

TERRY BRADSHAW: 'You've got to be man enough to say something is wrong'



Bradshaw

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Playing in the Super Bowl should be the crowning glory of a quarterback's career. Winning the Super Bowl four times should be unimaginable bliss, joy, glee and every other word ever used to express happiness.

Not for Terry Bradshaw, the legendary Pittsburgh Steeler who became the first quarterback to

ever win four Super Bowl rings.

"How can I play in the Super Bowl and hate every second of it?" Bradshaw said. "The weeks following were even worse than that."

Bradshaw's Super Bowl wins in 1974, 1975, 1978 and 1979 made him the manliest of men in a manly game. He called his own plays and needed a cortisone shot before each game for his

injured elbow. His jersey No. "12" will never be worn by another Steelers player.

So why did Bradshaw cry when he saw an elderly couple holding hands? Why the endless funks? The bad behavior? Bradshaw got an answer eight years ago when he was diagnosed with clinical depression.

See BRADSHAW, 5D ►

Bradshaw: Therapy, medicine worked

► BRADSHAW from 1D

The diagnosis was a shock and a relief:

"I was actually happy because it gave me answers to some things I had done in my life," said Bradshaw. Things like three divorces, womanizing and feelings of hating his life.

After his last divorce, when he realized he would not be living with and raising his young daughters, he hit bottom.

Bradshaw spoke candidly about this battle with depression at the Hope for Depression luncheon at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach on Feb. 20. There was no hesitation or embarrassment as he described the progression of his illness.

Bradshaw, a Southern Baptist, first sought help from his preacher, "pouring my heart out for three days." His preacher told him needed more help. Bradshaw went to a psychologist and poured his heart out for another three days. The psychologist suggested he go to a psychiatrist.

"Can you give me a shot or something?" Bradshaw asked the psychiatrist. No, he learned, it was not that simple. He would need medications — which he is still on — and three more years of regular therapy.

"You have to be willing, men, to tell someone you don't know what a slime you have been in life," Bradshaw said.



RUTH CINCOTTA/Palm Beach Daily News

Football great and depression patient Terry Bradshaw with Audrey and Martin Gruss last month in Palm Beach.

Bradshaw got better but the world didn't. He took heat from his former teammates and the media, who accused him of hitting the speaking circuit with his story of depression to make money. He faced the same "woman" issues that every man with depression confronts.

"We're the macho guys and we don't want our women to know about it," he said. "Football players don't cry."

But depression does not mean you are weak, or that you are less of a man or that you cannot fix what is wrong, Bradshaw said. It means you have something wrong with your brain. No man chooses to have depression. You choose what to do about it, he said.

"Listen, men, you've got to be man enough to say something is wrong," Bradshaw said. "Don't be ashamed. I'm not."