

## **A Revolutionary Mental Health Question**

Transcript of Charles Eisenstein's interview with Marcus Pibworth

<https://charleseisenstein.org/video/a-revolutionary-mental-health-question/>

Like when you say, these things have their place - I'm not sure if we're talking about psychiatric medication or talk therapy and stuff. If you take for granted the conditions that cause us to be miserable and insecure and anxious, if you take all that for granted as unchangeable, then you do need these things to keep society running.

A more revolutionary question is, do we need to take these things for granted? How can we change them collectively? And then there's also, how can I change them even just in my own life? How can I create conditions where I feel more of a sense of belonging and stuff? To some extent that's impossible without changing the entire society, but to a larger extent it is possible to foster more intimate connection with people and nature.

There are things that we can do that have been shown, even like garden therapy. Get people in the garden and a lot of the mental illness goes away. Get them into nature, get them into participation in some social project. Of course, if you're feeling really depressed, you probably don't even want to do that, so something has to intervene to bring you from that universe of despair and depression into a universe of participation and connection. And I think that a good first step for a sane mental health system would be to intervene by changing conditions, rather than by giving pills that allow conditions to be maintained.

Most of the support structures are there to help you become a functioning member of society as it is. And if society as it is needs to change and your purpose in this world is to help serve that change, then the support structures will not be your friend, and we need alternative support structures that understand that society has got an illness and to adjust you to that is to make you ill too. And in that viewpoint, depression could be a symptom of health. It could be a symptom of the soul's rebellion, because with depression it's kind of a withdrawal from life. You just want to stay in your room and not do anything. You don't want to participate. So non-participation is a good thing. I mean suppose we're in Nazi Germany and you got a job at the death camp and then start feeling depressed and it was like "Man, I don't want to go to work, you know", and then the psychiatrist comes and says, "Oh, the reason you don't want to go to work is that you are depressed and here is some medicine to make you once again happy to go to work."

Actually, your depression was healthy. Not that we live in such an extreme situation but in a way, the normal functioning of society is bringing incredible suffering to humans and other beings. So I think that it is kind of healthy to not want to participate in the life that's

offered to us. So I think that any approach to mental health that doesn't recognise that, that doesn't acknowledge that non-participation could be a good thing and that sees health as being well adapted to the way things are - that's got a problem.