

BIPOLAR II -

(Beyond the unhappy diagnosis
and into a happy life)



Evelyn Tomson

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Bipolar II - (Beyond The Unhappy Diagnosis And Into A Happy Life)

Аннотация

Informational and positive look on the hard diagnosis. Lifting the stigma, finding that you are not alone in all this.

The book is a personal journey, finding what the disease is all about, managing the difficult moments of depressions and hypo-mania episodes until a stable effect is reached, the so-called remission. The author also shares her successes, talents and everything she has learned in an optimistic and positive way.

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Beyond The Unhappy Diagnosis And Into A Happy Life

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Cover back:

“We all have the right to be happy, married or single, with kids or without, with a disease or without”.

What is BAR all about?

I started a research about BAR years ago in 2005 with nothing much to find in the Internet. Only that it was a disease that is quite difficult to diagnose, but at least it is curable, or better say treated with success. Today in 2021 there is much more information freely available, but a few people dare openly share they have it. Still the stigma that goes along with it is strong, because it is a mental illness. Nowadays doctors talk of 3 types of BAR (Bipolar Affective Disorder): Bipolar I, Bipolar II and Cyclothymic disorder. Here I am only giving you the names and the top 3 sites I found the latest information from. These are:

www.spychiatry.org/patients-families/bipolar

www.helpguide.org/bipolar-disorder-signs-and-symptoms

www.mayoclinic.org/disease-conditions/bipolar-disorder/signs-and-symptoms

Why is it bipolar? Because there are 2 ends of the pole: one is called Mania, the other end is Depression. When you are in Mania you do not need much sleep and you are very active, feeling elated, full of energy and ideas, often creative and you spend your days almost without fatigue. It may seem to be very positive to an on-looker. But a person who is Bipolar may accept some ideas of his as pre-dominant and act according to that. He/she might take an illusionary scenario as real, for example he

might feel as being watched or pursued. And if he does not stop to rest and slow down, or is unable to decide which part of these ideas are untrue – he may end up in hospital.

The other end of the pole is – melancholia or depression. You lose interest in your job, your life, family and friends. You have low energy, low self-esteem and if this goes on for longer than a month you might be heading for depression. Depressions can be mild or severe ones, depending on each case, individually. And they do not go away by themselves. You need to consult a doctor and try more than one medication sometimes, until you and your doctor find one that works for you and can bring you back to normal – meaning you can work, live your life and even enjoy things.

	Severe mania Hypomania (mild to moderate mania) Normal, balanced mood Mild to moderate depression Severe depression
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So we can differentiate the following 5 conditions, according to helpguide.org:

The good news though is that many talented people are like that...mainly singers and actors but Mariah Carey – the famous singer – openly spoke about it in an article I found in 2018.

I myself am not a singer, but I like singing Karaoke songs. It happens once or twice a year and especially when I go to Wonderland in summer time.

In search of what is wrong with me – I read a lot of books about self-help and improvement and I can say that we all have the right to be happy. So I searched for happiness and I found it. In my work and in my friends circle in my home country and in the country I prefer to call Wonderland. This was my starting point: We all have the right to be happy, married or single, with kids or without, with a disease or without.

Here is the best place to mention the books I found helpful throughout my life, books that make you think outside of the box, lift your spirits up and help in all possible ways.

1 Dale Carnegie: How to Stop Worrying and Start Living

2 Dr. Joseph Murphy: The Power of Your Subconscious Mind

3 Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now

4 Phonda Burn: The Secret

5 Brenda Barnaby: Beyond the Secret. Happiness is possible

6 Osho: The orange book – about meditation

7 The works of Bayinsa Dunov , the books of Mirzakarim Norbekov

8 Deepak Chopra: The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire

9 N. C. Lazarev: Diagnostics of Karma – this last one I found heavy and difficult to understand.

Since yearly childhood I knew my life will be associated with English. I was at the age of 9 or 10. I lived a happy life in a

country behind the iron curtain. But apart from the strong feeling that my life will be associated with English I also knew I was very fragile, too sensitive for this world, taking things personal and later working too much...

My 1st Episode of depression

According to statistics the first episode usually occurs up to the age of 25. (National Institute of Mental Health, USA). And each 1 in 100 persons is bipolar. (irsiluma.It)

My first meeting with the disease was at the age of 23. I had fallen in love with an intelligent man but he was not free. So I was only an affair for him and naturally things had to end. But his partner found out and spoke to one of my parents. She did not ask me how I felt. Nor did she take my side. And soon the events escalated so much that I decided and tried to commit a suicide. Luckily, as it was mainly a cry for help, I had chosen pills and alcohol for my attempt. And so they found me on time and saved me. I will always be grateful to my dad for he was the man who found me. So before I knew what Mania is I was facing a Depressive episode. Horrible time, the emergency unit had to report the attempt and after my initial treatment I had to be treated for my mental problem.

I do not hate anyone for the way they reacted. I spent 40 days in a psychiatric ward and then the veil was lifted, exactly on the 40th day. I felt light, good again and I learned the hard way that there is a way out of a depression. I am now almost 50. So for the time span of 27 years living with the disease I can say that I had more Depressive episodes and only 3 Mania ones. In one of the sites I have given in the beginning of the book they say

that patients experience more often depressive episodes, and that manic ones can be mild, and then they are called hypo-manic.

But during these 40 days I remember 2 things. I asked for a Bible – the version for children with wonderful pictures. And there I draw a line for every day spent inside. The second amazing thing was that Mum came to visit me every day after work. How she managed to go to work and how she got a permission to enter every day at about 5.30 I never dared to ask. But I love her dearly for being there for me every day. The other members of my family visited also when it was allowed.

Anyway, after this depression I found reasons to live, I had to finish my education and that's what I did. I pulled myself together and studied and passed my exams and I nearly finished with flying colors. I got a diploma in English – Master's degree.

I was happy that I survived and got over this difficult moment in my life. And I only hoped no new episodes would come. Alas....

A shift into mania, perhaps hypo-mania

BAR can be a seasonal illness. My doctor advised me to be careful especially in spring and autumn times. She had also said that I have to take my medication – usually just 1 pill, the so-called mood stabilizer. I was taking Depakine Chrono 500 gr. then. And I was feeling quite OK for some time until in early spring I started listening to the texts of the songs very intensively. I mostly listened to English songs and I sometimes made connections with the text as referring to me, or a scene from a film as referring to me. Until then I had not experienced a manic episode so I kind of liked being with sharpened senses and thinking precisely... I just noticed that I sleep less hours though I had nothing to worry about. It was my last year of University... But probably the lack of sleep played a trick on me. I am not sure exactly how it started but I had the feeling of being pursued at some point. The other interesting thing was that I was not afraid or something but I thought that all cars in dark grey or black were pursuing me. And I walked for hours around my university town, restless and not knowing who to call for help, would he/she understand me and believe me.

I read that if you do not sleep enough you get tired at some point and then you get micro-sleep moments. Not when you are

in mania! Nor do you fall in hypo-thermia...like they described in a test they made with soldiers, who were left without sleep for 48 hours or so and they developed one of these conditions or both of them: the micro-sleep and hypo-thermia. (I had read about this in a book.)

The important thing is to stop yourself, if you can and try and rest. Going home and staying in bed is the best option. Something I did not do and following a bad scenario, I made a small mess, my family found out about it and I had to be referred to a doctor. I already had my first depressive episode and with this episode of mania the doctor had every reason to decide I was Bipolar. It is not something pleasant to hear, and back then in 1996 you almost looked like an alien, trying to understand and not finding enough information – only the bits the doctor told you. That it is intellectual, that you should not give up or despair, that it is treatable... But try and explain it to your family...It is difficult...for the same reason...lack of information in those years. I remember my doctor was so kind and so encouraging. She said that it is individual and with the proper attitude and a working treatment things can stay under control for a long time. She did not even register the case. I had not got a file in my name. We used my father's name in the beginning. Like I said the doctor was hoping it will not repeat itself. Now when I think of it, it is much easier because I have my own experiences, but it was my first case of mania, so it was natural not to know what is better to be done. Also having all the latest information from the sites

and all through the years, I can say I am probably Bipolar II, like Mariah Carey's, for my mania episodes are of short duration, so they are more or less hypo-mania ones.

Depressions

In 1997 I began working as an English teacher but in my second year I started feeling so tired. I started losing concentration and could only finish my teaching if I didn't have a prompt/something to lean on – my notebook with the written timetable for the lesson. I knew something was not OK and when I started losing sleep I went to see the same doctor who helped me out the first time.

She prescribed me some pills and somehow I managed to finish the school year, and then came the big summer break for teachers when I hoped I could recover.

Depressions are tricky. They do not go away that easy. They last individually but not less than 2 months until a stable effect is achieved. So I took the pills and believed I would get better. My doctor had told me interesting things. One such fact was that it is a condition which is inherent to refined and delicate people. She reassured me that I could keep on working while I am in this condition, because the lower self-esteem is not real. And that other people often do not notice that something is wrong with us. She was a great help through the years, also saying that whoever cares about us will accept me even with this peculiarity of mine. But it cannot be predicted. Much like the flue, you never know if you will get ill, or not. But there are signs to watch for. And if necessary, I should seek help or

medication. She had told me also that some people only have 1 or 2 episodes of depression and then they recover completely and they never suffer again. But the memory, the knowledge I have is not affected by it. In my case the center of reproduction was suppressed, and between the incoming and outgoing data there is certain lack of biochemical elements. We discussed the reasons for the difficulty in keeping my concentration and she explained in light and easy to understand words that the will is also suppressed in a depression and that it is a very bitter and distressful experience personally. But there is a way out of it and I must be hopeful. We need not torture ourselves or blame ourselves or others because we experience an episode of this dreadful malady. We also should not change our plans about life drastically either. It is possible to find a middle way, a compromise and an effective treatment and be like everybody else, have a great job, a happy family and why not kids.

Sometimes it was an hour a day, sometimes it was after drinking a cup of coffee but I noticed that moments came when I was better, I felt like going out, or doing something...I even had the energy to go on a students' trip around Europe for 10 days in spring. So generally people do not notice until something attracts their attention. And I could again live with it. This time I was working and getting help. Depression 2 was shorter, milder and I could get better faster than the previous time.

But I still remember the fatigue, sleepiness and boredom I felt then. Luckily as they say: What does not kill you makes you

stronger. And I had to go on making a step each day towards feeling better. After this second depressive episode I had about 10 years of almost no problems. The medical term is remission.

But then I started working much. First it was one international school project, then another 2-year project and then a cross-border one for 3 years. I was teaching English in a school and doing project tasks after classes...Boy, it was exhausting! – 6 years on a roll! So in February 2015 I began with the same symptoms: fatigue, boredom, not getting enough sleep, feeling of exhaustion.

I knew right before the start of the last 3-year project that I had to say Stop! I had a hunch, an intuitive feeling not to accept the offer. But instead of listening to it and saying Enough! I need a break! There are other people speaking English in this school, I did not refuse the job. And I regretted my decision to this day. Depression No. 3 hit me like a hurricane. It was not mild this time it was severe. So I did what I knew would work. I went to the doctor. She prescribed me medication and I went on working – teaching and project work fighting every day for the strength to pass the day. And so from February until end of May I was teaching and working on the project. It was unbearably hard. I did not want my colleagues to notice. And my mother would not let me give up the project.

So for 4 months I was like a prisoner, going to work, doing the best I could and coming home tired, with no strength, even

though I took 4 types of medicines. My body had accumulated so much stress and fatigue. So every day I crossed the day on the calendar and hoped to be able to finish the school year. Luckily somehow May came and with it most of my classes were over. And I had the strength to finish the project but I knew this had to end. So in August 2015 I quit my teaching job.

When I look back I guess it was not the job that caused the stress but the additional, the extra-curricular project stuff. I had spent 18 years teaching. I had no desire to become a deputy-headteacher. I was a senior teacher and head of the English department. Plus I won a scholarship for a Teacher training course in Cambridge, the U.K. so more or less I had achieved it all in this profession. It was really time for a change.

In 2007 a company in my town needed a translator and I started doing translation for them as a part-time job. Sometimes there were translations on-site with some foreign visitor to the company. And I liked doing translations. So for 4 years, until 2011 I was translating documents and reports, contracts and some manuals for machines. Of course I did not quit my teaching job. I did the translations in the afternoons, in the summer time, during holidays. The company was understanding – they would call and ask me how much time I would need for ...xx... many pages and we had very good working relations. I was getting experienced and I really enjoyed it.

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