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Epitome of Nature

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TWO CLOTHES OF THE SAME PERSON: A PERSONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY AND JOURNEY LIVING WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER

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Introduction

I am WV, and my journey with bipolar disorder began in late December of 2017. Over the past seven years, I have explored the sunshine and rainbows of mania and weathered the rain and ruin of depression, with each brief passing experience of highs and lows, weaving a unique thread with its colour and hues

on the tapestry of my life, making myself into a barren and beautiful patchwork of a person. In this intimate account, I will intertwine and untangle personal reflections and refractions with scientific insights, offering a glimpse into the complexity of the flora and fauna, the biome of bipolar disorder.



Image 1: Art made by the author during depression phase
(Source: Author's own collection)

The Scintillating Symphony of Mirthful Mania

Mania, the frenzied crescendo of emotions like a high note of a godlike prophet tenor singer, has marked many chapters of my life. It's a symphony of heightened energy, boundless creativity, and magnetic charisma that draws me into its embrace. During these episodes, the world transforms into a kaleidoscope of possibilities, each thought racing like a melody, each idea a vibrant note in the composition of mania.

Scientifically, mania is characterized by increased activity in the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, the neural orchestrators of emotion and cognitive processes. As I reflect on the scientific underpinnings of my manic states, I gain a deeper understanding of the intricate swirls and sways within my mind. It's a dance that, at times, captivates and exhilarates but requires careful navigation to avoid losing oneself in its frenetic and erratic rhythm.

The Daunting Dark Depression:

In stark contrast to the exuberance of mania, depression casts a sombre shadow over my existence. Looming on about existence on its self and it can be crippling. The lows are absolutely profound, a descent into a world of grey, and emotions are submerged in a sea of desolation. Like an atom with no charges or attraction to anything. Noble but on its own,

alone or being someone that is last of its kind, drifting waits into extinction.

Scientifically, these depressive episodes are associated with alterations in the hippocampus and anterior cingulate cortex, regions of the brain that play a pivotal role in mood regulation. Navigating the ever-perpetual pendulum swing between mania and hypomania has been a profound challenge. The unpredictable shifts in mood demand resilience and a firm grip on reality, a skill I've honed over the years through therapy, self-reflection, and the unwavering never-ending support of those close to me.

Treatment Strategies

My journey with bipolar disorder has been a continuous exploration of treatment strategies. Mood-stabilizing medications such as SSRIs or/and Anti-psychotics plus minus the benzodiazepines to further concrete the bedrock of my management plan, acting as stabilizers on the undulating changing tide and waves of my moods. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) has equipped me with invaluable tools to identify, challenge, and redirect the patterns of thought that accompany both mania and hypomania.

Support as a Pillar

Central to my ability to navigate this intricate terrain has been the pillar of support provided by friends and family. Their understanding and empathy serve as a beacon of light during the darkest moments of

Depression and a grounding force when the waves of mania threaten to carry me away. The power of this support transcends beyond emotional reassurance, influencing the scientific understanding of the impact of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships on mental health..

Coping Mechanisms

In addition to formal treatment, I have cultivated personal coping mechanisms that serve as a lifeline amidst the tumult. Sports is one of them and has become a refuge during manic episodes, encapsulating the cascade of thoughts before they become irritability and rage which can be destructive to others or towards self. In moments of nostalgic melancholia, writing and reading poetry and mindfulness act as immortal anchors, grounding me in the present reality and offering solace.

Seven Years of Mirrored Reflection

As I reflect on the past seven years, I see a kaleidoscope of experiences, each contributing to the variable mosaic of my identity. Bipolar disorder has been a formidable arch nemesis of toil and trouble but it has also been a catalyst for self-discovery, resilience, and empathy. The scientific lens through which I view my experiences has provided context and inexorable understanding, transforming the clandestine chaos symphony of my mind into a masterpiece composition with its own unique beauty.

A short poetry before concluding.

Within these two corridors of my mind, split echoes a symphony that plays both kindred kindness and crippling cruel melody.

**Mania, a dance of vibrant enlightened colour hues
Melancholia, the palette of a poet written in muted blues.**

**An ever-living pendulum swings on my biological clock, a relentless tide
Through the crests and crevasses of mania and melancholy's guide.**

**For my electrical impulse of neural synaptic dance
Emotions entwine and entangle then disentangle and dismantled.**

**A poetry of two opposites, both deranged and divine.
As the sun dawn and dusk on each tumultuous day**

**As the moon has its phases.
For in the tapestry this bipolar's art**

beget I shall beget I will with these two hues it stints.



Image 2: Art made by the author during manic phase (Source: Author’s own collection)

“I have cultivated personal coping mechanisms that serve as a lifeline amidst the tumult. Sports is one of them and has become a refuge during manic episodes, encapsulating the cascade of thoughts before they become irritability and rage which can be destructive to others or towards self” - Author

Conclusion

Living with bipolar disorder has been a journey of self-discovery, scientific exploration, and the delicate art of finding balance within the fluctuations of the mind. As I move forward, I carry with me the melody of mania, the echo of melancholia, and the unwavering hope that by sharing my story, I contribute to a broader understanding of the

intricate landscape of bipolar disorder.

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