

that one room in their house that is still tragically un-hip. They are able to enjoy TV again while carefully avoiding the news. They can believe in smart bombs that only kill bad people, with only one casualty after days and days of bombing. They will send unsatisfactory meals back to the chef while others starve to death, and have their eyes "refreshed" by their plastic surgeon so they look and feel better about themselves during these trying times.

Without the Zoloft, Paxil, or Valium, they might send all that wasted money to peace groups, to the homeless, to those taking life-saving medicines to Iraq. They could set new priorities, instead of having the small, single-minded goal of going on with their lives as usual and not feeling guilty about it, even as the world is being forever changed around them. Guilt can even be a huge motivator; drugs, never.

War provides those who court and participate in it with exciting purpose and new goals. Vainglorious and tiny-minded rich men who make it into positions of power need constant reaffirmation of that power. Deceiving a frightened country into the collective fear and loathing of Iraq and into a false sense of patriotism has been quite a coup. Rhetoric is carefully chosen: Operation Liberate Iraq! Keep America Free! War supporters seem blissfully unaware that they are aiding a spoiled man's hateful obsession, even when offered evidence. Humans need that sense of purpose to defy depression. Instead of listening to reason and to their own inner voices, many chose to support our fearless leader's agenda, which allowed them to push down their grief and fear without much proof after 9/11 and trade those weak feelings in for anger and revenge.

Anti-Depressants

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The rest of us, along with the sons and daughters of Iraq, were left holding the bag. They were left bleeding to death in the streets. Those of us who were screaming "NO" felt the anguish of blood being spilled in our name without our consent.

The legal drugging of America makes us go down easy. As we lose more rights daily, the less we care and the less we think about it — and the more they take away. We must force our politicians to work for us; we must trust our own voices and use them loudly. We must not worry about what others think of us.

For everyone that disagrees with you, there are hundreds that you can give courage to. But not if you're drugged. Not if you are anesthetizing yourself in front of the TV, or in the mall. Betsy McCarty offers you the easy way out.

Real freedom is using your personal power by living a life to be proud of.

McCarty was also responsible for stopping private citizens from feeding the homeless in downtown Santa Cruz. People used to make up a couple dozen sandwiches and distribute them to the hungry. Lots of people acted out of the kindness of their hearts. But they were prevented from this with McCarty claiming that it made it too easy for someone to poison the homeless and it was against the health rules of Santa Cruz County.

Be encouraged as you suffer the sometimes unbearable emotional and mental pain, and use it as a catalyst for action. Draw up a plan and do what you can in the name of justice and peace each day. The worse you feel, the more you do until you are strong again. Just say NO to George W. Bush, to Betsy McCarty, and to your doctor; and never, never stop speaking in your own clear voice until your last breath on this earth.