed back to her room and cried. I thought she had someone to talk to.

Until today she still needs 24/7 watch by her parents. At our age, we should be out searching for our goals, for our lives, and seeing the world, Instead, she could only stay indoors and paint. This was all because she had a different style of clothing.

If only I had even once tried to ask her why she cried. If only I had even once paid attention to her when she came back to the dormitory with red eyes. I did nothing. I was so convinced that cool people like her would never need my help, not even my concern.

Sometimes, people don't show their vulnerable sides at all. But at least what we could do is stop being judgemental, and start with just a simple conversation: "Hi, how are you?"

Yellow vs. Blue

12

Subconscious Mind



By: Toqa El-Deeb



No matter how much I read about it, never have I imagined how our subconscious mind could surprise us.

I had just finished college. I was so busy trying to figure out what to do with my life that I didn't do so well in my social life. I was not able to communicate my thoughts and feelings clearly to anyone, not even to myself. I neither had the time nor the courage to figure out how I felt at times. I was so harsh on myself; I didn't know how to accept myself for who she is. Maybe family comparisons were the origin of that, maybe it's social media, I am not sure. At that time, my fiancé encouraged me to start taking life coaching sessions.

During one of my sessions, my coach gave me an exercise that involved a lot of self-reflection and recalling certain memories. Although I found it challenging and somewhat intimidating, it helped me in so many ways. It made me realize that I held so many memories inside of me, that I thought I forgot about or that I buried too deep that I lost access to. I felt like I started to find the missing pieces of the puzzle, put it all together, and build a better picture of myself. Awakening such memories helped me understand who I am, what I want, and what drives me.

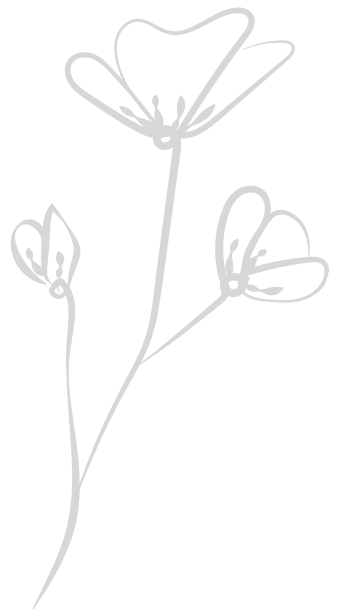
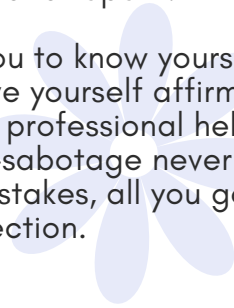
I became the master of my mind after it took control of me for years. This was embodied in unexplainable anxiety attacks and whirlwinds of intrusive thoughts that used to paralyze me.

I started to learn my patterns of thinking, and how to better communicate my needs and boundaries. I even learned about my limiting beliefs and how to rewire my mind to think in a way that serves me better.



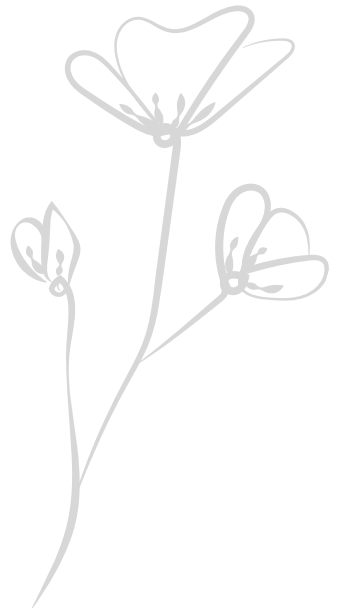
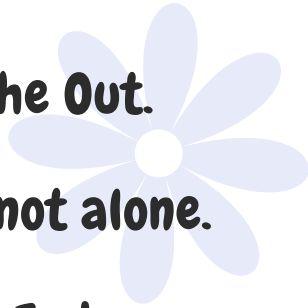
I turned from being a person who utterly hates themselves and hugs the blame for everything that goes south, to a person who empathizes and even loves themselves immensely! I started to believe that I am a good person, I am just a vulnerable human and can make mistakes. Society taught me to act like "a good girl" and "do the right things", but this made me lose sight of who I am, and be so scared of making mistakes. In fact, mistakes are your best teacher, as long as you learn from them and repent.

In the end, I encourage you to know yourself better. Journal, talk to someone, give yourself affirmations in front of the mirror, and seek professional help if need be. Be kind to yourself. Self-sabotage never solves a problem. When you make mistakes, all you gotta do is be sincere and do self-correction.





Breathe Out.
You are not alone.
The End.



Yellow vs. Blue

Dear reader,

We hope you have enjoyed reading *Echoes Of The Mind* as much as we enjoyed creating it for you. Your support and enthusiasm for this book means a world to us. We want to take this opportunity to thank you for joining us on this journey. Your engagement and feedback has been invaluable to us, and we couldn't have done it without you.

We hope that this book has reminded you of the importance of self-care, self-compassion, and self-acceptance.

We also hope it has provided a moment of escape, a moment of reflection, or a moment of connection. As well as a sense of hope, empowerment, and belonging.

A big thanks to all our wonderful contributors who shared their stories and writings. We are grateful for you!

Spacial thanks to MCW Global for funding this project and helping us to bring it to life!



With gratitude,

[Yellow vs. Blue Team]



If you would like to support Yellow vs. Blue in its vision and mission to promote mental health, you can make a donation through our Paypal account (paypal.me/yellowvsblues).

Every contribution helps us keep our work alive and support more youth around the globe with their mental health journey.

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Echoes Of The Mind is an anthology of mental health stories, crafted by young and gifted voices from various regions, who have encountered comparable challenges. This book presents a diversity of views on managing mental health struggles and aims to serve as a self-care resource. It empowers readers to self-reflect and voice their innermost thoughts and struggles in a safe and supportive space. The book aims to offer readers new insights and strategies for coping with their mental health challenges. The ultimate goal of Echoes Of The Mind is to support young people in their journey toward mental wellness by promoting the significance of speaking out and fostering a safe environment for them to do so.

