

Response recognized who he is and what he has to do



To The Editor: I am appalled at the response of Barbara Schiff in her "advice" column of Nov. 15.

gories and pain. Ma. Schiff tells him that as an apparent "rugged individualist," he has the last say. The alternative — staying alive — she describes as "sacrificing himself" for the sake of those who love him.

Surely, a trained therapist should recognize depression when she reads it. How else can she suggest counseling? Just because she has "no good solution" for him, does not mean that others in her field would be as helpless and hopeless. I hope he — and other readers who may have empathized — is still with us and that he reads this and seeks help to restore value to his life.

valuable human being. A Very Concerned Reader Dear Reader, I received this letter some weeks ago after having already advised in other words, and in a previous column. The issue is very important and so I welcome the opportunity to discuss it further.

There are times when a patient is dying and a doctor with all good intentions offers help. But a few patients do not want false hope; they want the bleak facts. In the letter that the voice mail and the letter to the editor refer to, it was understood that the writer had been on medication and had been in therapy.

Without an argument, pharmacology has changed the treatment of mental illness. Patients who only 10-20 years ago would not have been able to live productive lives now often do. But it is not a cure-all. There is still a resistance to complying with a doctor's recommendation to take pills even though they are helping. Psychotherapy, also, can save lives sometimes. Neither is it a cure-all. Recommending it to someone for whom it has not been helpful seems a cruel joke, lacking in empathic understanding.

There are those of us who take a spiritual path to peace and those of us who face a bleak honesty and in so doing find the ability to problem solve. People are capable of a great deal, if not deluded by what some have called "fairly tales." Those who respect their ability to develop grace under pressure need to be recognized, too. This is who they are and this is what they have to do.

It is true that great people have helped others through the spiritual route; it is also true that millions of others have been aided in their development through the cerebral, intellectual, cognitive functioning of the "miracles" of the brain.

Barbara: If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Direct Sense, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 32021 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. You can also leave a message by calling 953-2047, mailbox 1877, on a touch-tone phone.

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