

# There Are No Silver Bullets

Brent Blonigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Brown Books Publishing Group Introduces *There Are No Silver Bullets*, a Celebration and Study of the Messiness of Life

*Debut author and successful businessman Brent Blonigan sheds light on his personal struggles with depression, his conservative Catholic upbringing and the pharmaceutical industry.*

DALLAS – Milli Brown, founder and CEO of Brown Books Publishing Group is proud to announce the publication of Brent Blonigan’s memoir, titled *There Are No Silver Bullets: My Family, My Depression*.

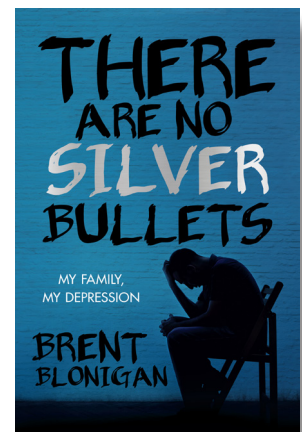
In this deeply personal memoir, successful businessman and entrepreneur Brent Blonigan recounts his lifelong battle with depression. Through self-reflection and personal anecdotes, he examines the impact family, culture, religion and society have had on his life – and evaluates their impact on who he is today. From his complicated relationships with both his mother and father, to high school shenanigans and trying to fit in, to the corruption found in the churches and schools in his small Minnesota town that shook the foundation of his Catholic upbringing, Blonigan offers an unexpected inside view of how the puzzle pieces of his past helped him come to terms with who he is today.

*There Are No Silver Bullets* sheds light on one man’s depression. Blonigan has never told his story in full until now. However, he understands the value for both he and his readers in sharing his story about depression. While he still finds it difficult to talk about his feelings and experiences, he now shares what he has learned in the hopes it will help others. Reflective questions at the end of each chapter offer self-examination as a tool readers can use to consider the internal and external influences that may have contributed to their own emotional reality.

“This book is a source of hope and comfort to those fighting the demons of depression by revealing that they are not alone,” says Brown. “As an incredibly successful businessman, Blonigan is opening up an important dialogue that reveals CEOs, entrepreneurs and business owners suffer from depression too. Success is not a safeguard against these types of struggles.”

“Depression is a very real subject,” says Blonigan. “But there are no silver bullets. There is no magic solution that will make your problem go away in one fell swoop. Rather than looking for silver bullets, I would like to see more emphasis put on sharing the narratives of those who are afflicted – narratives like the one in my book. I hope it encourages people to share their stories as well and continue this conversation.”

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Brent Blonigan

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"I knew my middle name was Michael, and Michael was a bad-ass angel. It was my goal to become that bad ass."

Brent Blonigan is a successful business man and entrepreneur, originally from a small town in Minnesota. Growing up in that small, Catholic town shaped him, for better and for worse. For most of his life Blonigan has struggled with depression, and has also faced problems with addiction.

Now knowing that he is not alone in his suffering and struggles, Blonigan seeks to provide help in a world that is increasingly over-medicated by the pharmaceutical industry. Blonigan believes that true healing and redemption occur through sharing stories and learning from our experiences as well as others'. He believes that no silver bullets exist that can cure the illness that is depression, and hopes to contribute to the dialogue on depression and its many side effects with his book, *There Are No Silver Bullets: My Family, My Depression*. By allowing conversation to flow, and sharing our thoughts, theories and personal testimonies, we can come closer to understanding – and treating – this debilitating disease, and in a much healthier way.

Blonigan now lives in the Dallas area with his wife and family, and he strives to be a light and exist as a sign of hope to those who are confused and suffering due to this mental illness.



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## Q&A WITH THE AUTHOR

### Brent Blonigan

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**Why do you think you felt such an intense need to figure out the origin or reason behind your depression? Have you found the answers you've been looking for?**

I always felt different. I have had labels to contend with all my life. Depression can be used as a label too, and it was for me. These labels led to a lot of shame. They also did and still do suggest that there is something not right about the person. If there is something wrong with you, then it is normal to want to know what the cause is. Our environment looks to fix. The usage of pharmacology is an attempt to find relief. But, the presentation that these medications are magic bullets is simply wrong.

We look to fill the void we feel. We look for completion. We need nurturing. In seeking solutions, we attempt to find immediate gratification. It was and is apparent that there are no easy fixes. At least, there are none, externally, that are available. We become frustrated. I became addicted to many things in this search for wholeness and relief, including therapy.

My contention is that depression has been with us since the beginning of time. So, what has changed? With my depression, I found that searching for the root cause is pointless. However there is a point in sharing the story. We all have stories and relaying our own makes us feel connected to others. In sharing these stories, the process of healing begins.

My goal in sharing my story is to simplify what is complex. The complexity of treating depression is more apparent today than ever before, as there is too much industry associated with it. We live our story and then we die. I would like to go out like the Native American, whose stories and myths are passed down from generation to generation. It is not about our own personal glory but about our legacy of helping others in the community.

**You believe depression is an addiction to passivity. What do you mean by that?**

I firmly believe that I have been addicted to passivity. In fact, I debate whether or not this is true for many others. In talking and sharing stories, fear seems to be a common denominator. You become numb. Feelings of sadness, hopelessness and fear can compel people toward various addictions. The state of depression is a result of circumstances or situation. Often the situation is an addiction to passivity. On some level, we are all addicts. We all have a wounded child inside that wants to be taken care of.


Have you ever noticed that getting a depressed person to move can be challenging? Most do not want to move because there is an element of fear freezing them. In a society that is increasingly complex and all about instant gratification, the consequence of heightened addiction and/or depression is rather predictable. Unfortunately, the



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treatment industry cares less about the story than about immediate results. Is that good? I think not because we do not put enough effort in encouraging people to stay still and think for themselves. In fact, instead of leading us toward a solution, I think the treatment industry may be contributing to the problem.

**Do you think depression can be hereditary? Is this something you worried about after you became a father?**

I can accept the fact that there may be some hereditary factors. Perhaps, it is true that depression is more likely to be diagnosed in children whose parents also suffer from depression. But then again, is that hereditary or is that the result of their home environment? I do not know and I think many professionals, if they are honest, do not know either.

I think society permeates the notion of genetic predisposition in such a way that the individual feels some kind of need to maintain the inherited behavior. Treatment has become an unnecessarily complex and big business where insurance coverage is paramount. Those who understand addiction, understand that the addict is the ultimate narcissist. The environment associated with external fixes, affect that type of conclusion.

In answer to the second question about whether I was and am worried about being a father and passing this on to my daughter, the answer is yes. She does have some of the same characteristics as her father – both the good and the bad.

**Although you were raised Catholic, you later became alienated from the church. However, you've continued to lead a rich spiritual life. How has your faith in God helped you throughout your journey?**

The Catholic Church is the largest power structure on the planet. There is no doubt that religion, Catholic or not, is about power and control. Its very foundation thrives on perpetuating fear. A result of that fear is often a compulsive need to observe rules that may or may not be natural. They are man-made rules.


Once labeled obsessive compulsive as a child, the “should’s and should not’s” that were imposed had a very negative impact on me. Being exposed to priests who were sexually abusive also had an impact. The resulting effects were profoundly negative and sadly, destroyed many people in my family.

With that being said, in my own spirituality, I still value certain aspects of Catholicism such as good work and duty to others. A relationship with a Higher Power is a personal one. In knowing that we are one with God, we come to realize that the universe we hold within is as large as the external universe. It is that internal universe where our solutions can be found. With prayer and meditation, miracles are probable. What’s more, they do not need to be explained. They just are.

**You've said that you feel your relationships with both your mother and father played a role in your depression. In what ways is your parenting style similar or different to that of your parents?**

To say that I have not been affected by my parents would be wrong. I was affected by them both positively and negatively, and I bear no animosity toward them. They have no control over my current situation. While I expected more from them, I did not get it. Sure, they could have done better, but other circumstances in my life could have also been better. With what they had, they shared. If you do not have something, it cannot be shared. My approach





to parenting is different from that of my parents. I do not compel my daughter to go to church. The decision to attend church was her own. I make a conscious effort to not make choices for my daughter that she is not comfortable with. As parents, we have limits, and I have always taught her to be her own person while being respectful of other opinions and beliefs.

There is no book that teaches you how to be a perfect parent. Making mistakes is a part of being human – and parenting is no exception. I am not the perfect parent, and I have made some mistakes. I have faith in the expression, “if you mean well, then well happens.” And I think my positive relationship with my daughter is the perfect example.

**Although you didn’t necessarily have a close relationship with your late father, he did pass on to you his love of books and the written word. In what ways did you feel his influence as you wrote this book?**

For many reasons, I honor my father. He was a very good listener, and many people went to him for counsel. While we did not agree on topics associated with being Roman Catholic, he was an honorable and nice man. He was a librarian with a deep appreciation for books. Knowledge comes from the written word, but knowledge also comes from experience. Rather than interact in father-son activities, he often preferred to read in isolation with his books.

I did not grieve when he died. My grieving was delayed because I was preoccupied with my own issues at the time. Writing this book has helped me work out my complicated relationship with my father and deal with my grief over his death. And I think if he were here now, he would be proud of me.

**We live in a society where everyone and everything has a label, and assumptions are made based on those labels – whether it be medical, political, religious, etc. Why is this dangerous? How can we improve the way we look at the world, those around us and ourselves?**

I did not speak until I was six years old, and as a result, was labeled autistic. Consequently, my parents were told that I would amount to nothing. That label set up a framework where I was coddled unnecessarily. My mother unconsciously, became a “smother mother” – there’s another label.


Labels are for cans and manufactured products. Applying a label to a person is inappropriate. The rationale of the label is often for monetary reasons. In order to secure “help,” both the medical and insurance industry need labels. The label is a form of control. It causes unnecessary shame. The reality of healing comes from the fact that we are all wounded. It is also reality that wounded healers are far more effective than those that do not have that recognition or experience.

**Why is it important to engage in open and honest conversations about mental health?**

When you define mental health, you would have as much difficulty defining it as you would in defining depression. Those that choose to define mental health may be part of the problem creating the stigma around it. A famous psychiatrist was quoted as saying that “insanity is sane reaction to an insane environment.”

When we stop labeling people, would this be a start? Maybe. One thing is for certain, we are all here for a purpose. The search for purpose is a process and not an end result. Helping others means getting to places





that may be ugly. I think that we have to understand that helping others is often not fun or happy, and it isn't turning a sow's ear into a silk purse. You have to be able to meet people in their place. That means getting out of our boxes. Doing these types of things does not happen in a vacuum. That can be scary but very rewarding. If we all took more time to listen to each other and be less self-involved, we would find that we are very much alike.

**What do you hope readers ultimately take away from *There Are No Silver Bullets*?**

The title says it all. There are no silver bullets. There are no magic solutions that will make your problem go away in one fell swoop. The book is kind of a blunt assessment of who I am and what my belief system is. It is not intended to be an indictment. It is intended to bring about some thought concerning a subject matter that is dear to me.

Depression and addiction are very real subjects. Both have always been present in our society. The only change is that the approach to both has become more commercialized. Rather than looking for silver bullets, I would like to see more emphasis on the narratives that come from those who are afflicted – narratives like the one in this book. I hope it encourages people to also share their stories and continue this conversation.



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## EXCERPTS FROM

### *There Are No Silver Bullets: My Family, My Depression*

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“I realize that no book is going to lift one’s depression. What makes a difference is what you do with the book. There is great value in putting your story into words and sharing it with someone who will listen. It is a fact that one’s story or narrative is sacred and that its sharing is paramount for both the writer and the reader. Depression is not an intellectual reality. It is an emotional, mental condition that I am convinced can only be relieved ultimately through person-to-person interaction, with a professional, a close friend, or possibly even a fellow depressive. Sooner or later, you learn that what works are not the antidepressants (which numb you) but the sharing and the talking (the expressions of your feelings). I still find that hard, but I have tried to write down what I have learned. I hope it helps.”

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“Depression does not just ‘happen’ to people. It is something that builds up, something that ebbs and flows, something that, if left unchecked, can take you over the edge.”

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“Rather than taking ownership of my own sadness and anger, I would act out on others. While these other parties may have contributed to my feelings of shame, I came to the eventual realization that I, with the help of God, was able to process my feelings. Rather than fighting, I started accepting. The Serenity Prayer has had a tremendous impact on me.”


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“I was looking for someone to take these feelings away. I had a delusion that God should take this away. I was angry about being depressed;



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I felt a lot of self-pity and hatred. The only way out of depression is taking an active role in your own recovery. I had to first understand what was happening and then accept it. Acceptance involves some kind of action that moves beyond doing nothing and just being passive. In therapy one is told that depression is anger turned inward. If we accept the anger and use it constructively, knowing that it is all right to be scared, then things seem to move.”

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“If depression is black, then my anger was red. Rage is addicting. Rage is a drug in itself. Anger is the result of not having your needs met. It allows the void to be filled and is a demonstration of the ego. I learned to use rage to manipulate the environment around me. When the rage would leave, the emptiness and the void of the depression would come back.”

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“A life without some type of internal conflict is probably a boring life. A life that avoids all conflict does not allow for growth. It would seem that conflict could, indeed, be something that helps create. If you attempt to change or to take a risk, you should feel no shame in failure. The shame would come from not making the attempt to get up and try again.”

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“I am here to tell you that being depressed has nothing to do with dying. When you are depressed, it is all about living. I cannot think of any experience that makes me feel more alive than depression. When I feel the pain and misery associated with a major clinical depression, there is no question. I know I am alive.”

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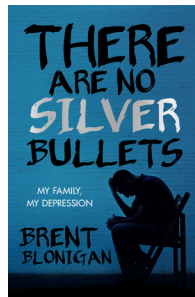
“I still deal with brokenness, but I can say that I do not feel depressed. I feel that I have put the puzzle together—for now. Will I ever be seriously depressed again? I hope not. But if that is the case, we will deal with it then. We will pick up all the pieces and reassemble them once again.”





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## Synopsis

In this emotional memoir, Brent Blonigan recounts his lifelong battle with depression. Through self-reflection and personal anecdotes, he examines the impact his family, culture, religion, and society have had on his life. He is bold, honest, and forthcoming as he presents his experiences and evaluates their impact on who he is today.

*There Are No Silver Bullets: My Family, My Depression* sheds light on one man's depression, along with his experience of the medical system's shortcomings in diagnosing and treating it. Reflective questions at the end of each chapter offer self-examination as a tool readers can use to consider the internal and external influences that may have contributed to their own emotional reality. Blonigan provides sympathy and support for those fighting the demons of depression, abuse, and adjustment disorders, along with coping strategies that he has found helpful—even lifesaving—over the years.

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