



**Lord Stevenson, 57,
Chairman of Pearson plc
and HBOS plc.**

I used to think that people got depressed when there was something to get depressed about; depression was something to snap out of. But then it happened to me, quite out of the blue when I was in my 40s and just at a time when everything in my life seemed to be going perfectly - my family, my work, financial stability etc.

I had what I now understand to be a mild bout of clinical depression. I felt this 'deepening melancholia' - the 19th Century description is the best I have found. At its worst it lasted for three months and then it took another six months to get back to feeling completely better.

At least the experience has taught me one or two things about pacing myself in life's rich rat race, as well as being more

accepting of one's fate. During that period I continued to work pretty productively and did responsible jobs tolerably well. It is always worth remembering that Churchill led the victory in World War Two while wrestling with what he called his "Black Dog".

I did not tell people at the time because it was a matter of surviving and it would not have been sensible when I had so many people working for me. What better way to undermine people's confidence? But since I have recovered and it has not reoccurred I have been open about it with a reasonably selective audience. This is not a difficult decision for me because frankly I am reasonably successful and self confident. It would have been far more difficult to do when I was 30 and still struggling. If I cannot be honest about it, who can?

FACT: In a recent survey, 64% of young people said they would be embarrassed to tell a prospective employer that they had a mental health problem. (mind out for mental health research, 2001)