

My Bipolar Story

By Travis Balitz

Prologue

I hate glamorizing my mental illness. But I feel like of all the books I have read from bipolar novelists, they share a similar theme. And that is instability with their moods. I think out of all the people in the universe that I've interacted with, I've been labeled the craziest, and most inappropriate person alive. I've been blocked from Facebook groups for all the content I post out there, and I am sure people get tired of me constantly complaining about how much I hate my life and that I want to end it. But truth is being bipolar isn't easy. Unlike a lot of the stories out there about bipolar disorder, I find mine a little boring. It just gets old after a while. But I want to share with you my story like an open book because I feel I need to get my story out there and share with you what I experienced as a Bipolar 1 individual, in the past, schizoaffective bipolar disorder, psychosis NOS and depression.

This is a precursor to the events that have greatly affected the livelihood of my life. I just want to explain a small snippet of my history. As I recall I was adopted at 6 months of age with an identical twin brother (who does NOT have bipolar disorder), and lived with my dad for 29 in a half year. We found our birth family, well birth mother, stepsisters and stepdad. According to what I know my mom had an affair with someone and got pregnant with us to. There isn't any conclusive information about her medical history. I know bipolar disorder runs in family lines but even that is blurry. For one reason, my brother didn't develop it. I did. I felt like I lived a normal childhood. Middle school got bullied, got depressed. No signs of mania. However, high school was clearly different. My adoptive parents go divorced in 2004. I didn't think much of it, maybe sometimes use it as an excuse for my behavior but reality is I am still in touch with my mom and since I live with my dad I get a long with him. It was in 11th grade when they divorced. When I was 11th and 12th grades I was increasingly losing sleep. I would be up all

night with insomnia, and get little to no sleep. I would always feel exhausted the next day, I talked to my therapist about it and she thinks that's not bipolar, you would be energetic. That's true but I feel if I cannot sleep and sleep medications do not really work these days (after experimentation with doctor's approval of course), then I am running a fine line between mania and depression. I was still having depression in high school. It was more pronounced during the mornings which I dreaded concert and ensemble. I remember taking some type of mental health test but I lied because I didn't want other people to know I was depressed.

2008

"My Bipolar Story" started in 2008, so it has been awhile, it is now 2017 and it feels like ages ago. Story goes that I've initially been diagnosed with depression but then two weeks later had a manic reaction to Paxil. What I remember about the incident is that I was leaving Brown College and I left class in a drunken stupor laughing hysterically. My brother was just awestruck and didn't know what to do because he was there taking the same course I did. My brother drove me home and all I would do is laugh and laugh and laugh like I was high or something. Later that day, I ended up in the emergency room, and Dr. Olsen, my primary physician said that I had a manic reaction to Paxil. Basically, I was already manic, and Paxil sent me on an even higher slope, so that is why I was giddy. Ever since this happened I have been labeled bipolar. However, as years go by things do get a little more complex. In fact, this was just only the beginning.

2009

The year is 2009 and I was going to college and going to work full time at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage as a temp worker. This happened from January 9th, 2009 to April 9th, 2009. We

will get to the reason why I only lasted 3 months – in the end I quit both my job and school. This entire time I wasn't suicidal but I was getting close to my breaking point. I was seeing a psychiatrist that prescribed me Wellbutrin. However, I was losing too much sleep. Due to frustration, I quit work, then I quit school. At the time, I was in an online relationship with a girl who lived in Virginia. So out of contempt, I drove 19 hours to Virginia. It was a difficult ride. I don't remember too much other than that it took me two days, and I hardly slept well. I do remember briefly stopping at a gas station to sleep. When I finally arrived, I am pretty sure I was being as impulsive as ever. Quitting work and school is one thing, but driving 19 hours in 2 days isn't something anybody would do. I was currently 22 years old. It was an alright time I had with her. I still wasn't getting any sleep. But I managed to make the best out of it. We took photos, went to the local store, met her brother and sister, and I even slept in her room. By the way she was Cambodian mix and was probably 19 years old. I am not sure if I was that sexually promiscuous but I lost my virginity to her that night. I don't want to be judgmental but her kitchen was a mess so I reorganized it. I stayed 3 days and left.

So, I started driving home, and due to my lack of sleep I was falling asleep at the wheel. I wasn't very cautious about my experience with her but I was urging myself to go home because I could not sleep in my car even if I tried. I missed her so much while being home that I couldn't bare being without her. It was my first relationship in real life, and I couldn't even be with her, so I thought. I don't really recall what was going through my mind at the time. I just had disorganized thinking. Something that comes up a lot in my life is that I experience suicidal ideations. And this time, I was lost and didn't know what to do with my life. I felt the relationship ended and it had nowhere to go, I had no job nor career and I was experience intense eyestrain, later I found out this was common with me and it was due to low moods, a sign of

depression. So out of spite of myself I grabbed up a rope from my dad's vehicle and I tied it to the top of the scaffolding in the Gazebo. I know one thing I was crying. I was in pain. So I would just stare at the rope contemplating death. I still don't understand why I do certain things that are bad, but I do them because I am in that deep of despair. Sometimes I don't value my life and I want to give everything up. I looked at it and looked at it while I watch listlessly sitting on the 3-fold couch. This was my first suicide attempt and only suicide attempt. I didn't realize it but my dad came home with my sister and younger cousin. He saw I was in the Gazebo and told me that this isn't right.

I believe I ended up in the hospital during July 2009. This was my first hospitalization ever. It was at University of Minnesota Fairview Hospital located in Minneapolis, MN. It was about a 45-minute drive from our house. I was put in a room with a roommate. In fact all of the rooms required roommates. I don't remember too much about how I was acting or feeling but I do recall they had a piano in their back office and I would go back there and play during the time my family would visit me. Throughout the entire session I was here I was doing okay. I can tell you whatever they put me on I was sleeping but I felt like a zombie. I would wake up a little after 8 AM and get breakfast, do activities, take mental health classes and get lunch at 12 AM, do more activities and mental health classes, and then dinner at 5 PM. This was my ritual, in fact most of the patients there had similar rituals. So, I finally got my diagnosis. I was hospitalized for psychosis not otherwise specified (NOS). When I was in the hospital, I was there probably 2 weeks and then I was put on Seroquel, which is an antipsychotic. I was experiencing auditory hallucinations that wanted me to kill myself, and so they put me on that drug. After the two weeks, I was discharged.

I was supposed to go to group after I was discharge but the first day I went back to the hospital for group treatment, I ended up in a catonic state so I would pace then slowly stiffen up and could not move. I felt over drugged, tired, in fact I felt extremely tired, it was horrible. I ended up in the ER and I don't know what drug they gave me but then they put me on a second drug Geodon. I was only on this drug for 2 weeks. Every time I would take it I would set off around 6 PM in excruciating mental pain. It was a permanent meltdown. I could not stand being on that drug any more. So, then I tried Invega, and experienced akathisia, which is the need to pace and that is so severe your legs begin to act out and is in constant need of walking. It is incredibly uncomfortable. It got so bad that I had to tell the psychiatrist that I wanted to kill myself because of the feeling. I then tried a newer drug at the time called Abilify. It was also a horrible drug. It caused akathisia and I felt my time was up as well. Then I found a relieving drug called Risperdal. I had to take Propranolol with it because I would experience severe akathisia. It helped a bit. But more so I was sleeping a lot like 12 hours a day. I believe I managed to stay on this drug for 6 months or so. During this time, I wanted to finish my Bachelor's Degree in Technical Management. So, I would do online studies at the time. Eyestrain was so bad I would use a projector. Yet again it was related to my mood, simply too depressed.

2010

I also was taking classes at Century College. However, one day the akathisia from Risperdal was so bad that I wanted to commit suicide while driving myself over a cliff. I got myself lost somehow, but managed to find my way home. So I went back to the hospital at University of Minnesota Fairview Hospital in August 2010. The routine was the same. I can't remember if I have any artwork that I worked on there, but I do recall doing a tin work design. I

was given Zyprexa and was on it for a few days. However, they took me off of it because I would be sleeping too much and over sedated. Then the psychiatrist (med student) would give me Clozaril. But I ended up sleeping 16 hours a day there. There was no major life changing event that I experienced while in this hospital but in the end, I do remember they put me back on Seroquel. Now let me remind you, with in a years' time I was on Seroquel, Geodon, Risperdal, Invega, Abilify, Xyprexa and Clozaril from 2009 to 2010. It was a year of pain and a year of suffering. But I discharged maybe 10 days later. I also need to mention that I was going to Dakota County Technical College. However, I've decided the last day of my stay at DCTC I would quit Seroquel because it impaired my driving.

2011-2012

From September 2011 to February 2012, I worked for UPS. I was clearly on no mood stabilizer and no antipsychotic. I look back now and wonder, if they knew I was bipolar, why would they not prescribe me a mood stabilizer? I think it is because they thought the psychosis was bad enough that they wanted to make sure this was taken care of. A lot of people with mood issues like depression and bipolar would take antipsychotics over a mood stabilizer. I managed life now. I was the fittest I have ever been. However, I was getting sick of the job at UPS. I was having weird demonic dreams and chaotic sleep cycles. My brother was dating a Hmong girl named Mai at the time and I would always disrupt their relationship. I liked Mai, and things with Kyle were alright. I would just get mixed moods after a stressful night at work. Clearly anything would set me off and I would argue with them. I was way to intertwined with my relationship with my brother Kyle and his girlfriend Mai. I forgot to mention that we were identical twins, and that has always played a pivotal role in our relationship and how we interact with others outside the two of us.

2012 was a magical year for me at least the relationships were that I've encountered. They probably were the most passionate of all relationships. My first one was a beautiful Korean adoptee. It didn't last long. Although I was attracted to her, her personality and mine were very different. We shared our adoption stories to her mom. We even went to a Korean adoptee camp. It was alright I guess. It was boring though, unsubstantial and unriveting. There was some drama but none to be over obsessed about. I was one time so fearful in a park with her that I ditched her. We would clash. Surprisingly she was the first and only that gave me a promise ring. I gave her one back of course but I don't know. This one just didn't last. I wasn't even on meds at the time so I don't know why the problems started with the one I will explain to you later. But with this one we parted ways and I became a well-known rapper. Oh wait, I've rapping 5 years and still a dink but that is when I started and never ended.

Then I got involved with a Hmong relationship. I don't remember much about this relationship just the obnoxious events like trying to sleep at her place then leaving her in the middle of the night because I couldn't sleep. Or the time I got mad at her and took a chainsaw to her place to represent how broken and irritated I was with her. There were plenty of bad moments but I also good ones. However, I would always mention the ex and I would have to pay her money every time I would start whining that she isn't good enough. It probably didn't make her feel that good but of all the relationships I have had, even the one's now, she was the one I took the most advantage over. I would pretend moments were passionate. I remember one event where we lay in a van listening to my new rap singles. I felt on top of the world. I felt wanted. But the obsession got to me and then things got worst and I started loathing. She simply wasn't enough. She wouldn't be there for me. Did I mention she had a son? I guess I wanted her to give me more attention than him. Again, she wasn't enough for me. All I would

do is complain, complain, complain. You see the bigger picture? I was having a riveting affair with bipolar coming out at its finest. I just didn't want to accept it. In fact, the relationship failed because I would cycle between high and low and I would cycle between mixed mood to a passionate state that I forget how difficult it made the relationship. I can remember many inappropriate behaviors. I'll let you decide what that may be. But in the end, I ended up in the psychiatrist office with a slowly becoming ex-girlfriend. I just wouldn't let it go. I didn't want to be on medications period. No if and or buts. It's not fair. Not my time. Will not accept it. Then I would blame music for getting me manic and even doctor Olsen said, "no its your brain not music." So, I tried Depakote one day, felt dead like it was poison. I've become a passionless diffusion of my high. Oh God I missed the high. So, I grabbed a big stick and dragged it on the highway in the middle of the road. I pretended to be Jesus Christ himself suffering. I dragged it until my bro picked me up 5 miles later. Then I was meeting with another psychiatrist but as soon as I got to the building I choked and walk away on Warner Road next to the Mississippi river. My dad and bro picked me up after that. My to be ex-girlfriend was there and I don't know what happened to her after that. Then there was this other instant I drove my push lawnmower on highway 61 shirtless. A seemingly stupid event that lead me nowhere other than the cops coming to hunt me down and my brother ended up picking me up. So I tried Depakote on my own again. It was nighttime when I rushed to girlfriend's house. I couldn't breathe. I ended up in Maplewood in the ER and I was given a med probably a Benadryl and the doc told me, "the reason why your throat is swelling up is because you are allergic to Depakote. This was a rough relationship with medications. Not only did the mood stabilizer didn't work, it proved how unwilling and stubborn I was to get treated. I just wasn't ready. I had a passion for composing music but didn't put in all my effort. So, I was using music as an ultimatum. It is

weird got a 3.86 GPA in high school and made the dean's list in college but my life proved immaturely unsuccessful. I didn't want to grow up. Two years on social security made things easy but it wouldn't take my illness away. I was starting to notice how unstable I really was and went to partial hospitalization at united hospital. The doctor was an asshole so I thought. I hated his words. I said, "I just can't sleep. I am depressed." He said bluntly you have bipolar disorder. He then gave me lithium that day, the oldest mood stabilizer in the books. I wasn't fighting as much anymore so I took the damn pills. This was a life changing event. I started with 1 pill 300 mg and slowly went up to 900mg 3 pills daily. I was reluctant to go to the hospital, it was cold and snowy one day. In the end, I missed a few days and was discharged due to my absence. I finally started to accept my mental illness.

According to my ex I am talking about here in the previous paragraph, she says "airplanes and trains, were a sign. I would receive obsessive 24/7 texts, messages, and calls. There was a lot of coming to my house and turning around. Going into ditch trying to work to 'support' me. One time he was cycling so fast at Hmong Village he was driving to Phalen lake, oh no, not feeling it, then going back to Hmong Village, no go home, no doesn't want to go home, go back to Phalen, no don't want to go to Phalen, go to movie, no, go to eat, no. He would be yelling at your dad, trying to move out, purposeless, emptiness, high stripping naked, throwing rice, 'explicit' while bathing, crying, praying, airbrushing, throwing a fit when interrupted, threatening to kill my son if I didn't let u go."

2013

2013 was a year I want to forget. In fact, I don't have a lot to tell you much about 2013 because I don't remember much other than looking at past newsfeeds that took place in late 2013. I assume that is when I met another Korean adoptee. I was raw and selfish and abusive. I

was probably at my worst when it comes to romantic relationships. It just wasn't there anymore. I would think this girl would feed on me like a parasite. Not only did I put myself in a relationship out of pity. It was the worst mistake ever. I even wanted to visit her in Boston Massachusetts. And just gang up on her to spite herself. Instead of me becoming the agitator, I'd become the victim of obsessiveness. I'd see a text. I throw a fit. I hear her name I would dig a hole in the wall. All of this is literal. It happened. But let's get to the beginning. I was up in the attic enjoying my time watching Netflix, music, and stripping. But then I got serious and started airbrushing. I really closed my mind up and shut everyone out. That lead to 2014 which I will discuss in detail later.

Ex-girlfriend writes, "Nah it's ok and I know what you mean about back then. It wasn't good. It was before I was diagnosed as bipolar and possibly was manic and it why I texted you nonstop. Now these days I learned my lesson and take my meds. I know you did verbally abuse me but that's all I remember. I know start of our friendship was fine with us and remember just talking basic." So, there isn't a lot of great memories that we remember between us which is the reason why we probably both forgot them. She does admit being verbally abused and so do I. But for now, all I can do is apologize for that. And I have on Facebook. Though I was on a mood stabilizer, I was increasingly getting more depressed, and I would often act out my situation. 2014 would disclose more information about what eventful happenings were going on at the time, and quite stressful times.

2014

2014 was the roughest year in my life. Sometime in the winter I put up a tent and wanted to live in there. My mom saw a picture of my brother and me in there and she told us to take the tent down. There was an argument with my dad and he tore it down. I was mad but didn't have

anything else to do. In February 2014, my dad had a freak accident. I can remember parts of it like yesterday. I heard the collapse in the basement since I was pretty much living down there stuck to the couch. It went boom. At the time, I didn't much think of it but Becky (my dad's girlfriend) came down and was yelling. I went into the laundry room and I noticed my dad was in a deep snore. Two police officers came in and I remember them asking us questions. They were looking around and it became a blur after that. I was in the waiting room with mom, sister, brother and aunt. I was deeply distressed and this triggered more gloom and doom and greatly impacted my mood. It was hard to not hold back tears when we saw him in the operating table. We found out he had a pulmonary embolism but he was saved. After this incident, my behavior was slowly becoming psychotic. It is worth mentioning that during my first and second hospitalization I was considered to have schizoaffective bipolar disorder, a mix of psychotic and bipolar behavior. The symptoms I like to call "poverty of the mind" where the mind slowly becomes paranoid. For instance, eating rice was like eating brains. I was so paranoid I didn't leave the house or go upstairs. It was hard to get up from the couch. I was slowly collecting things of nature and my basement became of clutter. My friend has left his fat black cat with us and I slowly became its only friend. I wanted nowhere to be near dad, because of the incident. I thought the world around me was decaying and I had to be on guard sitting or lying on the couch 24/7 due to fear of movement. I created a "bitchen" by putting shelves on the walls and putting plates used for eating while a toilet was just below. I would rinse in a sink instead of a bath tub. I would take an empty bucket and fill it with water to rinse my hands. And worst of all I would use kitty litter as a bathroom. I would even chunk it up and put it in the kitty litter dispenser. I felt like I lived homeless in a home and it felt awful. I just couldn't get myself out of this state of mind and I couldn't get myself to get a job. I would spend my time making crafty wire

ornaments to represent our dead love ones. They were alive, but I lived each day like they were dead. The last straw was when I wouldn't go upstairs to eat dinner with the family. So, I ended up in the hospital at Regions. I was at my lowest weight. I dropped a phenomenal 25 lbs. My lowest weight calculated was about 122.6 lbs. So, when I was in the hospital waiting room I went to see a dietician. I was put on a new antipsychotic, called Latuda 80 mg. When I was out I was seeing a nurse practitioner and I would fiddle around with the dosages at home between 40, 60 and 80 mg. I was always complaining that the meds made me feel like a zombie and the effects would prevent me from doing anything during the day. The fatigue drained me. I was incredibly sedated. When I was home I was always complaining to a friend online how lonely I was and that the cat was my best friend. I had two more hospitalizations that year. One was in end of November 2015 for 3 days and after Christmas day 2015 for 2 weeks or so. I don't remember much what happened during this time. Not sure why perhaps nothing out of the ordinary was significant other than the suicidal ideations. I almost forgot that at the end of December for 3 weeks I participated in a partial hospitalization called "Daybridge." I made one friend there, she was a korean adoptee though we are no longer in communication.

2015

On January 9th, 2015, I was voluntarily committed to an IRTS facility in West St. Paul. My family at the time thought I would be in better care there with a staff then at home with a physically weak father. I just didn't want to be at home. I didn't feel safe and I did not want to go back. I have journal entries of my stay there but I am not sure if I should share personal stories that involved their names being released. I could always change the names but I will see once I re-edit this paragraph. I don't remember a whole lot it was all a blur. I remember getting up at 9:30 AM and going to groups in and out till 3:30 PM. We would be assigned certain task

to do throughout the day. This includes cooking, cleaning, vacuuming, restocking, garbage removal, etc. Some people were old and couldn't do their tasks. Some people were lazy and refused to do their task. I met an interesting bunch. In fact, one of the people there that I roomed with for a long time was also a patient at Regions. He recently had a dying wife and it put a lot of strain on him. I made friends but I didn't keep any. I just felt that once I got home I wanted a new perspective on life. Back to the IRTS facility. There was a pool table, and cable tv and a small exercising machines. I participated sometimes in these activities. When it came to groups I was pretty much there all the time because I wanted my free time to go out. Main reason is that I had to go to caribou coffee to use their internet to upload my music I was composing at the time. I was smart and brought my music equipment, computer, keyboard, stand, sheet music, extra USB ports, speakers, etc. I created several new age music pieces and even a couple beats. And I was prepared with two suit cases. I had an unexpected visitor from Thailand and she came to visit me in the IRTS. I was moved by the event but she didn't seem to want a relationship, and I wasn't totally interested but greatly am impacted by her care. I had a few outside visitors but this is the first time I met this one. I was 3 months there. My discharge date was April 9th, 2017. I was set for Dialectical Behavioral Therapy at Minnesota Mental Health in Woodbury. When I was in the IRTS I was given an assessment for a CADI-Waiver. This would allow me to have certain access to mental health services, especially the ILS worker. I still have one today. When I saw the nurse practitioner, she advised me to see another psychiatrist since I was with her a year and problems haven't resolved. I briefly was with someone that I felt was deathly ignorant and then I've been with my current one ever since. I can talk about dialectical behavioral therapy. However, even though it was 8 months long, I forgot most of the knowledge. How effective were the results? At the time, I felt I couldn't live without DBT but

that isn't true. Even when I was in the IRTS and had several classes on mental health there I was able to live without the knowledge that I learned later in life even up to this day. The reason I stopped applying the concepts is because I couldn't keep myself studying on my own. It was just information that slowly was being forgotten. The events that lead to me quitting DBT were so traumatic that I didn't want anything to do with DBT. But the things I remember was simple concepts. There were three modules that had several acronyms for coping mechanisms. Originally DBT was created by Marsha Linehan who suffered from Borderline Personality Disorder. She invested her time to create a system of things for other borderline individuals to cope with. It later became a renowned therapy method for other mental illnesses outside of borderline personality disorder. One policy that I remember is that there were no interpersonal relationships while in class (even though I knew one existed). It made it difficult to form relationships outside of group so I made no friends but it was for safety issues. Members would often come and go as seen fit. Sometimes it was work, or safety, or even disobeying the rules. It would be wrong of me to discuss anything outside of group so that was another reason why I forgot most of the connections that I did have.. It was pressured for me to find a job so I got in in June 2015 and I quit sometime in December 2015. I did this simultaneously while being in DBT and working part time. I worked for Marsden cleaning banks. One day I spent my time adding Korean adoptees on Facebook. One reached out to me after the friend request. We quickly became good friends. However, I felt misled and it soon became an unrequited love relationship. She decided that my mental health wouldn't be fit for her, and that she met someone. I believe she is currently engaged now. But at the time it gravely impacted my mood. I quit DBT, I quit my job, I quit my ARHMS worker, and I was bound to quit my ILS worker. Ever since then I haven't felt the same about work. In fact, I've only held a job for 6 months, no

longer than that, and that was the job I held at Marsden. I seem to always end up in relationships that affect me negatively

2016

2016 was a very normal life. More normal than anything that I have mentioned in the past. Of course, I had financial and relationship let downs. But I still carried my way towards a goal each day. I want to say that history repeats itself, so I may end up in a bad state. I know I probably had my bad days in 2016 but I don't remember them. One of the big events that happened in April was that I had a female friend come visit me for 2 months. She was Korean, very beautiful, and had an intermediate English accent. I was in love with her but many people felt she abused me and that I should get out. Even up to this day I am no longer in touch with her but she has the habit to disappear and reappear in my life. It is emotionally draining because her inability to make up her mind makes her very unreliable. I feel that because of this relationship, I wasn't hit by it till much later. I didn't think much of the break up even though we were to be married. But at the time I only got to know her 3 months including the chats online. I also felt that in the end it was too rushed even though she desperately wanted to get married. Not only that but my brother felt like she abandoned him and that he was still an asset in the house while his girlfriend felt like she couldn't get a long with her. She was uneasy with my bipolar disorder but at the same time all of the girlfriends that I have been uneasy with my relationships with them and they never last.

2017

2017 happened quickly it is already September. I did have a hospitalization and a new ILS worker however things are going much smoother. My biggest regret was going off Lithium

and going onto Lamictal. I was having increased suicidal ideations and wanted to hang myself again. Chris Cornell, and Chester Bennington hung themselves and committed suicide. It triggered me and only wanted me to attempt it as well. So, I went to the hospital after 26 months from being at Regions. It is noted that I was pondering about the side effects of lithium. In the future, I could have dystonia or kidney problems so I thought I try switching mood stabilizers. It just didn't happen that way. I was discharge after 5 days. My dad and I had an argument about my profession since I entered online modeling. Because of it I ended up being stopped by the police for 2 days. I was so furious that I ended up walking away in corn stalks, with feet all muddy and on the highways. We made a deal and I no longer pursued the profession. I only did it partially because my ex-girlfriend did it and that it was easy to do and I could do it anytime I want. I had some minor med adjustments and I am here right now writing this paragraph today. I'm currently taking Metoprolol 25 mg 2 tablets (50 mg total) in the morning. I take Lithium 300 mg 4 tablets (1200 mg total), Lamictal 100 mg 1 tablet, Latuda 60 mg 1 tablet, Klonopin 0.5 mg 1 tablet, and Sonata as a PRN at night if I wake up in the middle of the night. “

Things are always changing I was weening off one 300 mg tablet of lithium.

These are some of my thoughts as of today. No matter how much people tell me that I am not my illness. I continue to disagree. I don't know why I feel like I treat myself different because I get a feeling it is how others see me. With the inclusion of failed relationships and those that never even opened I feel I blame my mental health. For the one point in my life, like a personality trait, it will never be cured just managed. So far I feel that the wisdom I have received from outside sources like personal development books and training, I feel like I haven't really overcome that part of me, failure and loss and illness. Now, I know if I was a successful internet marketer I'd be financially steady

in my own way to the point I wouldn't need to fit the mold of what society brings me. But I'm not successful as of now even as I write this book. I hope that as I continue to grow that some perspective inside of me would see things differently. But for now I know bipolar is part of me. As I write this I am on 2 hours of sleep, different from a week ago, I just got 19 to 23 hours in bed each day. I got use to sleeping a lot, it made my day easy, however, things are changing as of now.”.

Epilogue

My therapist says I put too much emphasis on my bipolar disorder but I swear that is what most people see. So, every time I seem to have a rough patch in a relationship or I feel down about being lonely I go back to writing my book. I don't necessarily think it is healing but it does distract me from the worst part of the day. I am obsessive in relationships, and quite active to the point it drains people. My ideologies are that I just need constant attention but other people feel suffocated and cannot handle the suffocation. As I reflect I have had 7 hospitalizations in total. I had 2 partial hospitalizations. One 90-day IRTS. And 6 months of DBT. I have had several relationships and my mental illness has affected my ability to maintain a stable relationship. In fact, up to this day I barely can manage a part time job. I recently had a rediscover spiritually. A Jehovah Witness reached out to me and I got involved. This is the first time in which I have used God to my advantage. In the past, I felt that mental health was a curse from God but now I have a very different philosophy. Due to human imperfections, we are unable to live eternal life that includes living with such mental illnesses. It isn't what God wanted of us. I was very open to the new religion, however, I had a recent fallout because my dad didn't agree with the teachings. He didn't want me having bible sessions no more, so I quietly exited the religion.

People might be wondering about my mental health. My moods come and go like waves, sometimes stronger than before, others much less. I find myself wondering if publicizing my illness is going to change anything. I am not sure. I hope in the long run it pays off because sometimes I still feel like there are days in which I experience suicidal ideations. The hardest part about everything isn't so much about retelling the story, but trying to win an audience. I would like my story to be heard and accepted in the community. I've spent years composing music, rapping, exercising my faith on YouTube and still I feel that people lay a blind eye on my mental health. It is all too common online to be judged harshly when I have a bad day. No matter what it is what people remember the most is the negativity coming from me. I got banned from groups because of the way I express myself online. I feel that when it comes to relationships, I am bounded to discipline and I feel far from able to do that. I am usually a free for all, telling my disability to the world. It has been 8 years in which I have been on disability. I don't regret it but I do regret not having to make an impact in what I love to do. I would have never thought that writing a book, especially an autobiography be during my to do list but here I am almost finishing what I wrote. I am not sure how long I want to put it on the back burner because I may want to include more information about my long-term past.

Why is Life Precious?

Hi. My name is Travis Balitz and I have bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder is a state or states in which I have highs and lows. I don't want to get into too much scientific detail on the illness but to get you to believe that life is precious even living with a mental illness, even when you feel you are at your ultimate low in life. You have significance; it may not feel like you do at this moment but you still mean a lot to you and your relationship with the universe. You are a survivor. And you can turn things around. Never ever give up hope. Never ever give up faith because without passion, life can seem meaningless. People who commit suicide are not weak but are in a vulnerable state. These people may forgo their meds, forget about self-care. But remember if it takes you all your strength to move forward or get out of bed, take your medications, it is one step forward in the right direction. I'm calling to you that your life isn't meant to be over. It is just beginning. Those scars you may have after your latest cut, or those feelings you have after your latest depression are memories and experiences, good or bad, experiences are just subjective events. With time, they can mean something totally different. I am sorry you have had a tough life. I'm sorry you have a mental illness, but don't be ashamed. Shame only calls you to cower. Do not be guilty, it isn't your fault. Don't blame the illness; blame yourself for not fighting back. Challenge yourself to believe that life is worth fighting for because in the end, it's you and the universe. I want you to strengthen your meaning here on earth. I want you to believe that life is worth living. But in the end, it's up to you to take that knowledge and live superior. I am that resource for you to use for it to become useful. When you're cursed, you forget to dream. When you feel free, you believe you can dream. So, dream for me. Why? Because life is precious.

Why Take Medications to Treat Mental Illness

The bottom line is medication works. People relapse because they go off their meds. This is a well-known fact. You are probably thinking well I don't want to take meds, I am feeling better. So, I can go off my meds. I hate to break it to you but meds are the only way to address your problems especially if you are mentally ill. I've tried 8 antipsychotics, 4 antidepressants, 3 mood stabilizers, until I found the right cocktail of medications. In fact, I am continuing to find the right cocktail. This whole thing is a process and takes time. There is no easy way around it. We suffer from lack of sleep, to suicidal tendencies, depression, and mania. Meds can help with coping with these problems. You might ask will meds cut my creativity? That isn't true. In fact, most people with mental illness are more productive when they are in their normal states then depression or mania. They are just more influenced by the abnormal states when in creative moods. I spent several years denying myself to medication with no positive results. I succumbed to feelings of weakness, sorrow and despair. I remember one psychiatrist say that I am bipolar and the only solution is a mood stabilizer. I just didn't want to believe it. However, he was partially correct because I also needed an antipsychotic for sleep and bizarre behavior I was experiencing. I want you to know that taking medications for mental illness is no different than a person with diabetes who takes medication and should be treated no different than such illness. You shouldn't be ashamed to take medication because many people do. Likewise, the if symptoms persist, it could make treatment more difficult and more ineffective in the future. I had an ex fiancé tell me to go without meds. You'll feel better. But I know relapse and hospitalization is likely the outcome. I cannot sleep without meds. For now, if you people are mentally ill, please take your medications. Thank you.

Bipolar and Relationships

I find personal relationships difficult, especially living with bipolar disorder. There are so much dynamics involved, whether I was on medications, personality, physical illness, family etc. Not only do I find it hard to find a relationship, which is finding people that can accept my illness and have the willingness to date me, I find it harder to maintain a relationship. I am 29 years old and had six relationships, and 1 unrequited relationship. I have dated only Asian women: 3 Korean adoptees, 1 Korean, 2 Hmong, and 1 Chinese, Cambodian mix. I guess you can say I have a preference. It might be because I'm a Korean adoptee that I tend to assimilate to Asian people. In reality, I am open to date someone I am attracted to, they just tend to be all Asian. Let's talk physical. For 4 of the relationships that got physical, I had no problems meeting my sexual needs; however, my bipolar traits got in the way with some physical needs. One wanted more skin ship, hugging, kissing, touching, but I wasn't in the mood. We had several heated arguments over this. When I am depressed I usually am not in the mood for a physical relationship and tend to be more aloof hence my bipolar depression. Now let's talk about emotional needs? It is apparent when I am depressed I get people angry. Some are more open to my neediness; others don't know how to react. I would often experience mixed moods. I was always angry and I would take out on my relationships, blaming them and not my mind. Usually a relationship is supposed to feel uplifting but during my most depressive eras, 2 relationships were clearly not working. I was cold, down, and suicidal, meaning my life was on the line and I wasn't sure how someone could help me feel any better. I ended up getting help of course, but the relationships fell apart. As you can tell there is a lot of instability to the point that I feel unlucky in relationships. There is more too it but I want to respect the privacy of some of them and clearly do not want to point fingers because that isn't what the goal is. The goal is to

share my experience on living with bipolar disorder and trying to have a loving relationship. I feel like I failed. I don't think I would find one person that I could fall in love with meanwhile having it go the same. If I must be alone the rest of my life, it defeats the purpose of what I really am searching for. Of course, I don't want to be alone but the lifestyle I live doesn't always suit the relationship I seek. So, is there a positive outcome to this scenario? I could always hope but realistically it doesn't seem practical. The way I see it is that a relationship is only a part of what I need; the other parts are things I'm working on. I clearly do love someone but at the same time I felt I wasn't love properly. In fact, we were going to get married and now she's just an ex fiancée in another relationship. I dream of that normal life but I am quite abnormal and having both things doesn't seem to always work. In the end, I do feel better than before and the truth is I'm not in a relationship. So that is one positive thing out of this scenario. I don't have a clear answer for you guys, usually I am very one sided with my speeches but I clearly am aghast by this topic – relationships never go well for me – in the end I just end up being alone to pry on my own situation. I find it strange to pray for something when it will never work. Being a pessimist with some acquired optimism all I can hope for is to know that in the end I am not alone in my situation. There are other people that had experiences like me, and if not, well I guess that is the part of being unique.

Managing Bipolar Disorder and Work

I struggled with anxiety, depression and anger. These all contributed to work related problems. I haven't been with the same company for over 2 years and I haven't worked for over 6 months consecutively. Prior to being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, earlier than age 21, I managed a full time outdoor seasonal position for 3 years. Once I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, managing my second job became difficult. I worked in an office fulltime, suffering from insomnia and anger. I also was going to school fulltime too and that lead to my ultimate breakdown. It maybe was 2 or 3 years before I tried work again as a part time package handler. I was currently on no medications besides a benzodiazepine for sleep. I remember having mixed moods, aggressive tendencies and anger issues during this time. I stayed at this job for 5 months than quit. That's when the strange nightmares stopped as well. I then cleaned my mother's house, composed music, and airbrushed. Sometime in between these years I worked a few days in construction and manufacturing. They didn't last long. I've always struggled with getting proper sleep until I started an antipsychotic. Since 2009 I have been on social security disability insurance and SSI. Work overall has been challenging and I became unambitious to work. My latest job was a janitorial position for banks. I stayed 6 months and quit, due to increasing suicidal ideations over an unrequited relationship. In the end, I never quite successfully accomplished a job. Part of it is lack of motivation, part of it is mental illness. Now I am doing what I must do to keep mentally healthy. I find it difficult to manage a job and live with bipolar disorder but it's good to know that I am a live to tell about it.