



## **A Mind of Your Own: What Women Can Do About Depression That Big Pharma Can't**

*Kelly Brogan*

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**A Mind of Your Own: What Women Can Do About Depression That Big Pharma Can't** Kelly Brogan  
Named one of the top health and wellness books for 2016 by *MindBodyGreen*

Depression is not a disease. It is a symptom.

Recent years have seen a shocking increase in antidepressant use the world over, with 1 in 4 women starting their day with medication. These drugs have steadily become the panacea for everything from grief, irritability, panic attacks, to insomnia, PMS, and stress. But the truth is, what women really need can't be found at a pharmacy.

According to Dr. Kelly Brogan, antidepressants not only overpromise and underdeliver, but their use may permanently disable the body's self-healing potential. We need a new paradigm: The best way to heal the mind is to heal the whole body.

In this groundbreaking, science-based and holistic approach, Dr. Brogan shatters the mythology conventional medicine has built around the causes and treatment of depression. Based on her expert interpretation of published medical findings, combined with years of experience from her clinical practice, Dr. Brogan illuminates the true cause of depression: it is not simply a chemical imbalance, but a lifestyle crisis that demands a reset. It is a signal that the interconnected systems in the body are out of balance – from blood sugar, to gut health, to thyroid function– and inflammation is at the root.

*A Mind of Your Own* offers an achievable, step-by-step 30-day action plan—including powerful dietary interventions, targeted nutrient support, detoxification, sleep, and stress reframing techniques—women can use to heal their bodies, alleviate inflammation, and feel like themselves again without a single prescription.

Bold, brave, and revolutionary, *A Mind of Your Own* takes readers on a journey of self-empowerment for radical transformation that goes far beyond symptom relief.

## A Mind of Your Own: What Women Can Do About Depression That Big Pharma Can't Details

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# **From Reader Review A Mind of Your Own: What Women Can Do About Depression That Big Pharma Can't for online ebook**

## **Kim Ryan says**

This book is a watershed moment - an actual Doctor of Psychiatry who says "Pills don't cure depression". I thought depression was due to a chemical imbalance in the brain. I don't know WHY I have always thought this was true; a point the author makes by way of explaining that the U.S. is one of only 2 countries on Earth that allow direct-to-consumer advertising. This is what the makers of Prozac want us to think - despite the fact that not one study in 60 YEARS has proven this to be true.

Dr. Kelly Brogan considers depression to be a symptom, not a diagnosis. And it's a symptom that we should be listening to, not masking with pills that temporarily make us feel better/different/"happy". I argue, is it really "better" if you can't replicate it without the pill? As someone who watched a family member die from acute drug reactions due to being over-prescribed by disconnected doctors, I applaud Kelly Brogan for looking beyond the prescription pad, into what's really going on inside the depressed woman's body and mind. This is a book that goes beyond "fun to read" and into "need to read" territory.

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## **Utopía L. says**

En resumen: Un libro bien documentado y contrastado con conocimientos y estudios médicos que te hará replantearte todo lo que hasta ahora creías saber sobre la depresión y los antidepresivos, así como la forma en que nuestro estilo de vida influye en nuestra salud física y emocional.

Nota: 4/5

Lee la reseña completa en mi blog: <http://utopiainthemoonlight.blogspot...>

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## **Seawitch says**

I agree with the premise that depression is complex and pills only one narrow approach. But I cannot agree with the radical approach that the author than proposes including her stance against birth control and vaccines.

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## **Jennifer Jaynes says**

I've been trying to get off SSRIs for years. I think I'll finally be able to.

Everyone should read this book.

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## **Katie says**

After reading this shocking book its clear to see that Brogan is a paranoid, cherry-picking conspiracy theorist, with an irrational fear of the FDA and 'Big Pharma'. She utilises non-credible resources which lack peer-review (often citing websites she's PAID to write for herself) to bash Western medicine, while presenting a narrow, limited "cure" for depression that in no way takes into account personal circumstances or challenges. Brogan promotes unnecessary fear and fallacies about Western medicine, the same field from which she profits, by offering her clients expensive services with only anecdotal evidence of her successes, while not once having published any of this data or any papers on the subject.

Brogan liberally promotes pseudoscience and the majority of her 'holistic' therapies have NOT been proven to be effective (otherwise we would call them 'medicine') and often involve costly lifestyle changes that would be impossible and impractical for someone truly suffering from depression to undertake.

Read with caution.

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## **Bonnie says**

Quite fascinating and enlightening. For a nonfiction it is very readable and practically helpful. I had already given up dairy for two weeks before starting it and had seen a remarkable improvement in my allergies. Now after reading this book I'm taking my allergy testing more seriously and have given up wheat and sugar and flouride toothpaste and am drinking filtered water. And am going to bed at 10:00 pm. I'm very thankful for this book. Different people will get different things from it as she covers a multitude of problems with antidepressants, statins and many other medicines.

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## **Angie Jones says**

This book quite literally changed the trajectory of my family's health. I stumbled across this book seeking answers to help my daughter who was struggling with anxiety, depression and an eating disorder. The fact that Kelly is a trained psychiatrist who has rejected drugs as a viable therapy to treat her patients intrigued me. The anti-depressant that our daughter's psychiatrist prescribed wasn't working so she just kept upping the dose until our daughter self-harmed. At that point an anti-psychotic drug was additionally prescribed, allegedly because she was too underweight for the prescribed SSRI drug to work properly. This med is one that is usually prescribed for schizophrenia. (our daughter is not schizophrenic). This med didn't do anything either so the doc upped the dosage on it too. At that point, our daughter self-harmed again while becoming almost catatonic in her demeanor. What was going on!! Instinctively I knew the eating disorder was not going to be cured until the underlying depression and anxiety were dealt with yet not one of her professional doctors seemed concerned with getting to the root cause of these, they only wanted to throw more drugs at the symptoms. As I read Kelly Brogan's book, I became aware that our experience with her psychiatrist and other doctors was the norm, not the exception and the more I read, the angrier I became. The very people we were trusting our daughter's life to were causing more harm than good. Much to the doctors' stern objections, we pulled our daughter off her meds and began feeding her a limited version of Kelly's protocol. Due to the complications that an eating disorder brought to the equation, we didn't want to give her excuses to restrict food so we didn't completely limit sugar and dairy, but our family went gluten-free, organic, grass-fed beef and purged the house of most of our processed food, chemical cleaners and commercial beauty supplies. In

addition we started taking supplements and herbs. Within a week or two, we began seeing glimpses of our formerly happy, joyful child. We are now about two months in on this new lifestyle, our daughter is generally happy and at peace, she is gaining weight, her father and I have lost some excess weight, we both have less aches and pains, less desire for sugar, breads, alcohol and caffeine. My blood glucose levels are in a healthier range and we all have more energy and vitality. I am convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that natural, organic eating and living that this book advocates is the key to helping my daughter overcome her depression and anxiety without drugs and really for everyone to live a healthier, more vibrant life. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has that still, small, but persistent voice in their heads that is telling them drugs aren't the answer and there has to be a better way. There is, we are living it, amazed at the difference in our family and will never go back!

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### **Karen says**

I borrowed this book from the library and found it so chock full of good information that I'll actually now buy a copy to refer to regularly. We've long been hearing about the growing body of evidence connecting gut health to brain function. This book continues the theme in an accessible way and provides clear advice on lifestyle and dietary changes you can make to improve your mental and physical health. I'm not on any SSRIs myself, but will certainly be giving some of these suggestions a try in the hope of lifting my mood and my energy levels (for starters).

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### **Laura Luzzi says**

This woman is a walking medical encyclopedia. There is a lot of material in this book. I was attracted to this book because I have had medical problems for 3 years and no doctor has yet to know what exactly is the answer to my problems. Everyone dreams of a magic pill to quickly feel good, but good health doesn't work that way as this book points out. I do believe in the gut-brain dynamic. That's the very 1st thing I am going to do - go on a probiotic supplement. This book has a lot of valuable information. Good health doesn't happen by accident. You have to believe your worth it.

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### **Sarah says**

If you have ever taken medication for anxiety or depression, if you're currently taking them, or if you're considering taking them, I strongly urge you to read this book. I have been struggling with anxiety and depression for about 18 months now, and it is one of the most physically and mentally painful and debilitating things a person can experience. But I am here to tell you, and so is Dr. Kelly Brogan, that anti-depressants are not always the answer. Despite what pharmaceutical companies would have you believe, we don't actually know how the brain works and the effects anti-depressants have on it. These are essentially chemicals that we think help, despite the fact that many people who are on anti-depressants never actually "get better." If these medications are supposed to work, then why are more and more people taking them but not becoming happier people? The answer is most likely this: chemicals aren't the answer, because overall health and wellness is. Essentially, avoiding toxins and chemicals heals us. A balanced diet and exercise are essential. We are created to eat natural foods that nourish our bodies. How can we expect our minds and bodies to function efficiently if what we are feeding it is so processed it's essentially no longer even food. Please, friends, do yourself a favor and find out what you can do to give yourself a chance to defeat anxiety

and depression without buying into the idea that you have a disease that can be cured with chemicals.

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## **J says**

This book is a rollercoaster of "oh wow that's really interesting" to "oh wow, what a nutjob".

I liked the beginning where she dissects big pharma and how they play with studies to sell pills, the analysis of the placebo effect. There's some good stuff in there like how the average depressive episode lasts up to 13 weeks, depression is the mind channeling all its resources to cognition to figure something out, and SSRIs can actually diminish the benefits of exercise on improving mental mood (so healthy people telling someone with depression to try exercise isn't actually that helpful).

There was also an interesting discussion on how SSRIs actually push your brain in the wrong direction (as seen by newer studies on serotonin uptake enhancers) and that the benefit may just be because your brain is fighting so hard to account for this.

I'm in agreement that the newer theories that inflammation in your body can cause depression as a side effect are interesting, especially the studies on mice where changing gut bacteria changed their mood (which I've seen referenced in several books now).

But then she lost me, when she went into the deep-end anti-vaxxer, anti-gmo, organic everything, detoxification ("take an loumfa and rub it over your body every two days") etc. Somehow this is a more extreme version of *The Microbiome Diet: The Scientifically Proven Way to Restore Your Gut Health and Achieve Permanent Weight Loss*. It made me appreciate how sane and balanced *I Contain Multitudes: The Microbes Within Us and a Grander View of Life* and *My Age of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind* were.

I liked the part where she talked about how hand sanitizers think your skin, kill your external friendly bacteria and make you more susceptible to getting sick.

But it's kind of interesting about how all the discussion of placebo effect and scientific rigor that was applied to "bad" big pharma in the beginning isn't also applied to the "good" holistic approaches. Isn't there also a placebo effect going on with holistic approaches?

It also reminded me of the theory of capture from *Capture: A Theory of the Mind* where he suggested that one cure from when the mind becomes captured on an unhealthy idea (depression, addiction, anxiety) is replacing it with a different capture. In this case Kelly Brogan seems to be trying to create an obsession with a "natural/holistic" lifestyle. An honestly if you tried to follow all of the advice in her book you would be so focused on your food and environment that there'd be no way you'd still have time for rumination.

I think it's telling that all the selected quotes for the book are in the parts in the beginning where she takes down big pharma. But her arguments of what to replace it with aren't nearly as strong.

So if depression isn't a disease, then what is it? As I briefly mentioned in the introduction, depression is a symptom, a vague surface sign at best that doesn't tell you anything about its root cause. Consider, for a moment, that your toe hurts. Any number of things can cause a toe

to hurt, from physically injuring it to a bunion, blister, or tumor growing inside. The hurting is a sign that something is wrong with the toe, simple as that. Likewise, depression is the hurting; it's an adaptive response, intelligently communicated by the body, to something not being right within, often because things are also off in our environment.

In a seminal 2006 paper, “Do Antidepressants Cure or Create Abnormal Brain States?” Moncrieff and her coauthor write: “Our analysis indicates that there are no specific antidepressant drugs, that most of the short-term effects of antidepressants are shared by many other drugs, and that long-term drug treatment with antidepressants or any other drugs has not been shown to lead to long-term elevation of mood. We suggest that the term ‘antidepressant’ should be abandoned.

Six decades of study, however, have revealed conflicting, confusing, and inconclusive data.

That's right: there has never been a human study that successfully links low serotonin levels and depression. Imaging studies, blood and urine tests, postmortem suicide assessments, and even animal research have never validated the link between neurotransmitter levels and depression.

In other words, the serotonin theory of depression is a total myth that has been unjustly supported by the manipulation of data. Much to the contrary, high serotonin levels have been linked to a range of problems, including schizophrenia and autism.

According to Andrews, when patients on SSRI medication improve, it appears that their brains are actually overcoming the effects of antidepressants, rather than being helped by them. The drugs are interfering with the brain's own mechanisms of recovery.

He and his colleagues challenge the whole notion of relapse, suggesting that when you feel terrible upon stopping an antidepressant, what you're experiencing is withdrawal—not a return of your mental illness. And when you choose the medication route, you're actually extending the duration of your depression.

To really grasp the fact that depression is not a disorder primarily rooted in the brain, look no further than some of the most demonstrative studies. When scientists purposefully trigger inflammation in the bodies of healthy people who exhibit no signs of depression by injecting them with a substance (more on this shortly), they quickly develop classic symptoms of depression.

fully 99 percent of the genetic material in your body is not your own. It belongs to your microbial comrades. These microbes not only influence the expression of our DNA, but research reveals that throughout our evolution microbial DNA has become part of our own DNA. In other words, genes from microbes have inserted themselves into our genetic code (mitochondrial DNA being the prime example) to help us evolve and flourish.

Dietary change is step one, because we can change the microbiota dominance within seventy-two hours of simple changes to eliminate potential triggers to the immune system and rebalance the gut flora.



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## Ardyth says

Ugh. How to review a book that says so many things you want to support, but for all the wrong reasons???

I'm absolutely, positively, 100% in favor of attempting a lifestyle-based cure for what ails you. Start there. \*Especially\* if you are American. Our nation has gone completely off the rails when it comes to medicating. This isn't even remotely at question.

I simply suggest that you choose a different guide.

I borrowed this because it was recommended on the A Delectable Education podcast, and an interesting conversation began amongst a group of us who listened to the episode.

Before you read any further: be aware that there are no serious, professional book reviews to be had. Everything is from bloggers, and I struggled to find more than a handful of negative or ambivalent discussions. I have no issue with bloggers -- yay for the internet! -- but not a single review from a reputable source? Not one? Not a negative review, not a positive review -- just no mention? Hmmm.

Brogan's version of this appears to be that it's because she speaks truth to power, and everyone is too afraid of Big Pharma to provide anything but a negative review. ("I like to think for myself." is one of her less subtle uses of rhetoric to help us feel like we, too, are one of the awakened few) But where are those negative reviews planted by Big Pharma?

I'm more inclined to believe there are no serious reviews because the book reads like a long series of long blog posts, and the arguments presented for her lifestyle plan are poorly formed... in some cases, even internally inconsistent. (For the record, other books have proposed medication-free lifestyle improvements, and received at least a couple of reviews. See, for example: *The Depression Cure*, which was reviewed by *The Guardian* and *NPR*)

### **Problem #1: Brogan's plan is based on evolution, but she doesn't understand evolution**

Whether \*you and I\* believe in evolution or not is irrelevant for the moment. Her entire position is based on the idea that humans co-evolved with other earthly lifeforms and therefore have an ideal niche to fill.

The problem I have is that Brogan does not actually understand evolution.

I subscribe to the idea that the body doesn't make mistakes after millions of years of evolution.

^^ This isn't how evolutionary theory says it works. There's no agent in evolution to make mistakes. More importantly: according to the theory, evolution never ends. There is no point at which any species attains perfection, not even in relation to other species. (For more details on evolutionary theory, best to read an evolutionary theorist instead of me... maybe *The Magic of Reality: How We Know What's Really True*, it's one of Dawkins' less belligerent products.)

Again... it doesn't matter whether \*you\* believe in evolution. What matters is that her entire position is based on a foundational misunderstanding of the science she claims as its root and logical source.

## **Problem #2: Brogan opposes \*all\* hospital care**

I don't have much else to say about this. Either you think medical intervention is always a terrible idea, or you don't.

Drug-based medicine makes you sick. I will go so far as to say that hospital care makes you sick

## **Problem #3: Bait and Switch**

On her website, and in early sections of the book, Brogan refers to her solution as "a few easy changes to her diet and a combination of other lifestyle strategies" <-- note that word, easy.

Then: "We collaborate, and they work hard. They work hard at a time when they feel they can't even lift a finger."

Well -- and I'm sorry to be a smarty pants here -- either it's easy, or it isn't. My guess is that it is not, because if it were then everyone would be doing it.

## **Problem #4: Brogan is selling her online program for US\$ 397**

I know because these podcast listeners got a \$100 discount.

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I could keep going, pointing out some internal inconsistencies and the fact that her belief in personalized medicine doesn't extend to a refusal to sell supplements to us online through her online pharmacy-that's-not-a-pharmacy. But I'm already tired of talking about and thinking about this woman, her book and the careful marketing which targets a vulnerable group of women: women who not only feel depressed, but are nervous and confused by scientific jargon. They're easy pickings, and she's picking them.

So I've abandoned this book at 50% -- having read very thoroughly her "scientific" defense portions, and started on the specifics of her diet / lifestyle plan. But I don't need to read about her lifestyle plan, because I know that the basis for her argument is faulty.

Please **DO** address your diet and lifestyle before going on medication. This is wonderful advice.

Please **DON'T** use Kelly Brogan as your guru for it.

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## **Suzie Hunt says**

This is one of the worst 'pseudo-science' books I have ever read. She criticises 'Big Pharma' for using studies with small sample sizes and for failing to control for placebo effects -- but then the studies she posts as sources for her truly outrageous claims are so completely flawed it's hard to know where to begin in criticising them.

I was hoping for a book that explained some of the science behind depression, and had some of the studies of the recent links between the microbiome and mental health. What I got was an angry, controversy theorists' rantings about the evils of antidepressants, antibiotics, statins, vaccines and painkillers.

Her healing 'plan' seems to be a version of whole30/paleo, with some meditation and exercise thrown in. Though, disclaimer, I quit this book 40% of the way through because I just couldn't take any more.

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## **Jennifer says**

Lots of what seems like good evidence for the link between gut health and mental health, but I am left with a lot of questions about how solid her research is. The author's credibility is strained by what I think are some pretty over-the-top claims about lack of effectiveness of pharmaceuticals such as statins (new article in the NEJM just validated their effectiveness in preventing heart attack and stroke, even for those who are not high-risk), toxicity of vaccines (hello? haven't we already been through this?!), lack of necessity for antibiotics (have you ever been treated for cancer, lady? no? perhaps you should've qualified the population for whom holistic immune-boosting supplements are adequate/appropriate). So while my own experience suggests that the gut-brain link is legit, I will be seeking other sources to validate her claims.

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## **Sara Strand says**

I have to start by saying I am not a health nut. I am not that person who believes essential oils and meditation is going to help me. I'm far too impatient and not gullible enough for that. I'm just not. I really struggled with this book because it feels like it's coming almost from the anti-vaxxer group who will tell you that these things are going to ruin you and you're better off eating an apple or something. I should also note that I'm not that person who doesn't trust her doctors. Yes, I get incredibly frustrated at how over the top charged I am for things and how I sometimes feel like nobody is actually listening and processing what I'm saying but just going through the next step they know to do out of their medical book. Like a gut feeling means nothing anymore. I have found it to be incredibly frustrating to deal with doctors when you have depression because it can really go one of two ways: 1. They tell you that you're probably fine, try to relax and get more sleep, eat better and things will work out, or 2. They automatically fear for your safety and call you suicidal.

Just because some days I don't want to be here doesn't mean I'm suicidal, folks. I'm responsible enough to not toss in the towel and jump off the bridge, I have real guilt over not being enough and that doesn't make me want to give up, instead I'm constantly trying to be more.

Anyways.

I know that sleep, exercise, and good food will help me. But it doesn't do it all. It only gets me to a certain point and then I'm stuck and can't figure out what to do. I would really LOVE to get eight hours of solid sleep every night. I would. It is actually one of my old age perks that I'm looking forward to. Instead, I have three, soon to be four, children and a husband who snores so loudly neighbors can hear. It's not like I can kick him out, or move him to another room, I can hear him everywhere. I can't wear ear plugs because they hurt my ears. I feel like people dole out these suggestions to be helpful but they aren't practical and don't work. So as I'm reading this book I found myself getting angrier and angrier.

Then you tell me to avoid body lotions and tap water.

No, I'm not joking.

Because if I could afford filtered water from the Swiss Alps, I absolutely would. I'm just grateful I'm not in Flint, Michigan with lead contaminated water at this point.

I fully agree that a lot of people who have depression can really improve greatly by changing things in their daily lives such as diet, exercise, and sleep. 100%. Then I know some of the healthiest, physically fit people who are on the brink of suicide because they have a legitimate chemical imbalance in their brain yet refuse to take medication. I'm not even saying medication is that great, your options really are terrible and if you're lucky to find one that makes you not totally numb to even good feelings, you're doing well... until those lovely side effects kick in, of course.

I could go on for days about this but I won't because you don't want to hear it. I have to give this book 2 out of 5 stars. Huge props to the medical information and how it's organized for this book. It's clear the writer is highly educated, has extensive experience, and is incredibly passionate about this topic. As someone who has struggled my entire life with anxiety and depression in varying degrees, I can tell you 100% this was not helpful for me. I am that person who refuses to take medication because I don't like how I feel on it and I hate having to be on something to be well, but I also recognize that a lot of the strategies in this book are things I have done for years and they do not help me. They could help you tremendously, but for me they only offer slight improvements and never for long term. But that's the thing with depression- no two people are the same. What works for one won't necessarily work for the next and that's what makes it complicated and tragic, really.

I do recommend this as a read if you suffer from depression or know someone who does, if you are interested in alternative options other than what big pharma can, or just want to increase your healthy lifestyle in general. You don't have to have depression to find this book helpful, there is certainly a lot of information that carries over into other aspects of your life that could be beneficial for you.

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