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Media Kit

Escape from Dark Places: Guideposts to Hope in an Age of Anxiety & Depression

A motivating story of triumph over anxiety and depression, this mother-and-son journey offers practical steps toward mental and spiritual health that will empower young people to find purpose and hope in the postmodern Age of Anxiety.

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AUTHOR'S VISION

Author's Vision

Vision Statement

Create a world where communication bridges the gap between generations, igniting a deep, mutual understanding that mends the societal and spiritual disconnects at the root of the twenty-first century rise in anxiety and depression, enabling a stigma-free world where those with mental health disorders are viewed no differently than those with chronic physical illnesses.

Mission Statement

To provide the tools that will empower teens and young adults, together with their parents, grandparents, mentors and church leaders, to be catalysts for cultural change that can transform the attitudes impacting the spiritual and mental health of the rising generations and stop the growing trend of anxiety and depression.

The Press

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Millennials In Crisis – Mental Health Eroding!

New Bestseller delves into one Mother’s struggle to understand and help her Millennial son.

Denver, Colorado, June 13, 2016—Mental illness, and anxiety in particular, is increasing among Millennials and their Generation Z successors at an alarming rate. *Escape from Dark Places: Guideposts to Hope in an Age of Anxiety & Depression* focuses on the rising levels of anxiety and depression in young people and what parents, grandparents, mentors, and church leaders can do to help.

Escape from Dark Places shares a mother’s journey to find answers to her son’s anxiety and depression. Her discoveries offer a new framework for action that will empower moms and others often sidelined from the recovery process to help young people manage their mental disorders and thrive. The honesty by which each shares their individual experience enables a view into dark places from both generational perspectives. The journey for answers reveals how the loss of tradition and the massive societal, political, and spiritual change initiated by globalization and the technology explosion created the disconnects that threaten the mental and spiritual health of upcoming generations.

“Adolescents and young adults are struggling,” states author Ambra Watkins. “Like my son, they seem confident, but in reality they are lonely and isolated, they do not have a strong sense of self, they are easily frustrated, and they have unrealistic expectations of themselves and those around them. I wrote this book because it pains me to stand by and watch them struggle when there are practical steps we can take to improve their emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.”

The author states the hard facts, which reveal the astounding statistics and attitudes

surrounding mental disorders and the nonmedical use of prescription drugs. Then, relying on her expertise in training and change management, she proceeds to explore the controversial questions: What causes anxiety and depression? And how do we reverse the trend and stop the stigma? She makes a convincing case that living in the twenty-first century postmodern world has a tremendous impact on health, and the argument elicits a call to action that is both convincing and motivating.

“A riveting, revealing, and relevant approach to unlocking the paradoxes of the millennial mindset. The book is an inspiring and insightful tool that compels you to seek and share better ways of living a healthier and more fulfilling life.”
— G.D. Cannon, Juris Doctor (JD), Master of Laws in International Law (LLM), and College Football All American.

Ambra Watkins is a Boomer mom intrigued by the Millennial generation. She is concerned for trophy-kids whose high expectations crashed into the reality of an economic downturn and for parents who are trying to help them find purpose in the postmodern world.

Author and speaker Ambra Watkins is a training and change expert with an MA and a PMP certification who provides tools for intergenerational dialogue that empower young people to triumph over anxiety and depression. Find out more about Ambra and her book *Escape from Dark Places* at ambrawatkins.org, or email her at ambra@ambrawatkins.org.

Ambra Watkins is available for interviews.

Escape from Dark Places: Guideposts to Hope in an Age of Anxiety & Depression is available at your favorite bookstore or online at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Books-A-Million, and Tattered Cover.

Book preview: www.amazon.com/dp/Bo17RAZ

Radio Interview

With Viki Winterton on Write Now

Date: June 9, 2016

Listen at ambrawatkins.org/press-and-appearances or on Write Now Radio:

- Blog Talk Radio: <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/writenow/2016/06/02/author-ambra-watkins-on-write-now-radio>

With Doug Foresta on Creating Change

Date: December 7, 2015

Listen at ambrawatkins.org/press-and-appearances or on the stations below:

- IHeartRadio: http://www.iheart.com/show/Creating-Change/?episode_id=27403024
- Empower Radio: <http://www.empowerradio.com/home/shows/on-demand/creating-change/810336-How-Moms-Can-Stop-The-Stigma-Depression-and-Anxiety-with-Ambra-Watkins.html>

"In this episode Ambra Watkins, author of *Escape from Dark Places: Guideposts to Hope in an Age of Anxiety and Depression* discusses how mothers have typically been cast as the problem when it comes to their children's mental health and how to shift the narrative so that they are seen as part of the solutions. Ambra discusses what you can do if your child has anxiety and depression, and lessons she's learned along the way in dealing with her own son's depression."

Endorsements

Review

"Feeling a concern for the hopelessness of many millennials, project management professional Watkins uses her son's experience to help gear her words toward young people, their parents, grandparents, and church leaders. She dissects not only the reality of mental illness but also the disconnectedness of the postmodern world with the millennial striving for purpose. The author addresses substance abuse, the shift of generational perspectives, the cynicism brought by the 1970s, and detachment from the spiritual. An enlightening section features inushuks—infographics that capture the spirit of recovery and hope. **VERDICT** Watkins's outlook provides an inside view of the young generation's mental territory. A rewarding read for anyone looking to establish a positive relationship with the upcoming generation."

– *THE LIBRARY JOURNAL*

Testimonial

"After speaking to over 100,000 students, I can tell you that mental health among students is not only an issue but also a problem that is not being addressed with the relentless efforts it needs and deserves. Ambra refreshingly conveys her story of identifying and addressing mental health among students with precision and passion. *Escape from Dark Places* serves as a perfect complement to the psychological and medical research with a mother's touch and from the unique perspective of a transformational change expert. If you work with teenagers, this book must be on your shelf. If you work with parents, this book must be on your shelf. If you work with educators, this book must be on your shelf. It is the hope students need in a time of uncertainty and pain!" – MIKE FRITZ, International Speaker & Bestselling Author

On the Back Cover

"A riveting, revealing, and relevant approach to unlocking the paradoxes of the millennial mindset. The book is an inspiring and insightful tool that compels you to seek and share better ways of living a healthier and more fulfilling life."

— G. D. GANNON, Juris Doctor (JD), Master of Laws in International Law (LLM), and College Football All-American

On Amazon

From a Reader in the UK:

★★★★★ **A real eye opener!**

By [Liane avery](#) on 13 Jun. 2016

Format: Kindle Edition | [Verified Purchase](#)

I have family members that suffer from depression and I have to admit in the past I have been inpatient with them, I didn't have a clear understanding of the dark place they are in. This book has really helped me see the tunnel these people gone down and the desperation they have to come out - its really opened my eyes and for anyone who suffers depression or knows people who do I would recommend this book.

From a Doctor of Chiropractic:

★★★★★ **Well Written Guide to Deal with a Pressing Issue**

By [Kevin D Smith](#) on December 13, 2015

Format: Kindle Edition

I had the pleasure of meeting the author Ambra Watkins at an event where I learned about her work, *Escape from Dark Places*. I was so intrigued by the purpose of the book, I asked for an advance copy. I was not disappointed but amazed at her writing style, her creative ability to bring in a body of evidence to support her message, her courage to share her own personal journey and that of her family to help many deal effectively with a very pressing issue faced in our modern day society. I especially enjoyed her discussion of generational characteristics as well as visual Inukshuks to Hope to help the reader chart a course of action. I highly recommend this book

★★★★★ **I Highly without reservation recommend this book to anyone suffering from anxiety**

By [Amazon Customer](#) on December 8, 2015

Format: Kindle Edition

As a Doctor of Chiropractic I have seen what pain can do to a person and how it can lead them to dark places. Ambra's work is truly inspiring and brings an instant feeling of HOPE to the reader. I Highly without reservation recommend this book to anyone suffering from anxiety, depression or have found them selves walking away from the light. I highly recommend this book to any and all Doctors and health professionals looking to change their own and their patients lives for the better.

From an individual who suffers from anxiety and depression:

★★★★★ **A terrific examination of many of the environmental factors relating to anxiety and depression**

By [Christian Wilson](#) on December 17, 2015

Format: Kindle Edition

As a lifelong sufferer of anxiety and depression myself, I really enjoyed Ambra Watkins' exploration of the condition, the factors, and the outcomes that she experienced with her son. Knowledgeable and insightful, *Escape from Dark Places* provides a terrific narrative of not just the point of view of someone suffering from anxiety and depression, but the viewpoint of his immediate loved ones as well, which are not often included as those who are affected by mental illness. This book examines the societal pressures and factors of generational interactions in our homes and communities, which can go a long way into explaining why "we are the way we are", and why such a stigma surrounds mental disorders, and the importance of overcoming it for current and future generations. I would encourage anyone who is touched by mental illness or simply interested in learning more about the subject to read this book and help us to overcome the stigma.

From a boomer parent:

★★★★★ **Expertly written - A definite read**

By [Amazon Customer](#) on January 6, 2016

Format: Kindle Edition | [Verified Purchase](#)

As a Baby Boomer parent I absolutely correlate with the author's description of "trophy kids" in that the vast Millennial population (92 million strong) were raised with the premise they could do no wrong and everybody wins, i.e. typically everyone participating in a sporting event, spelling bee, or whatever it may be, gets a trophy just for participating despite not excelling in the activity. Unfortunately, as the author points out in the book, what we Baby Boomer parents now know is that through coddled nurturing, we raised our kids to develop an extremely strong sense of entitlement thus generating often unrealistic hopes regarding jobs and life universally. As the author's research expertly points out, an overwhelming twenty-five percent (25%) of these described "trophy kids" who have gone on to attend college either have been diagnosed or have a diagnosable mental health issue. That percentage is alarming and certainly points to an epic crisis not only in the United States, but globally as well. The author's generational research & theories described in Chapter 6 & 7 lay the a framework for action in helping those afflicted with anxiety & depression to have hope that recovery is possible through effective intergenerational dialogue. *Escape from Dark Places: Guideposts to Hope in an Age of Anxiety & Depression* is written through the author's own first-hand experiences with her millennial son and is exceptionally well written. It's an absolute MUST Read for anyone directly or indirectly impacted by someone who has or is suspected to have a mental health issue.

Suggested Interview Q&A

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, & TIME REQUIRED

Q What was your inspiration for *Escape from Dark Places*?

40 sec.

A One in four college students has a diagnosable mental illness, and the number is growing. I discovered the truth of that statistic in 2012 when I went to pick up my promising millennial son for his college graduation only to find he was so overcome by the pain of anxiety and depression that he could barely get out of bed. Now he is on his way to a successful career in the finance industry, managing his anxiety well, and finding happiness and success on his path to reach his full potential.

Had we not sought to understand one another's generations and embark on that journey to healing together, chances are he wouldn't have made such exceptional progress. I want your listeners to know what to do in a similar situation and how to catch the problem earlier to eliminate some of the pain involved in the recovery process.

My son is my inspiration. He is the one who had the strength and determination to escape from the dark places where anxiety and depression live. I simply walked beside him providing the support and guidance he needed to chart and follow a course to recovery. And I am there for him even now as he is working to attain those key life skills so many millennials are lacking.

Q Why did you write *Escape from Dark Places*?

20 sec.

A A majority of young people who suffer from a mental health condition do not ask for help. Anxiety is the biggest culprit, and the problem continues to grow. Anxiety often leads to depression, which many times ends in suicide. Now is the time for a solution.

Millennials are a strange amalgam of optimism, confidence, anxiety, nihilism, and despair. But they are more likely to comply with authority than other generations, they are quickly advancing into management positions in the workplace as boomers retire,

they are relentless optimists, many are moving back home, and they are listening. Now is the time to take action!

The last thirty years has ushered in a tremendous amount of change, and as a result we have seen a major shift in philosophical perspective. I wrote *Escape from Dark Places* to put mental health in a historical and cultural context where it can be better understood. I tell my story of a mother-and-son journey of triumph over anxiety and depression to offer hope and to provide practical guidelines for helping others connect, relate, and recover—connect with other generations, build lasting relationships that empower, and engage in the kind of dialogue that supports recovery.

Q What problem does your book aim to resolve?

20 sec.

A Statistics clearly show that mental health disorders are on the rise, particularly anxiety, and particularly in millennials and their successors, Generation Z. I look around and I see these adolescents and young adults struggling. Like my son, they seem confident, but in reality they are lonely and isolated, they don't have a strong sense of self, they are easily frustrated, and they have unrealistic expectations of themselves and those around them. Many people do not understand the problem and do not know how to help, so they are forced to stand by and watch the struggle or rely solely on the medical community. *Escape from Dark Places* tackles the problem by providing a framework for change mapping out practical steps forward in an effort to turn this trend around.

Q In your book, you argue that environmental causes are largely generational. What do you mean by that?

40 sec.

A In 2015, the millennial generation surpassed the boomers to become the largest generation in history. Also, people are living longer, so six generations are now living on this earth for the very first time.

Furthermore, the changes that have come about as a result of globalization and the technology boom and the pace at which

those changes have taken place is unprecedented. As a result, the twenty-first century has seen a major shift in philosophical perspective.

For example, we see a discrediting of authority, expertise, knowledge, and importance of achievement; a shift in the primary goal of education from the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake to the pursuit of skills for the sake of job acquisition; the emergence of new technologies, which diminishes the emphasis on quality and craftsmanship; and a desire for novelty, entertainment, even shock and stimulation— instant gratification—to name a few.

Perhaps most importantly, we now live in a culture where everything has meaning only as it relates to the self. This perspective limits people's ability to see beyond the self, and thereby causes both societal and spiritual disconnects that prevent people from living rich and meaningful lives.

The chaos and confusion of the postmodern world, the loss of traditions, and the inability of older generations to connect with young people and guide them is making it increasingly difficult for our kids to transition into adulthood, find happiness, and succeed.

Q How are people living in the twenty-first century disconnected from society?

A Unrealistic expectations cause many of the societal disconnects that impact mental health. Technology, for example, sets up unrealistic expectations. Young people don't have real relationships in the real world; instead, they have virtual relationships in cyberspace. Social media users create for themselves the image they want to portray to the world—an image of a life filled with excitement, adventure, and success—when in reality, we all have our share of challenges and misfortune. Many times, the pressure to keep up with the virtual success of peers results in isolation and causes anxiety.

1 min.

Parenting styles that overemphasize the value of high self-esteem can also set up unrealistic expectations. Many parents and schools promote giving a trophy to every child despite their level

of effort or performance and telling them that they can be whatever they want regardless of their strengths and weaknesses and despite external factors such as the economy that often create barriers they will have to overcome on their path to success.

Then, when the kids reach their late teens and early twenties and their unrealistic expectations crash into a world plagued by unfavorable economic circumstances and other challenges, they experience a sense of inertia, which impedes their ability to transition into adulthood and yields an increase in mental health challenges, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and even suicide. While society is becoming increasingly aware of the dangers of spending too much time on social media and instilling a false sense of self-esteem, there has been no real movement to change the paradigm.

Q Why is it important to be spiritually connected?

30 sec

A Human beings have been looking for the answers to big life questions since antiquity. At the same time that anxiety and depression are on the rise, the US and nations around the world are becoming increasingly secularized. Materialists contend that the only thing we can believe in is what can be proven, and the only thing that can be truly proven is matter. So they are telling young people that life has no meaning, and since there is no meaning, there is no need to pursue questions about the purpose of the world.

I contend that human beings need meaning and purpose to get out of bed in the morning and to keep going. Science can't prove that God does not exist and theology cannot prove that He does. And the truth is, even if you do not believe in God, you believe in something. These are chaotic and times, so it is especially critical that we all take the time and effort to establish or validate our belief system. By making a spiritual connection, young people can instill knowledge and truth into their lives and introduce the stability and certainty they are searching for.

Q Your book shifts the conversation about anxiety and depression from talking about moms being part of problem to moms being part of the solution, so what can mothers do to help?

20 - 30 sec.

A There are many ways that both moms and dads can help. You can:

- Look for signs of anxiety and depression in your children
- If you suspect your child has a mental disorder, do your research and seek help
- Start a dialogue with your children about managing stress, and (if necessary), how to manage anxiety and depression
- Reconsider how you and your family define and talk about recovery from mental illness
- Recognize and accept intergenerational similarities and differences and encourage family members to do the same
- Help your children establish boundaries and formulate a healthy sense of self
- Reflect back to your children who you see and experience them to be
- Establish a dialogue with your emerging adult (18 - 25/29) that utilizes mentoring and coaching techniques
- Demonstrate for your children how to develop real relationships in the real world and encourage them to do the same
- Make a concerted effort to bring valuable traditions back into your family
- Share family history and stories to help instill a better sense of self in your children

Q What is intergenerational dialogue, and how will it help improve mental and spiritual health?

20 sec.

A Intergenerational dialog is the practice of having face-to-face conversations with individuals of different generations for the purpose of gaining an enlightened understanding of the way others perceive the world. And, much like the Socratic Method,

the practice serves to reveal underlying assumptions and stimulate critical thinking. Intergenerational dialogue also:

- Empowers us to answer big life questions
- Forces us outside of ourselves
- Encourages us to go deep
- Helps us formulate a more stable sense of self
- Helps us find common ground

Q Tell me about the toolkit you are building.

30 sec.

A The toolkit I am building is designed to help people have those tough conversations about mental health: moms with their kids, mentors with their mentees, church leaders with their church groups. Intergenerational dialogue is a means of finding mutual understanding that builds a bridge across the diverging generations. The aim of tools for triumph is to empower young people by helping them to:

- Accomplish a more stable sense of self
- Filter out the noise of technology
- Think about the big life questions that bring life meaning and purpose
- Attain real world life skills
- And finally, to initiate a stronger conversation about prevention and recovery

Intergenerational dialog is mutually beneficial. Older generations also learn from millennials, not only about technology, but also about creativity, innovation, and how to stay relevant and competitive in our rapidly changing world.

Q How did you come to your passion and purpose in life?

1 min.

A I have been passionate about the power of words and about writing practically all my life. For many years, I was a technical writer in various industries including software development, finance, and construction, so I thrive on the challenge of writing about topics I don't know much about. I conduct in-depth

research, interview people, write and rewrite until I figure it out. For me, writing is a painstaking but exciting and rewarding process of discovery.

So when I found my son in his college apartment so overcome by his battle with anxiety and depression that he struggled to attend his own graduation, I knew I was facing something I didn't know much about. In the course of our mother-and-son journey to recovery, I found it extremely difficult to navigate the medical and psychological communities, my own emotions, and my relationship with my son. I found the best strategy for finding my way and then for being able to look back and make sense of it all was to write it down. And once I started writing it down, I was compelled to encourage others with my story and to share what I learned.

Now I am passionate about writing AND about connecting the generations, about building lasting relationships that empower, and about teaching people how to play a critical role in preventing anxiety and depression and supporting recovery. I show people how to connect, relate, and recover.

Q When did you start writing?

30 sec.

A I recall liking to write when I was in elementary school. My English teachers encouraged me; they nominated me to attend special writing workshops and events and posted my work on the bulletin board. More than that, I liked to organize information. I remember as a senior in high school going to a yearbook conference in NYC where they held a competition to see who could best organize a yearbook based on impromptu data. I was able to structure the information in a way that was unique and intriguing, so I won that competition. After that I realized that the ability to create and structure writing projects was a gift. I've been able to leverage that gift in various ways throughout my career.

To me, writing is like putting a huge puzzle together. You take little pieces of information that don't mean much by themselves and put them together one by one with graphics to create a complete picture that makes sense to people and is applicable to their lives.

Q What challenges have you faced with your writing?

20 sec.

A When I was working in the corporate world and raising my children, my biggest challenge was time. Now I know how to get more work done in the same amount of time with the same level of quality.

Early in my career, at the end of the day, I didn't have the energy or mental capacity left to write an intelligible sentence. But since I became a fulltime writer in 2013, I have been able to draw on the efficiencies I gained by working in corporate America and get more quality work done in less time.

Q What do you intend for readers to take away from your book?

20 sec.

A My goal is to help readers gain a new appreciation for the depth and breadth of the anxiety problem in the world today, and to help them recognize how much our young people are struggling. I want them to think about their own lives and relationships, and then respond to my call to action—to connect and build relationships across generations and effectively support recovery. I want readers to feel empowered to have those tough conversations about mental health. I want us to enable young people to triumph over anxiety and depression so they can succeed and thrive.

Q What impact would you like to see your book have on the world?

20 sec.

Q My Mission is to help create a world where communication bridges the gap between the six living generations, igniting a deep, mutual understanding between us. This will help us mend the societal and spiritual disconnects at the root of the twenty-first century rise in anxiety and depression. And I join the host of others who envision a world where those with mental disorders are viewed no differently than those with chronic physical illness.

Let's connect the generations; let's build real relationships in the real world, lasting relationships that empower; let's step up to play

a leading role in preventing anxiety and depression and supporting recovery.

Q How can people connect with you?

15 sec.

A Website: ambrawatkins.org (1. Read my blog, 2. Subscribe to receive more information, 3. Tell Your Story of challenges and successes with communicating across generations and improving mental and spiritual health)

- Email: ambra@ambrawatkins.org
- Twitter: twitter.com/AmbraWatkins
- Facebook: facebook.com/guidepoststohope
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/ambrawatkins

Remember: Go to my website, ambrawatkins.org, and Tell Your Story.

ABOUT THE BOOK

About the Book

2-Line Summary

A motivating mother-and-son journey to mental and spiritual health that will empower young people to find purpose in the postmodern world.

Short Synopsis

Escape from Dark Places tells the author's personal story of how she and her millennial son battled anxiety and depression. The author takes you on a journey to answer questions such as, How big is the problem? Why is the number of those suffering trending upward? And how can we stop the stigma? The author draws on history, psychology, science, and philosophy to construct a solution and looks at generational theory for ways to bridge the abyss that separates boomers and millennials. The book provides practical guidelines for engaging young people and their parents, grandparents, mentors, and church leaders in effective intergenerational dialogue.

Long Synopsis

Mental illness, and anxiety in particular, is increasing among millennials and their Generation Z successors at an alarming rate. *Escape from Dark Places* explores the questions:

- How big is the problem?
- What is the source of the problem?
- What can parents, grandparents, church leaders, and mentors do to help?

Millennials blame boomers and Xers for their shattered expectations, while boomers and Xers scratch their heads and ask why millennials don't just buck up. The gap between the two largest generations (millennials and boomers) has expanded into a gaping abyss, and the finger pointing approach does not help. If we do not build a bridge to understanding, the trend will continue upward with major consequences.

Escape from Dark Places tells the author's personal story of how she and her millennial son battled anxiety and depression. The honesty by which each shares their individual experience enables a view into dark places from both generational perspectives. The journey for answers reveals how the loss of tradition and the massive societal, political, and spiritual change initiated by globalization and the technology explosion created the disconnects that threaten the mental and spiritual health of upcoming generations.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The author states the hard facts, which reveal the astounding statistics and attitudes surrounding mental health disorders and the nonmedical use of prescription drugs. Then, relying on her expertise in training and change management, she proceeds to explore the controversial questions: What causes anxiety and depression? And how do we reverse the trend and stop the stigma? She makes a convincing case that living in the twenty-first century postmodern world has a tremendous impact on health, and the argument elicits a call to action that is both convincing and motivating.

Escape from Dark Places explains what it means to recover from mental health disorders and links the inability to recognize the similarity between mental and physical disease as the primary barrier to stopping the stigma. She also demonstrates how moms and others typically side-lined in the recovery process can play a critical role in empowering young people to:

- Accomplish a more stable sense of self without micromanaging or helicopter parenting
- Filter out the noise of technology and the Information Age to reduce stress and anxiety
- Initiate a stronger conversation about prevention and recovery that can better drive attitudinal change
- Think about the big life questions that enrich our lives with meaning and purpose
- Attain real world life skills that enrich interpersonal relationships and promote success in the workplace

No one can change the fact that there is a gaping abyss between Boomers and Millennials, but people can build a bridge. The need is urgent, and the time is now, as the trend toward anxiety is rising and boomers are already beginning to transition leadership positions to the next generations. *Escape from Dark Places* provides the framework for having effective intergenerational dialogue that will inspire societal and spiritual reconnects, fight indifference, create significance, stop the stigma—and spread hope.

Points of Interest

- The Number of Young People with Mental Health Disorders is Dangerously High and Growing
“One in four young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness, and more than one out of four college students have been

ABOUT THE BOOK

diagnosed or treated by a professional for a mental health condition within the past year.”

- The Road to Recovery from a Mental Health Condition is Neither Clear Nor Easy
“Suddenly confronted with the reality and pain of my son’s anxiety and depression, my motherly instincts and professional experience kicked in. I set out determined to assess the problem and fix it. But the complex, multi-faceted project quickly transformed into a journey.”
- The Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs is Rampant on College Campuses
“Six frosted cans of Miller Lite pushed 10 milligrams of Valium down my pipe. Nothing happened. My tolerance was dangerously high.” (the voice of author’s millennial son)
- It is Critical that We Establish Guideposts to Hope Before Knowledge is Gone
“If we do not set up guideposts to mental and spiritual health in the twenty-first century, all may be lost. The relativism that pervades this era, the connectedness that has slipped away in the context of the postmodern world, may never be regained, as those with knowledge and life experience of what it was like to live prior to the Information Age pass away.”
- Now it the Time to Break Through Barriers of Communication as Young People Enter the Workforce
If we do not build a bridge of understanding across the generational abyss and break through the barriers to communication, there are bound to be major consequences. And the need is urgent, as Boomers are already beginning to transition leadership positions to the next generations.

Excerpts

The Problem

- Anxiety and depression are significant problem in today’s society.
“One in four young adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four have a diagnosable mental illness, and more than one out of four college students have been diagnosed or treated by a professional for a mental health condition within the past year.”
- The twenty-first century mindset is a primary cause of the rise in anxiety and depression.

ABOUT THE BOOK

“The postmodern world highlights the ambivalence of the human experience. The lines are now blurred between what is real and what is not real, what is of good quality and what is of poor quality, what is experimental and what is complete—even what is moral and what is immoral. Postmodernity calls into question the very meaning and purpose of existence, whether life has any meaning or purpose, that is.”

The Solution

- The anxiety problem requires an intergenerational solution.

“Change requires a resolve across generations to address the issue of disconnectedness and all that disconnectedness implies. In cooperation, the generations can raise awareness of postmodern challenges, reduce the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression, and help stop the stigma surrounding mental illness.”

- The intergenerational solution is communication in the form of face-to-face dialogue.

“This loss of traditions in combination with the massive change initiated by globalization and the information technology explosion was bound to cause disconnects—disconnects between the self and community, between the self and spirituality—but what surprises me most is the extent to which our children have lost their overall sense of self. I cannot change the evolution of thought or the fact that there is a gaping abyss between boomers and millennials, but I can build a bridge.”

“It seems to me that this communication piece is missing from the current strategy to stop the stigma. What we need are the right tools for having the right conversations at the right time with the right mentor and mentee relationships.”

“What young people need are real relationships grounded in the real world. Long-term intergenerational relationships can provide an effective vehicle for filtering through the noise that technology and the Information Age impose.”

- People typically sidelined from the recovery process can be an important part of the solution.

“At the onset of my journey, I was uninformed and ill-equipped to provide the support my son needed; I felt guilty. I found that mothers are often regarded as part of the anxiety problem and are seldom included as part of the solution. I felt marginalized. But I soon learned that it does not have to be that way.”

ABOUT THE BOOK

Why now?

- *“If we do not build a bridge of understanding across the generational abyss and break through the barriers to communication, there are bound to be major consequences. And the need is urgent, as Boomers are already beginning to transition leadership positions to the next generations.”*

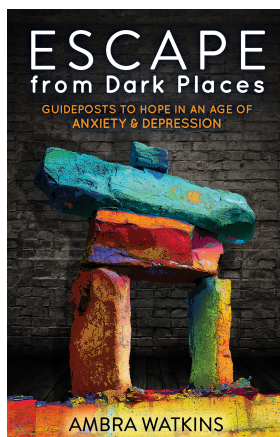
Why Ambra?

- *“Ambra Watkins, the mother of multiple millennials, is intrigued by what is proving to be a baffling yet compelling generation. She is concerned for trophy kids whose high expectations crashed into the reality of an economic downturn and is burdened for those souls that are desperately searching for meaning and purpose in the ambiguity of the postmodern world.”*
- *“Ambra holds a master’s degree in rhetoric and writing and a Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification. She worked for more than fifteen years designing, developing, and implementing large training, knowledge management, and organizational change initiatives at Accenture and other Fortune 500 companies. Her experiences living and working in northern Africa and traveling extensively in Europe, South America, and the Middle East lend a multi-cultural perspective to her life and her writing.”*

Cover Art

Please find two images of the cover art of different size and resolution included in this media kit.

- Print Version Large – 4 MB .jpg, 300 dpi
- Web Version Small – 429 KB, 72 dpi



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bios

2-Line Bio

Ambra Watkins, MA, PMP, is a nonfiction author and organizational change consultant who provides the right tools for helping young people triumph over anxiety and depression.

Short Bio

Author and speaker Ambra Watkins is a training and change expert with an MA and a PMP certification who provides tools for intergenerational dialogue that empower young people to triumph over anxiety and depression. Find out more about Ambra and her book *Escape from Dark Places* at ambrawatkins.org. Email: ambra@ambrawatkins.org.

Medium Bio

Author and speaker Ambra Watkins is a Boomer mom intrigued by the Millennial generation. She is concerned for trophy-kids whose high expectations crashed into the reality of an economic downturn and for parents who are trying desperately to help them find purpose in the postmodern world. With an MA, a PMP, and fifteen years of experience, Ambra uses her knowledge and expertise to provide young people with tools for triumph over anxiety and depression through effective intergenerational dialogue. Find out more about Ambra and her book *Escape from Dark Places* at ambrawatkins.org. Email: ambra@ambrawatkins.org.

Long Bio

Ambra was born the daughter of a Navy pilot at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. Naval officers seldom stayed at a duty station for more than a year in those days, so she was barely two months old when the family packed up their belongings in pursuit of new adventures.

Ambra was the middle daughter in a family of three girls. Her dad describes the sisters' personalities this way: "When we tucked them in at night, the oldest daughter didn't say anything, the middle daughter (Ambra) said, 'Thank you,' and the youngest daughter hollered, 'What are you doing?'"

As her dad neared retirement, the family moved back to their hometown in lower Arkansas (or LA as they like to call it) where Ambra graduated from high school. Afterwards, she pursued a liberal arts education at Stephens College, in Missouri. In the summer after her freshman year, Ambra went on a blind date that changed her life forever. She married the next year, her husband joined the Navy, and she was off

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

to yet another duty station, this time it was the snowy but beautiful Pine Tree state—Maine. There she completed her bachelor’s degree at Bates College.

Before too many years, the family grew from two to four, so the Watkins decided to leave the Navy and settle in Houston close to Ambra’s family. A few years passed, and the family became five. Government contracting proved to be just as transient as the military. The family packed up and moved to Alabama, where Ambra stayed home with the kids and wrote freelance articles; then to North Carolina, where she earned her master’s degree and started a career in technical writing.

Ambra worked in the insurance software industry, and then transitioned into the customer relationship management space where she worked as documentation and training manager. When the company was bought out, Ambra consulted for a marketing analytics firm where she implemented an enterprise knowledge management system. Upon project completion, Ambra provided instructional design services in the financial sector.

From Charlotte, the Watkins moved to the Washington DC metro area where Ambra worked on communications at an analytics company in support of the Air Force Surgeon General. Eager to consult again, Ambra joined Accenture as a talent and organization performance manager where she consulted for a utility in Pennsylvania, the Office of Personnel Management in DC, and the world’s largest retailer in Arkansas.

Before they knew it, Ambra and her husband found themselves as spectators at their youngest son’s high school graduation. In the ultimate attempt to avoid empty nester syndrome, they dropped him off at the university and headed overseas. They had both been hired to work for AECOM, a leading design and development firm, on a \$50 billion infrastructure and housing project in Libya, Africa. The journey to Libya was long, as it included a layover in Germany when Ambra made the mistake of eating fish on the plane. Then, after spending hours in the hot, smoke-filled Libyan airport and enduring the treacherous van ride into Tripoli, they sat on the hard couch in the tiny apartment that smelled of sewage and asked each other, “What have we done?”

But they grew to love the Libyan people, and as Knowledge Transfer and Training Director, Ambra had the privilege of rolling out a learning program that prepared 1600 Libyan Nationals to lead the development initiative. The Watkins headed back to the good ‘ole USA about a year before the revolution, which quickly curtailed the program and Saif Gaddafi’s plan to develop the coastline for tourism. Sadly, the country remains unstable to this day.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Watkins ended up in Florida where Ambra managed IT programs at a large utility company. Afterwards, they moved to Denver, Colorado, where she and her husband enjoy a view of the mountain ranges and spend downtime hiking, biking, snowshoeing, and skiing. Ambra is pursuing her goal of becoming a full-time author and establishing Guideposts to Hope, Inc., to provide tools that will empower young people to find purpose and hope in the postmodern Age of Anxiety.

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Headshots

Please find six headshots in this media kit, two color plus two black and white of the author and one color and one black and white of the author and her son.

AUTHOR



Author Back Cover Photo

AUTHOR



Additional Author Photo

AUTHOR & SON



Author & Son Photo

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Speaker Information

Young people today are tech-savvy, confident, and positive. They are also stressed, anxious, and depressed. Ambra Watkins shows participants why the number of those who suffer from anxiety and depression is trending upward and teaches how to engage in effective intergenerational communication to help prevent these mental health conditions and promote recovery.

As a seasoned trainer well versed in multiple disciplines, Ambra is the right choice to engage intergenerational audiences from behind the podium or in workshops in your church, college, or community.

Ambra addresses topics such as:

- How to Emotionally Prepare Your Teenager for College without Overparenting
- How to Guide Your Twentysomething into Adulthood without Sabotaging the Serenity of the Empty Nest
- Healing the Disconnects that Prevent Healthy Living: An Intergenerational Approach
- Building Real Relationships Grounded in the Real World: A Twenty-First Century Approach

Contact Ambra to design an event that will address your specific needs.

—Providing the Right Tools for the Right Conversations at the Right Time—