

# Why Depression Is Not A Curable Illness

By: Aaron Davidson

**It may now be safe to say that depression is an epidemic.** In the United States alone, major depression is found to afflict 6.9%<sup>[1]</sup> of adults and 9.1%<sup>[2]</sup> of adolescents. Why is this? Why are so many people suffering from depression? More importantly, what can be done about it?

## Is depression curable?

Before we tackle that question, let's pause to look at body types for a minute. Most of us agree that there are different body types, each type benefitting from particular kinds of foods or even exercise. Eat for your body type, says one book; exercise for your body type, says another. There's plenty of popular and even scientific opinion on why knowing your body type and adapting your life style to respect your type can increase your sense of health and wellness.

But what if there are different *brain types*, too? Doesn't it stand to reason that if some of us were born with one body type or another, then we might all have brain types that are distinct as well? Moreover, what if a certain brain type is predisposed to depression?

One group that undeniably fits this category is writers. **Historically, writers have suffered disproportionately from depression compared to those in the general population.** Is it possible that the types of brains that both process the world *and* shape it through language may also be particularly vulnerable to depression? **Maybe the very gifts that power the minds of the world's great wordsmiths also prime them to struggle with their moods and their mental health.**

Dr. Nancy C. Andreasen, M.D. Ph.D. of Iowa Carver College of Medicine has done extensive research on individuals classified as creative and also suffering from mood disorders. In one study, she selected 30 writers from the attendees of the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop, and 80% of them suffered from some type of mood disorder.<sup>[3]</sup> In another study, she writes, "**The capacity to be creative, to produce new concepts, ideas, inventions, objects or art, is perhaps the most important attribute of the human brain . . . .** Neuroimaging studies also suggest that highly creative individuals have more intense activity in association cortices when performing tasks that challenge them to 'make associations.'"<sup>[4]</sup>

Nancy Andreasen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl5BQfHy13E>

The implications of Andreasen's work are fascinating. **Clearly, writers' brains come with both a gift and a challenge.** The gift is obviously the writing itself, which emerges with complexity and beauty. But the challenge is the moodiness, the depression, the anxiety that often go with a writerly mind and temperament.

## So what's to be done to reconcile the gift and the challenge?

Dr. Fernando Gómez-Pinilla, Ph.D., a neuroscientist who studies the relationship between brain function and brain nourishment, made the following statements in a paper published by the National Institutes of Health: **“It has long been suspected that the relative abundance of specific nutrients can affect cognitive processes and emotions.** Newly described influences of dietary factors on neuronal function and synaptic plasticity have revealed some of the vital mechanisms that are responsible for the action of diet on brain health and mental function.”

He also points out that **“the brain consumes an immense amount of energy relative to the rest of the body.** Thus, the mechanisms that are involved in the transfer of energy from foods to neurons are likely to be fundamental to the control of brain function.”

Finally, he argues, **“Diet, exercise and other aspects of our daily interaction with the environment have the potential to alter our brain health and mental function.** We now know that particular nutrients influence cognition by acting on molecular systems or cellular processes that are vital for maintaining cognitive function.”<sup>[5]</sup>

For less- or non-creative brain types, communication often boils down to the sharing of information rather than the creation of it. Rather than organizing words creatively, we simply pull from the bank of knowledge we already have. **Writers, however, are constantly in the process of fashioning something from nothing—organizing meaning from chaos, essentially bringing new worlds into being.**

Back in 1998, Dr. Norberto Cysne Coimbra M.Sc., Ph.D., said the following about the brain: **“Your brain cells need two times more energy than the other cells in your body.** Neurons, the cells that communicate with each other, have a high demand for energy because they're always in a state of metabolic activity. Even during sleep, neurons are still at work repairing and rebuilding their worn out structural components. Most demanding of a neuron's energy, however, are the bioelectric signals responsible for communication throughout the nervous system. This nerve transmission consumes one-half of all the brain's energy (nearly 10% of the whole body's energy).”<sup>[6]</sup>

**Imagine the fuel needed for the creative brain!** Writerly minds essentially need brain food in the same way athletes need enhanced calories and nutrition.

## What kind of brain food are we talking about?

Maybe we can answer this question by first identifying how certain nutritional deficiencies affect the brain.

**Correlation Between Mental Illnesses With Mineral Deficiencies or Imbalances**

	Chromium	Copper	Iron	Iodine	Potassium	Magnesium	Molybdenum	Phosphorus	Selenium	Vanadium	Zinc
ADHD		X				X		X			X
Anxiety					X	X		X	X		
Aggression			X		X						X
Bipolar Disorder			X	X	X	X	X			X	
Depression	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
PMS		X	X			X					X
Schizophrenia		X	X	X		X			X		

Dr. David Thomas gathered [research from 225 studies](#) conducted over the past 60 years, **showing how specific mineral deficiencies or imbalances in our diet correlate with various mental illnesses.** He then went on to show how **the minerals our brain needs to function optimally are no longer found in sufficient quantities in the food that we eat**, a problem attributable to modern farming practices and the soil depletion

that has occurred since 1940.<sup>[7]</sup>

A quick review of Thomas’s research suggests that **depression may not necessarily be an illness so much as a symptom of what we are or are not feeding our brains.** In the same way that we would never refer to an undernourished athlete as “ill” when he collapses after a marathon, we ought to think twice before labeling a mineral/nutrient deprived creative thinker as “ill.” **Perhaps the Creative’s condition can be addressed with proper nutrition rather than treated as an illness that needs to be cured or fixed.** Bottom line, creative people have unique brain types that need additional supplementation of vital minerals.

**So, all you creatives! Up to the dinner table, right? Won’t eating right fix it all?**

Maybe not. The truth is that no one can successfully eat their way to perfect health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. **Nutrient-poor soil likewise results in nutrient-poor food.** Moreover, since we’re suggesting that creative types may actually need more nutrients and minerals for optimal brain health than the average person, they would likewise require excessive amounts of food. But since the minerals aren’t there, consuming food in unhealthy amounts would not only be unrealistic, it would also create a host of new problems.

Which is why micronutrients can be so powerful. In the last 14 years, [26 major studies](#) by such doctors as Dr. Charles Popper, M.D. of Harvard’s Medical School, and Dr. Bonnie J. Kaplan, Ph.D., of the University of Calgary, have all shown that **micronutrient supplementation resulted in an overwhelming improvement in the mental condition of the studies’ participants.** The micronutrient supplement, known as EMPowerplus in Canada and [EMPowerplus™ Q96](#) in the U.S., used in these studies contains a blend of 36 vitamins, chelated minerals, and amino acids **balanced specifically for the brain.**

If you find yourself suffering from what has traditionally been labeled a mental illness, you may in fact have a creative brain with stronger, more pronounced nutritional needs. Evidence really does point to the fact that **a creative brain needs more nutrients the same way a gifted athlete needs additional calories.**

Avail yourself of the only micronutrient effective enough that it has been studied more than any micronutrient product on the market.

**Reclaim the gift that is yours: a creative brain whose potential has no limits.**

[1] National Institute of Mental Health website. Major Depression Among Adults. 2012.  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/major-depression-among-adults.shtml>

[2] National Institute of Mental Health website. Major Depression Among Adolescents. 2012.  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/major-depression-among-adolescents.shtml>

[3] Andreasen NC. The relationship between creativity and mood disorders. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*. 2008;10(2):251-255.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181877/pdf/DialoguesClinNeurosci-10-251.pdf>

[4] Andreasen NC. A Journey into Chaos: Creativity and the Unconscious. *Mens Sana Monographs*. 2011;9(1):42-53. doi:10.4103/0973-1229.77424.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3115302/>

[5] Gómez-Pinilla F. Brain foods: the effects of nutrients on brain function. *Nat Rev Neurosci*. 2008 July ; 9(7): 568–578. doi:10.1038/nrn2421  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2805706/>

[6] Dr. Norberto Cysne Coimbra M.Sc., Ph.D., Laboratory of Neuroanatomy and Neuropsychobiology, Faculty of Medicine of Ribeirão Preto of the University of São Paulo;  
<http://learn.fi.edu/learn/brain/carbs.html>

[7] Thomas D. [The Mineral Depletion of Food Available To Us As a Nation \(1940–2002\)](#) – A Review of the 6th Edition of McCance and Widdowson. *Nutrition and Health*, 2007, Vol. 19, pp. 21–55.

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