

February peer poem

Peer Support

By Thomas Jackson

Bro I just need you to listen. I was trying to connect with the world but the world damage me,
said my views weren't there views because of my cultural differences and the words that I spoke were
Unmanageable so
I guess the world didn't wanna manage me
I just wanted to be free of the labels that they claimed that I was supposed to be.
Like I was unfit, retarded, a monster, depression, hospitalized, my world views were different,
so I guess that's insanity?
How can I ever find my piece- in what they is peace when there's no mutuality,
Every relationship I had broke a piece of me,
I was dying inside fighting to win but found myself battling me,
See—when I looked to succeed the labels said I need medication.
A diagnosis from credentials without hesitation.
I've seen and heard things my entire life that were breathtaking,
yet I learned the art of struggle and how to stand in my frustrations.
I look in the mirror trying to see past the labels fighting to find me again past all the fables.
To me it seems there's two of me
but I live with them— but Cain doesn't kill Abel.
I'm ok —but they say I'm unstable.
They are looking through the glass of a textbook rather than seeing the trauma that sits at this table.
Fight—I tell myself this on a daily,
trying to climb out of the pit of cultural bias and pray someone hears ME and saves me.
But how will they hear if they can't hear my voice,
taken the day labels and biases took away my choice.
I need my Voice.
So I can speak free.
And tell the world exactly what I need.
I can't begin-to say I understand your situation,
but I do agree with your frustrations.
I was once in a room full of people and felt no one saw me.
They saw the smiles but disregarded the pain in my eyes.
Said they wanted to help me but in my back I felt the knives.
What's sad is that it didn't come as a surprise,
because honestly I was used to the lies.
I felt like I was on fire inside, you know the term.
A man ain't supposed to cry.
Suffocating my pain so I don't kill the vibe,
shoulders back, stand up straight, keep your head up in pride— right—
But one thing I did was survive.
Fresh out the belly of a beast to thrive.
If I row from the left you row from the right
so that we both can get to the prize.
You are no longer alone in this ride,
though you are calling the plays.
I'm right beside you,

not in front or behind you.
You got the key so drive and I'll navigate the way.
If you move I'm moving too— as long as we doing it safe.
Stick your foot in my hand and let me give you a boost
because I've already climbed over this gate.
I'm no helicopter sent by God but the resources are already on the way.
So if we two agree I with you and you with me then equally share the weight.
Then we can live our lives above the labels and lies and let the world hear what you have to say.
I am a Peer!

Thomas Jackson is the Program Director for the Washington Peer Network and author of the Let's Get Human curriculum, a transformative resource focused on fostering authentic human connections in personal and professional settings. As the founder and owner of Let's Get Human LLC, he is dedicated to helping individuals and organizations develop emotional intelligence and communication skills for a more compassionate and effective world.

