

Robin Williams' Depression Struggles



The **storied** comedian and actor Robin Williams had spent time at a rehab **facility** this summer to maintain his **sobriety**, his **publicist** said.

“This morning, I lost my husband and my best friend, while the world lost one of its most **beloved** artists and beautiful human beings,” Williams’ wife Susan Schneider said in a written statement on Monday afternoon. According to the local sheriff’s office, **coroners** believe Williams may have committed suicide by asphyxia, and the actor’s representative said he had been “**battling severe** depression **of late**.”

While the representative did not elaborate on the potential source of his recent depression, one-third of people with major depression also **struggle** with alcoholism, and Williams admitted to abusing both cocaine and alcohol during the **height** of his popularity in the 1970s as alien Mork on *Mork & Mindy*, which **showcased** his **manic** improvisational style. He **quit** using drugs and alcohol in 1983 and remained **sober** for 20 years after the birth of his first son.

But in a revealing interview in the *Guardian*, Williams admitted that while working in Alaska in 2003, he felt “alone and afraid” and turned to the bottle because he thought it would help. For three years, he believed it did, until his family **staged** an intervention and he went into rehab, he told the *Guardian*. “I was **shameful**, did stuff that caused **disgust** — that’s hard to **recover** from,” he said then. He said he **attended** weekly AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings, and this July, People.com reported that Williams spent several weeks at Hazelden **Addiction** Treatment Center in Minnesota, for what his representatives said was an “opportunity to **fine-tune** and focus on his continued **commitment** [to sobriety], of which he remains extremely **proud**.”

Studies suggest that alcoholism and depression may feed each other. People who are depressed are more vulnerable to abusing alcohol than those who don’t experience depressive episodes, and those who drink heavily are also more likely to experience depression. The latest evidence also **hints** that the same genes may be responsible for both conditions, and depression is a strong risk factor for suicide. About 90% of people who take their own lives are diagnosed with depression or other mental disorders. Suicide is also more likely among **baby boomers**, according to 2013 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Adapted from:

<http://time.com/3102414/robin-williams-depression-struggles-go-back-decades/>

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1. Reading comprehension questions

- 1) What was Robin Williams most famous for? Do you know any of his films?
- 2) Why had he spent time in ‘rehab’?
- 3) When his body was found, were coroners sure of the cause of his death?
- 4) According to the article, why was Williams so susceptible to depression?
- 5) What happened to Robin Williams in 1983?
- 6) What caused him to turn to the bottle again?
- 7) What is the relationship between alcoholism and depression? Is it genetic?
- 8) How old are the generation of baby boomers today?

2. Match the VERBS in column A with their definitions and synonyms in column B.

A	B
1) attend	a) adjust, change
2) battle	b) fight, resist, make a strong effort
3) fine-tune	c) suggest, indicate or give a clue to something
4) hint	d) bring something to public attention; publicise for all to see
5) quit	e) fight, struggle
6) recover	f) give up, stop, renounce
7) showcase	g) get well, get better, recuperate
8) stage	h) plan, organize, represent, exhibit
9) struggle	i) be present at an event, go to a meeting

3. Match the ADJECTIVES in column A with their definitions and synonyms in column B

A	B
1) beloved	a) affected by mania, overly excited or enthusiast
2) manic	b) causing or deserving shame, scandalous
3) proud	c) recorded or celebrated in history or in a story
4) severe	d) pleased with yourself about an achievement
5) shameful	e) greatly loved, dearly loved
6) sober	f) harsh, brutal, rigorous
7) storied	g) not drunk

4. Match the NOUNS in column A with their definitions and synonyms in column B

A	B
1) addiction	a) firm promise, obligation
2) baby boomer	b) distaste, repugnance
3) commitment	c) a building where a public service is provided
4) coroner	d) apex, pinnacle, summit
5) disgust	e) person born during the baby boom following World War II
6) facility	f) a government official who investigates deaths not due to natural causes
7) height	g) publicity agent, press agent, PR
8) publicist	h) abstinence, temperance, self-control
9) sobriety	i) dependence, habit, compulsion

5. Provide a short summary of the text (150 words).