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Robin Williams, Depression and Dementia

Robin Williams was a comical prodigy who had the promptness of full throttle. He was the one who erupt as an alien on Happy Days and astonished the audience with his wide variety of talents. Behind the manic shtick of the world-renowned comedian, who left others breathless with his performance, was a man plagued by depression and poor mental health. He was suffering from severe depression which is one of the known causes of his death. His life is an irony that one who kept others amused till his demise was himself a man who took his own life at the age of 63. He was a star struggling with the monsters of depression, alcohol, and other demons which led to his demise by his own hands. This paper seeks to argue the ways mental health effects a person destructively employing the profile of a humorist, Robin Williams and how one can cope up with this demon.

Williams, the star was born on July 21st, 1951 at St. Luke’s Hospital in Chicago. He was the only child of his wealthy parents. The busy lives of his parents let Williams spend his childhood alone in the mansion of his house. In order to cope up with his isolation, he developed characters in his mind and used to have chats with them. He also suffered from bullying at school for being overweight. The sixth grade of her school is known to be the toughest time of his life and those early years of hardships resulted in depression at a very early stage of his life. His sense of humor is known to have come from his mother, who often used to communicate with her son with humor laced with sarcasm. By the time they moved to Tiburon, California, he was surrounded by the culture of drugs and alcoholism. He fell upon the drama department since he already established his reputation as a comedic appearance.

After his graduation, he decided to set himself in an occupation in political science but he was destined for fame in comedy. During his college, he earned the coveted role of Fagin in the College’s production owing to his exceptional act. After that, he left behind his diplomatic goals and took part in the community college theater program. He was offered a full scholarship to the Juilliard School of Performing Arts which he accepted and set himself as a future Superman actor. At Juilliard, he was able to make his teachers surprise by taking the persona of characters with ease since he was meant to do that. Though, he did not found himself a perfect fit for the school and left it in 1976 to set his own floor. He started as a humorist in the club in the San Francisco Bay Area that led to the development of his loyal following.

Williams moved to Los Angeles in the 1977 and a TV producer George Schlatter discovered him and offered him a stage in the show. This led to the development of his career in television. After this show, he got the attention of Gary Marshall, the producer of Happy Days who chose Williams to do the job of an alien in My Favorite Orkan. It was a hit and the audience demanded more, and Willaims got instant fame in a couple of days. One day he met his fellow comic John Belushi and shared some cocaine. The very next day he got the news of Belushi’s death owing to a drug overdose. He decided to change his lifestyle, influenced by the incident. Robin Williams was also called by the jury and after that, he decided to detangle himself from drugs. He discovered cycling as a way of saving his life. Interestingly, his Mork character led him to the status of superstar. Mork and Mandy had a lot of cultural influence and kids started to wear the trademark of Mork rainbow superstars and started using the words of ‘nanoo-nanoo.’

The instant fame led him to get involved in alcohol, drugs, and women. He quickly fell prey to the habit of partying late nights and his physical energy started to burn out. Nevertheless, he managed to quit alcohol in his 80's by adopting a healthy lifestyle and cycling but again in 2003. He admitted that he was an alcoholic and remained for sixty days in the rehab. He got into severe depression since at his time his second wife Marcia left him. He again adapted cycling as a healthy obsession and began playing video games. But for a person who had been struggling with depression his whole life again put him in the habit of drinking and taking depression. In 2014, it was also exposed that he was suffering from Lewy body dementia. This was publicized after his death by his wife, Susan that he was not merely suffering from depression but persistent episodes of anxiety, stress, insomnia, hand tremors and constipation (Tohid, 180). On August 11th, 2014, he killed himself by tying a belt. According to his wife, he was killed by the terrorist in his own mind. Soon after the news of his death spread, fans started posting pictures with the caption, ‘O’ Captain, making a reference to his character in ‘Dead Poet’s Society.’

One of his famous quotes itself reveals how sad, isolated and estranged he was, “I think the saddest people always try their hardest to make people happy because they know what it's like to feel absolutely worthless and they don't want anyone else to feel like that.". William Robbins brought some of the most magical experiences to the screen such as Genie in Aladdin to Jumanji (Cheu, 208). He was near and dear to his fans and played a role in their lives in taking them out of the sad times and making them laugh. He himself was living a dark life filled with depression but adopted comedy to bring optimism in others. He said, “Comedy is acting out optimism”. He was very much familiar with his addiction to drugs and alcohol as reflected in his quotes and sayings about drugs, "Reality is just a crutch for people who can’t cope with drugs.”

In this depressing world where everyone is suffering from mental health issues, comedians are the people who try to take them out of depression and anxieties. Comedy is the only thing on which humanity can bank upon in the times of stress and depression. Comedy holds the power of conveying the meaning of happiness and optimism in a light mode and therefore comedians hold a very high significance in human lives. Robin Williams is a perfect example of the fact that those suffering from depression and anxiety are very much familiar with the significance of happiness. Therefore they spread it through their words and actions. Despite suffering from poor mental health he strived till last to spread happiness. He appeared in a large number of films and his character shed a lot of influence on the generations. He was one of the most loved figures and his impact on society is not limited to his profession. He was also a philanthropist working for a variety of causes. He also entertained thousands of military troops to live his passion for supporting the military.

Robin Williams is a living example of the prevalence of mental health issues, even among whose job is confined to staying and making others happy. There are many ways of coping with mental health issues, in fact of the person, himself is familiar with what they are going through. He himself said, “Kid... if you need booze or drugs to enjoy your life to the fullest, then you're doing it wrong.” He adopted cycling as a way to cope up with mental health issues. Exercise is a great way to improve not only physical but mental health as well. It gives one an enormous sense of well-being, improves memory, and makes one feel positive about themselves. A number of studies reveal that exercise is a great way to treat depression and holds no side effects of an anti-depressant. Exercises also aid in discharging tension, stress and boost mental and physical energy (Robinson, n.p). Different studies reveal that exercises help in focusing on the mental state and allows the brain to focus on physical sensations during exercises that are very helpful in PTSD or trauma.

To sum up, the mental health is a common issue and by the time a lot of awareness has been created. Despite the treatments and education, it is not easy for people to cope with it even if they are celebrities, public figures, laughing all the time and spreading happiness. Robin Williams, a humorist who won the hearts of people killed himself of depression and anxiety combined with the other factors such as addiction and alcoholism. Mental health issues disturb the lives of people to an extent that led to suicidal attempts as an escape. Adopting the right healthy habits at the right time can, however, help one dealing with it. William’s case reveals that even the smiling faces can have a dark life and they need attention and care by their loved ones.

# Works Cited

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