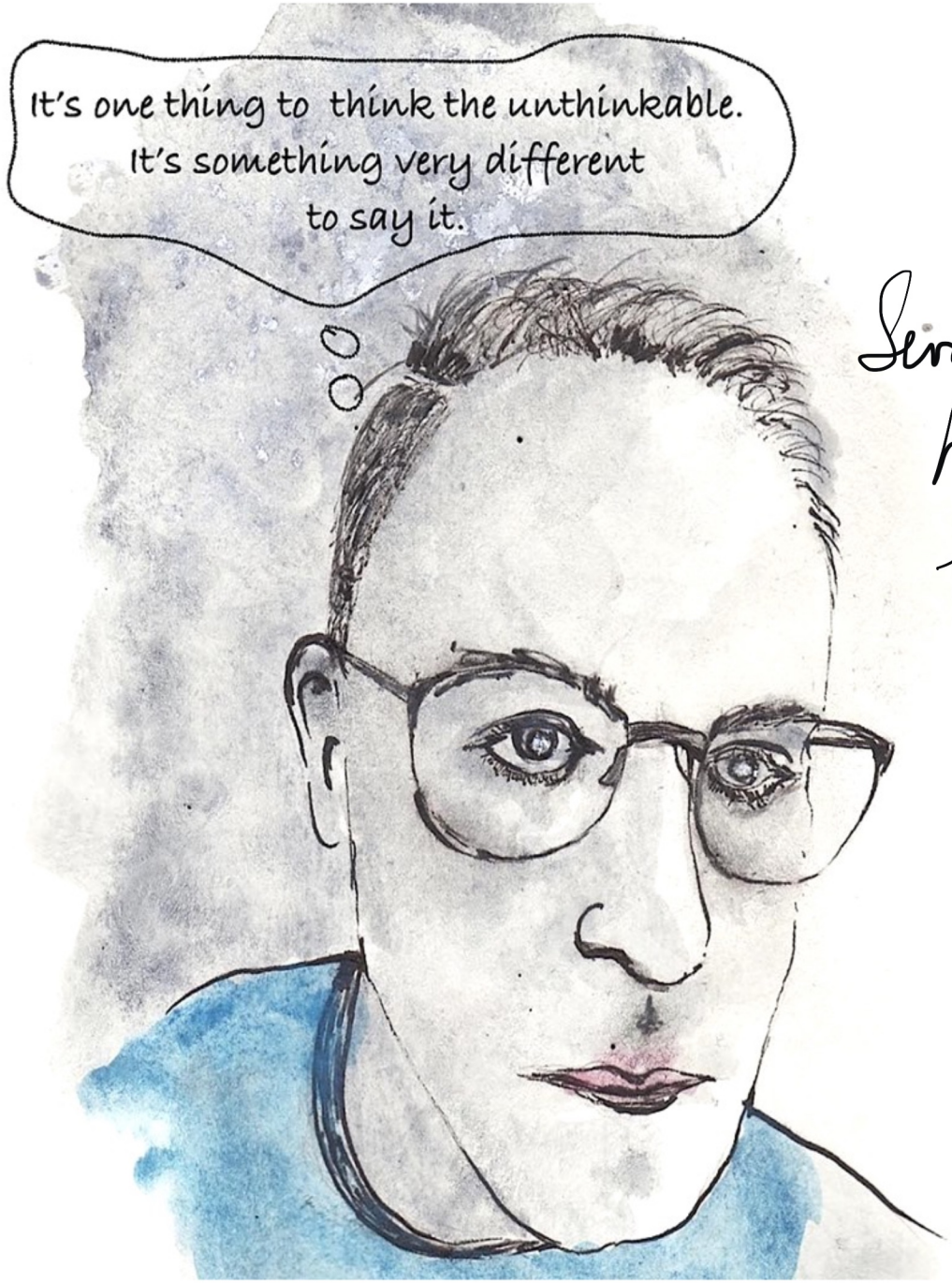


Dear Family and Friends,



Seventeen million adults had a major depressive episode last year. And the numbers for children are staggering. The personal, social, and economic costs of anxiety and depression are almost impossible to quantify. But they are certainly real.

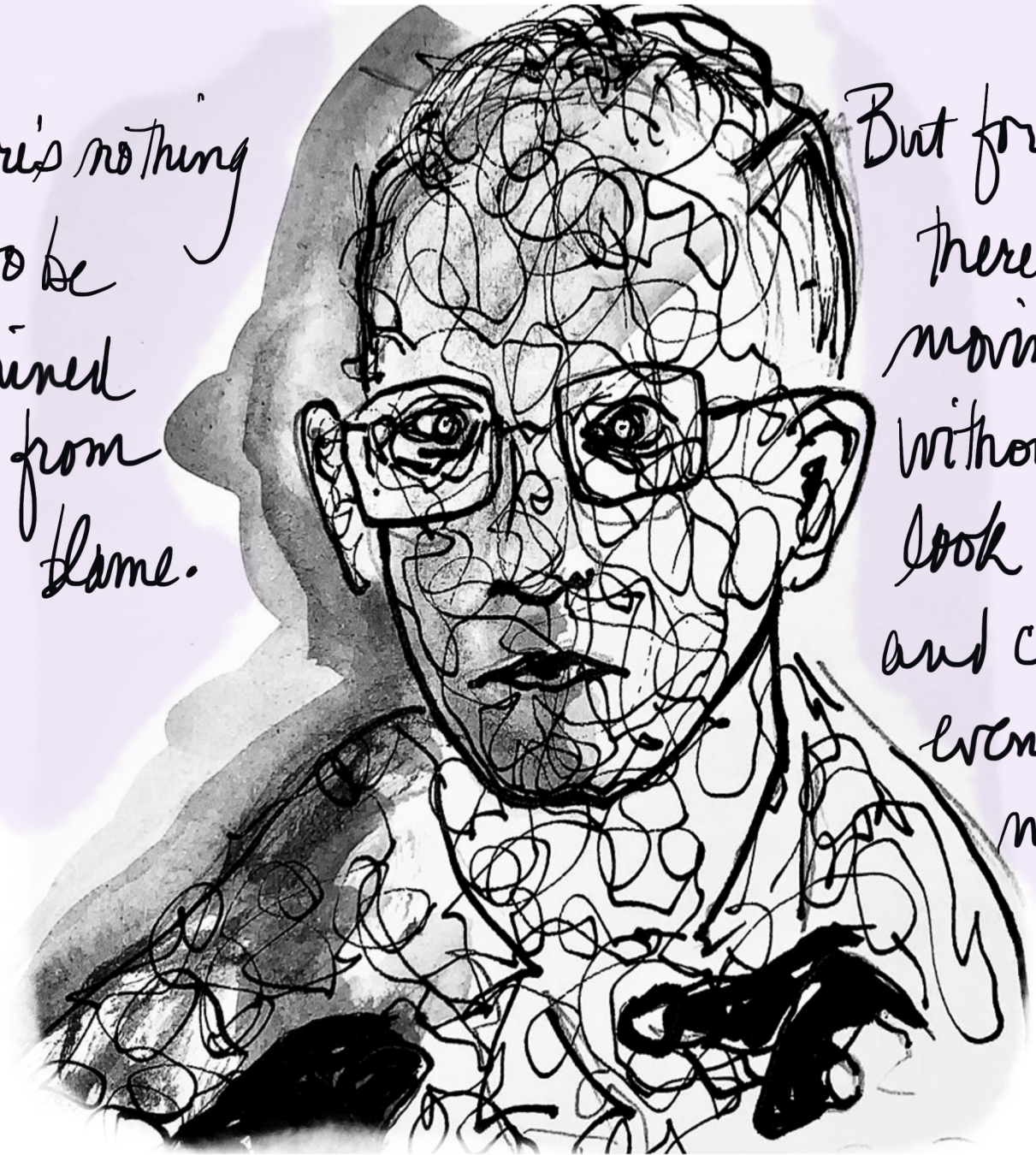


Seventeen million adults had a major depressive episode last year and I was one of them.

If you're going to write about a life lived with anxiety and depression, you have to take a hard look at the past. But how do you do that without judging yourself, others, or the social circumstances not of your own making?



There's nothing to be gained from blame.



But for me, there was no moving forward without an honest look at the varied and complicated events that brought me to this confession.



Sharing what it's like to live with anxiety and depression is a lot like undressing in front of strangers...

It's AWKWARD.


But
How to
Confess?
How to
tell this
story?
I tried doing it
in my head like
I did as a boy in
Church. Bless me
Father for I have
sinned... But the
truth is, hiding it
was actually one
of the ways I
survived.



Maybe I should write a letter...

I sat for days in front of a blank page. I couldn't remember the last time I wrote a letter.

Dear Family and Friends,

When anxious and depressed, which was most of the time, I would laugh a lot.

My laughter was fake as often as it was honest.

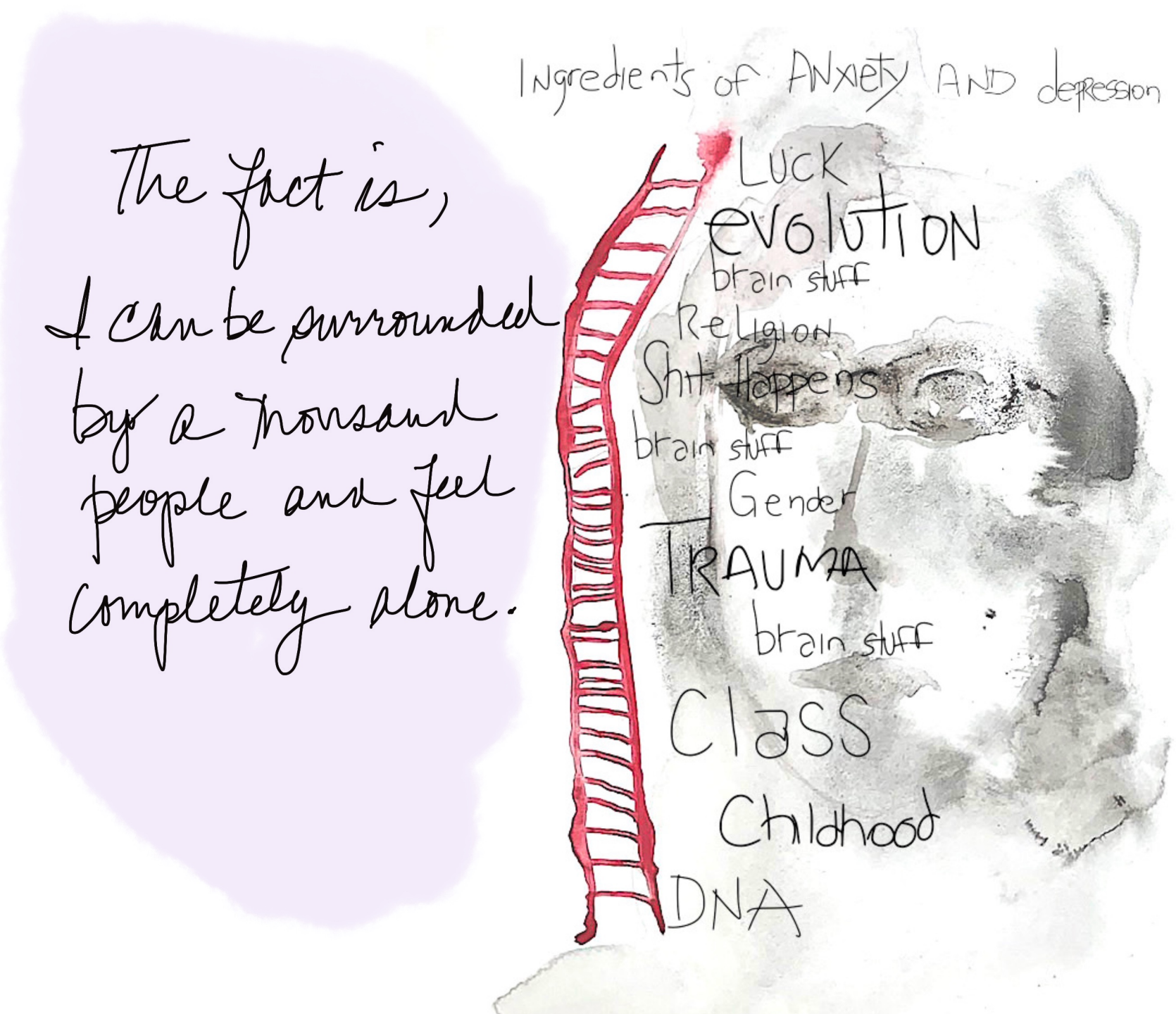
I knew that laughing and smiling were key to hiding the truth.





Don't misunderstand,
it's not that I didn't
ever feel happy,
or experience joy.
It's that I figured
out how to use
a smile or a laugh
to mask feeling
anxious or depressed.

The fact is,
I can be surrounded
by a thousand
people and feel
completely alone.



I always felt like the whole world was going one way,



while I went another.



Over time I developed an ability to pretend everything was okay. I mastered "fake it 'til you make it!"

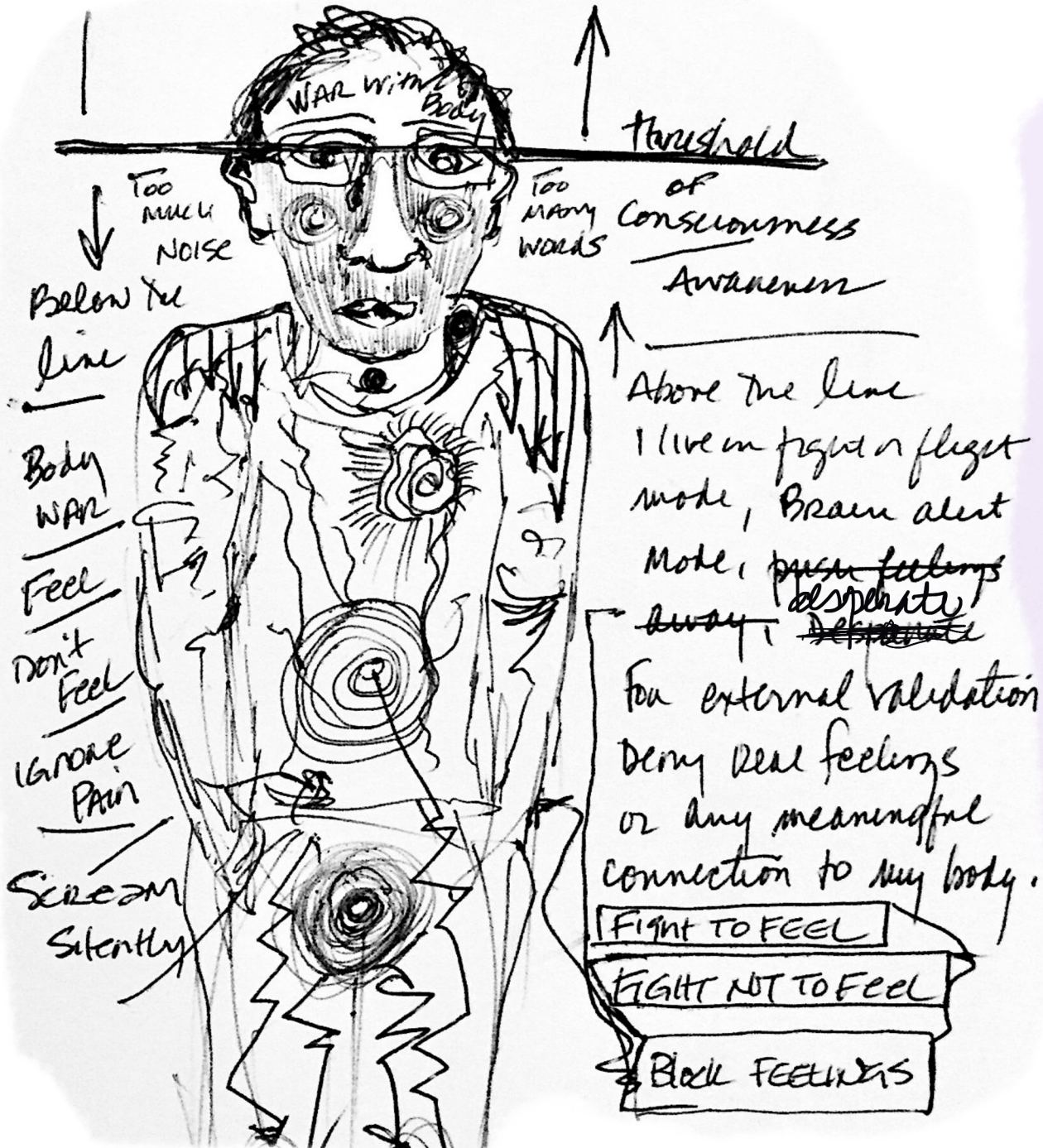
Often, once I was present, I could find a way to enjoy myself for a time.

But the cycle of dreading having to be somewhere, followed by regret, anger, or guilt was exhausting. I had to keep moving.

Pretending easily became lying, which became telling people what I thought they wanted to hear.

I could pretend my way through almost any situation. By lying to myself, convincing myself that I was the problem.





Just push it all away and Keep Moving.



Inside
I was
slowly
dying.

As I got older I grew angrier. And as I grew angrier I grew more desperate to keep what I was feeling inside.

Sometimes I thought my brain was on fire and I would never be able to hold back my rage.

It became increasingly difficult to keep all this hidden.



I've barely reached the heart of the matter in this brief letter. But it's a start.

What I know for certain, is that it's no longer possible for me to pretend I don't live with anxiety and depression and I hope this helps you understand why I need to talk openly about it. my mental health, my well-being requires me to. the truth. Especially to my family and friends.



Love,
Bill