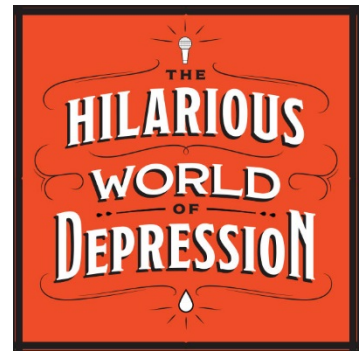


Episode #PLACEBO: Vol. 2 of Listeners' Favorite Coping Songs

Introduction: It's the Hilarious World of Depression, Placebo Edition. Another music placebo edition this time out. I'm John Moe, and on our last episode we heard songs from our listeners that use to help deal with depression. The go-to songs that certainly don't solve all the problems but can get you through a rough stretch, helping you feel a bit more understood, a bit more hopeful. We heard from so many people that we are doing another batch this time around. Here we go.



Jennifer: My name is Jennifer, and I live in California, and I have anxiety and depression. I'd say looking back on it now, my go-to song for that past few years has been "[Don't Worry Baby](#)" by the Beach Boys. The Beach Boys got played a lot around my house as a kid, so it reminds me of a time when things were a little easier, and the 60's sunshine melody with Brian Wilson repeatedly telling you everything will turn out all right. It kinda helps me calm down when things aren't so good.

Katelynn: Hello, my name is Katelyn, and I am from Indiana. My go-to depression song is "[I Wanna Get Better](#)" by the Bleachers. I always go to this song because it's more upbeat than the usual sad stuff that makes me feel like, yeah, I will just stay in bed all day. Plus, it's way better having the phrase "I want to get better" playing in my head over and over rather than what else my crappy brain is capable of coming up with.

Megan: My name is Megan, and I live in Lawrence, Kansas. My favorite depression song is "[I Wanna Get Better](#)" by the Bleachers. I have a high-functioning chronic depression that multiple people in my life ask me "Don't you want to get better? Don't you want to be happy?" So this song is really amazing to scream at in your car when you're having a bad day. I do, I want to get better.

Anne: My name is Anne, and I am from Minnesota, and I am so happy that you extended the call for the songs that help with depression. A couple of years back, I was listening to an NPR podcast, featuring Ryan Bingham. Something about his voice is really comforting to me. His song "[Nobody Knows My Troubles](#)" really brightens my mood. It talks about living with troubles, and in the third verse, he talks about checking into the lost and found. And when he says "what do you know, my baby come for me," it's as if there's this positive turning of his world. And I can't sing along with smiling inside.

Emmaline: Hello, my name is Emmaline Ash, and I am currently a New England transfer living in Salt Lake, Utah. My reliable coping song is "[Ripple](#)" off the album *American Beauty* by the Grateful Dead. There's just something about this song. Its serenity, its simplicity. I'm not sure exactly. Whenever I hear it, it immediately comforts and uplifts me. I think that in a gentle sort of way, it reminds me of the universality of the intangible we all face. Everyone is on their own path. Everyone has to make their own meaning. But it's the universality of that fact that connects us all.

This song simultaneously acknowledges the meaningless nature of our lives and the huge significance of our lives. I'm not sure if this makes any sense or if anyone else could relate. But all I know is that this song helps me through the hard times and makes me believe in the beauty of life.

Faya: Hi, my name is Faya, and I am from Bangkok, Thailand. When I wake up in a down mood and start negative self-talks and ruminating, when I realize I'm having a down mood, I would immediately turn on this song "[Shake it Off](#)" by Taylor Swift and especially the African hipster version by Alex Boye and Changing Lanes. The lyrics help me perfectly shake off my rumination, but this specific version especially helps me because seeing groups of diverse people dancing, who don't have perfect bodies and who aren't all white, gives me the life to join them dancing. Hence, I get off my bed.

Well, after a year of feeling down and debilitating, I went to see a shrink for the first time two months ago. And probably being diagnosed with MDD helps me to realize that some of the things I've been struggling with daily are just the symptoms of Clinny D, which can be managed with tricks like music. Unfortunately, in my country, we still have limitations of human resources of mental health professionals like therapists and psychologists. So tips shared on the internet by people who go through the same thing have been really helpful to me. Fortunately, here in Thailand, we do have access to many generic drugs to deal with depression and mental health conditions. So I am able to afford my weekly medications with only a dollar or two.

Susan: I'm Susan Oliver, and I live in Portland, Oregon. And there's this song by Pink [called "Raise Your Glass."](#) It pisses me right the hell off. My depression, instead of making me sad, shows up and robs me of all of my emotions. So when depression hits, I feel nothing for days, just nothing. So with my music, I need it to give me my emotions back, even if it's anger. And this song is an angry anthem for people like me. People like me who are all wrong in the right ways. And Pink says that that's okay.

Jean: Hello, my name is Jean, and I'm from Columbus, Ohio. My coping song is "I'm Going Down" by Bruce Springsteen off the album *Born in the USA*. This is a breakup song with a sense of humor. Bruce knows the relationship is going down, that there's nothing he can do to make it better, and that he is going down with the sinking ship. This is the way depression looks to me. I can see it coming from a mile away, and I know it's going to be bad, and I just have to ride it out. I think there's definitely some comfort in shared misery, but Max Weinberg banging away at the drums and a Clarence Clements solo never hurt either. Bruce ends the song with a "oom boppa ee bop," and you know he is going to be okay. And you know, that helps me remember that I am going to be okay, too.

Elaine: My name is Elaine, and I am from St. Louis, Missouri. In the early 90's when I was in my early 20's, I had been suffering from depression for a few years. I hadn't told anyone and felt very, very alone. Very scared. When I first heard this line in the song when she sings, "Something's gone dead inside my head. There's nothing but fear," it rang so true to me, and for the first time in the longest time, I felt less alone. And it really didn't matter if that was exactly what she was singing about or not at all that she was singing about. In my mind, I owned it as such, and it was a great source of comfort. I did find out years later, reading interviews with her and her memoir, that she did indeed or does suffer from clinical depression.

Todd: Hello, my name is Todd McKinley, and I live in Indiana. And the song I turn to most when my depression is getting the better of me is "[Unthought Known](#)" by Pearl Jam. I especially love a live performance of it from June 30, 2010. I was immediately drawn by its energy and how it builds and builds and opens up into a solid jam. I found that energy empowering, and I appreciate the lyrics for being both genuine and hopeful. Eddie Vedder acknowledges the darkness of self-doubt in the first part of the song but works towards something more hopeful and encouraging later on. After listening to a lot of melancholic music for a long time, I find a song like this one to be very helpful during the dark times.

Katie: My name is Katie, and I am from Panama City, Florida. The song that I've used to cope with my bipolar depressive episodes is They Might Be Giants' "[Birdhouse in Your Soul](#)." This song is relentless in its upbeat weirdness. And during times when I've been suicidal or all the best parts of me have been muted, this image of a personified bird night light has reminded me that I am the world, still contained by all of that wonderful, bizarre energy this song reflects.

Brooke: My name is Brooke Hesfeller, and I live in Brooklyn, New York. My depression coping song is "[Hard Candy Christmas](#)" from the musical *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. I first discovered this song when I was 15, which was also about the time that I experienced my first serious bout with depression. I would listen to that song for hours and hours and hours on repeat. One day, I decided to take a walk. I put on my headphones and cued up the song, and at some point, I realized that the only way I was going to end my depression was to end my life. So I came up with a plan to do just that, but when I was about to carry out that plan, I realized that I still had on my headphones and that "Hard Candy Crush" was still playing. A tiny voice in the back of my head said "this will be the last time you'll be able to hear this song."

A minute later, a larger voice said, "But I love this song." It's such a small thing, but the idea of not being able to hear my favorite song was enough to tamp down my suicidal impulse long enough to have me walk home and ask my parents for a therapist. So now I listen to that song to remind myself that I've hit rock bottom before and made it to the other side and that it's just like the song says, "I can barely get through tomorrow, but I won't let sorrow get me down."

John: Thank you to all of our listeners. I think music is the closest thing we get to real-life magic in our world. Some chords get played, some words get sung, and then something happens inside of you. It doesn't make any logical sense, but wow, does it work. It's so fascinating to me how different ways people use to employ music. Folks use happy music to tell themselves that there is a lighter, maybe sillier place somewhere, even if they can't get to it right away. Sad or even bleak music can help you feel understood and maybe less alone, and that's kind of comforting. I think of how many of the songs are about people who are in a tight spot – in a pickle, but they can reflect on it, they have a perspective and somehow get through it because they're singing about it. I don't know, this is the only world we have, right?

This is the only life we have to live. It sounds cliché, but we are all in it together – me, you, the Beach Boys, the Grateful Dead, Pink and the original Broadway cast of the *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. We have each other, and we have music, which is nice. But remember, music is not the same as medicine. And as great as musicians are, they don't do the same things that qualified doctors and therapists can do. So don't treat music as a substitute for getting actual treatment. If you need to see somebody, go and see somebody. For more information and resources on mental illnesses – how to talk about it, how to start conversations about it – go visit makeitok.org

The Hilarious World of Depression is a production of American Public Media. Our producer is Chrissy Peas. Our executive producer is Kate Moos. A special thanks to Nate Toby. Our technical director is Cory Schrepple. Our guests this time were recorded by themselves. Rhett Miller wrote and performed the theme song "Pagliacci" that you hear on this program. You can find out more about him at rhettmiller.com. If you need help right away, confidential help is available for free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK). We heard from so many people from these music episodes – more people than we could ever include in one, two or a dozen

podcasts, so my apologies that we couldn't get to everyone. Lots of great ideas out there. Lots of wonderful songs. Speaking of hearing from people, you can write to the show at thwod@americanpublicmedia.org . You can also find us on Twitter @thwofd. We've received a lot of emails since opening our email mailbox a few weeks ago, and we haven't had the chance to respond to all of them. There are a lot. But we've read every message, so thank you, and we will respond as soon as we are able. We'll see you next time around. I'm John Moe. Bye now.