



EPISODE 23: TWO KINDS OF “DIFFERENT”

- Speaker 1: [00:01](#) You're listening to the bipolar now podcast, episode 23
- Speaker 2: [00:06](#) welcome to bipolar now the weekly podcast for doing life on your terms, not the illness. And now here's the host of your show, Mike Lardi.
- Speaker 1: [00:18](#) Well, hey there, welcome back. It's Mike here with you once again. We got a great show coming up today. Oh I can't wait to get into it. You know I've been so encouraged over the last week or so last couple of weeks because of you all. Those of you who are in the group, those of you who are online who interact with my videos, I am so incredibly encouraged just by all of our interactions, all the questions you're asking, all of the ways that you're just telling me like, okay, keep going Mike. Like keep digging deeper into this thing that you've got going cause I'm loving it and I just want to thank you, especially for those of you who I talk with on a regular basis or you're inside the bipolar now podcast group on Facebook. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm excited. I'm always excited to be with you. And I just love pulling up my browser on my phone and wondering who's going to be there wanting to talk.
- Speaker 1: [01:09](#) And so, um, you know, this week I was uh, uh, very encouraged by the results of an ad that I put out. Um, you know, the, the word in courage means to impart courage. So, you know, imparting courage to someone else's to encourage them. And you guys have done that with the way that you've shared that video and commented on it and just gotten in there and allowed that thing to really travel. And I want to say this because I want it to encourage you that if you have any resistance to like putting yourself out there or you know, getting a message across or doing something that is like uncomfortable seems like maybe you couldn't really do it cause it's just so big and scary. I want to encourage you just to take the leap, do something small. Um, for me it was making a video about the podcast and you know, so I can encourage more people to come onboard and listen and enjoy me every week.
- Speaker 1: [02:04](#) And it was really difficult to set up the gear and to think through like, what is a good way to talk about this, you know, to a larger audience and, and how do I make it look attractive and actually show it for what it is. And, and now that I've gotten it out there, like that's something that like, it's a milestone for me to be able to have the courage to put things out there, to put my face out there, to put my voice out there, you know, hear, hear on the podcast, I'm hiding behind a microphone, usually in a studio or at my house or at a someone else's house or at Daniels and I'm, and that's one thing, but to get on video is like a whole other layer of scary for me. And so I just wanted to let you know that

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it's so, it's so invigorating to put things out there when you know that they need to be out there.

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And so I just wanted to, um, leave that with you, that things are going really well. I'm, I'm excited about the of the course that's coming up. Um, the membership, the course membership and um, I'm just, I'm so pleased with how everything's developing and the way things are coming out and all the behind the scenes, uh, levers that I have to pull to pull that and make it a reality is just been the coolest journey of the last eight years of my life of recovery. And, um, and I wanted to bring that up too, is that my recovery hasn't been overnight. My recovery has taken a very long time and I don't know that I'll ever exit recovery. Um, I don't know that that's even a goal right now. Like my stability is at an all time high. Um, I had a major test of that stability this year with my income being so thrown off, um, with the scarcity of jobs.

Speaker 1: [03:45](#)

And then the ending of my construction job, like that was a really major hurdle and a major test to all the things that I teach inside my course. And I am so pleased that I have come through this summer, you know, a stronger person than even before. And I look forward to getting stronger next month and the month after that. And so that's, that's why I'm here. I'm, I'm, I'm here to let you know that it's not an overnight deal, you know, wherever you're at right now in the process, uh, wherever you see yourself wanting to be in the future and there's that gap in between that produces a sense of suffering. It's like, I don't want to be stuck here forever. I want to grow beyond this. I want to get better. I want to get stronger. I want to be resilient. I want to face ordinary life challenges, uh, with stability and a clear mind.

Speaker 1: [04:37](#)

Like, those are the things I want. I want you to know it's coming. It is definitely coming for you. You know, I had a conversation with somebody online just yesterday. They were like, I didn't know it took you four years, you know, to get to a place to where you feel like you actually had a turnaround to feel like you actually had a breakthrough. And had to say that, say to him that yes, it's true. It took me. So back in 2011 you know, I had my massive wipe out and all those hospitalizations and after the fact, you know, I was living at home again as a grown man, living with my mother and father, trying to figure out if I was even capable of doing ordinary life. And it took four years into that recovery of me working hard of me trying to better myself every day of me relentlessly experimenting, trying things out for my health, like trying to move in that area of my life to produce mental health and stability.

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- Speaker 1: [05:34](#) And yes, I did grow incrementally year after year after year, but it took me pushing four years until I felt like things were actually starting to come together. Life was actually starting to click. It took me four years to get to that point. And I didn't want you, I'm assuming that I had just kind of arrived at this place of health and wisdom and stability, uh, or confidence. I, I didn't just arrive, uh, that was a long process and I boil down obviously what I learned, you know, into the course elements that I teach and, and distribute monthly. But, you know, it's just, it was a process, a very long process. You know, the strength that I have now are only because I've literally felt it all, I've felt everything you can feel in life, well, almost everything. I shouldn't say everything because you know, I never got married and I never had kids.
- Speaker 1: [06:35](#) And the reason for that had to do with my bipolar disorder, but I didn't know it at the time. I just, I looked at my overall instability, my going from one place to the next, from one job to another and never finishing anything and falling into these crazy deep depressions where I didn't want to live anymore. Like I looked at that and I said, okay, there is some chaos there, Mike. You know, originally I thought it was due to the fact that I'm an artist and some artists are just like that. So that's what I thought at first. But I knew I didn't want to bring a woman into the mix and I knew that I couldn't thrust that instability upon her and expect a great marriage to come out of it. And so, um, you know, maybe there was some wisdom early on there of me interpreting the signs in a good way.
- Speaker 1: [07:26](#) You know, cause I've never, I've never had to deal with what you guys tell me about, like when you tell me that your marriage is really suffering or that it's already split. You know, I've never had, I've never had a strain on relationships quite like that. Like I've strained many, many relationships. Um, family ties, friends. Um, I mean I've, but I've never like seen, you know, I've never had to see my wife, like have to deal with me when I was that, uh, sucked into chaos when I was that at the, just at the mercy of my disorder, I've never had to see my kids, you know, fear for their lives or be upset or afraid or, or not know, you know, who their daddy is today. Like I've seen my, my nieces and nephews, like scared for their lives, but I've never actually had to like feel that burden of my children seeing that.
- Speaker 1: [08:14](#) But you know, I, I have, I, other than those two things I have felt at all and I think that's where my strength comes from. You know, because being bipolar now, it suddenly sent me back to the very beginning. It sent me back to where it all started. I mean, I, I've, I've talked about this on a couple of episodes about how as a young man and even going back to childhood, I

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didn't feel a sense of value about my life. Like I, I didn't really know what I offered. I didn't see myself as like any, any status that you would desire. I always stayed in the shadows as a kid or like they sometimes they would call somebody like me a wallflower, you know, like at a party, you just don't, you do not want to stick out. You don't want to be in conversation.

Speaker 1: [09:02](#)

You just want to get through the whole thing and have it be over with. And that was me, you know, from the very beginning is very, very super shy and intelligent, but introverted child. And that carried over into my teenage years. And um, it really like becoming by like becoming aware, you know, and when I had my diagnosis becoming aware of being bipolar, now suddenly it sent me back to that very beginning sensation where like, I didn't feel I had the power to make anything happen in my life. I felt worthless. I all over again. I felt like I had no value and I was super, super sensitive to this, you know? Uh, I think back, I don't want to always use my stories as examples. Um, unless I feel like they could teach to a, a more universal human condition. But I'm in my human experience as a teenager.

Speaker 1: [09:52](#)

Um, I started out relatively alone and very insecure and the reason I was alone and insecure is because I was living in an area living in a way that you could call low risk. I didn't put myself out there. So as a result of being low risk, not really trying anything, not really working at anything, not trying to better anything, I stayed low risk. I played it safe and that left me alone and insecure until there was a new subculture developing, uh, in the late nineties, and it involved skateboarding. And so skateboarding was making a quiet resurgence back into the subculture. And couple of kids at school, you know, they switched to the way they were dressing. They would carry their boards around into class with them. And I took notice of this. I took notice of their personalities, I took notice of their status. And there was something about that combined with the fact that my best friend, you know, he started skateboarding as well and he started getting pretty good at it pretty quickly cause he was just very talented.

Speaker 1: [11:06](#)

Uh, physically, you know, sports comes to him easily. But um, he got good at it and then I got pulled into that world and I took a risk for the first time in my life I changed my clothing. So I changed my uniform. Right? Everybody has a uniform, every group. And it became part of a group. And slowly I absorbed the temperature of that group because that group was confident. They're like, we're cool. We're doing something different. We write the rules, you know, we don't, we don't follow, we lead. And all of a sudden I wound up in the middle of a mixture, a mix of people that said, we're confident. We're group, we're

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together, we're doing something different. And I took a risk to become part of that group. I didn't know if they would accept me, but that became the catalyst. And I became a new kind of different.

- Speaker 1: [11:55](#) So in today's show I want to talk about the two kinds of different, the first kind is what I shared with when I was alone and insecure. And I want you to think through the parallels to discovering that you have a bipolar disorder. You know, you wind up here, I was 30 years old, a grown man. I'd been living in years of confidence, years of leadership, years of breaking the rules and being proud of it. So I had all that going for me and then all of a sudden a mental illness diagnosis gets thrown into my life and I'm that different person. Again, I'm back to being different but alone and different but insecure.
- Speaker 3: [12:43](#) Okay.
- Speaker 1: [12:45](#) You know, when I engage with people that I'm meeting, you know, on a weekly basis here through the show, uh, I'm discovering that people want to be a new different, but they're not quite sure how to get there. And they're not quite sure if they're willing to invest the risk because maybe they've tried before. Maybe they've gone into a program, maybe they've bought a book, maybe they've read some articles online, maybe they attended, you know, something new that would help them with their personal development and then they got sick again. I mean, can you, can you just feel that for a moment? Like putting in all that work and then getting booted to what seems like back to the beginning. I run into this all the time. I run into people who are booted back into that world of being alone and insecure. They say I'm different.
- Speaker 1: [13:42](#) You know when we play it safe, when we say I'm not going to take the risk. What we're really saying is it's not worth it. It's not worth going after a better life. And today I want to talk about you becoming a new kind of different, I want to talk about you being in a in group. I want to talk about you being confident. I want to talk about you taking some risks, taking them on and looking for results in those risks. You know, we can go through life making microscopic gains, which is what I would have done years ago. So back into teenage zone years ago. I could have played it safe, no risks alone and insecure and I would have made most likely would've made microscopic gains cause I wouldn't have met the people that I met. Can't you look back on your life and see these monumental figures where it's like, man, if I didn't know her or if I didn't know him, I really don't know what I would be like because they pushed me.

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- Speaker 1: [14:54](#) I want to be that person in your life along with many other people. I want you to be exposed to many other people, all kinds of different voices who are all pulling for you to get stronger and smarter and how you live with this illness. But let me be the one to be the catalyst for you to be a new kind of different, to join a group in group where people like us do things like this and we exude confidence because we're growing by leaps and bounds through the actions that we're taking. You know, every week I get on this podcast and I talk through just one small area of life that has a big impact on how you live with bipolar disorder. And I recognize that in this format of a show, I can't properly train you. I can't properly lead you step by step into how that is done.
- Speaker 1: [15:48](#) I can't properly illustrate all the things I want to show you. I can't get you into the activities that are going to change your mindset and allow you to do things and try exercises and get, you know, in, in a environment where coaching takes place and all that stuff. I, I re, I recognize that. So the show is about ideas, but think about this. Who are you around? Who are you surrounding yourself with? Who's raising your temperature? Because the results are all that matter. You know, on the one hand you can be different and have social alienation. And I think that's where fear comes in, right? Like because we're social creatures and because mental illness strips away our ability to function in social settings, like it results in alienation.
- Speaker 4: [16:38](#) But
- Speaker 1: [16:40](#) for others, the others who go through a catalyst, the others who take a risk, the others who insist on growing leaps and bounds, they wind up in social freedom and this is so incredible. Imagine being able to walk into any social setting that you want and you show up in complete confidence. You're like, yeah, I can hold my head high. I know who I am. I like who I am. I'm living well. I have challenges that everybody in this room can't even imagine and here I am. I'm going for it. I'm different. I want you to move from challenges and hold onto them. Of course, like all the challenging things that you experience, those are actually needed. They're necessary. What I do is I hold them and then I transform and I put myself through training. That's how I transform and it's like training for mental health.
- Speaker 1: [17:42](#) Can you do that? Whoa. W what'd he talking about? But it's true. There are ways to train your brain through activities and exercises and shifts in mindset. There's things you can do to hold onto the challenges of bipolar, but then transition and transform and become that free person. You know? For me, it all started with awareness, awareness in a workbook, actually, the

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workbook came from Julie fast. She authored a book called take charge of bipolar disorder. It's a four step plan. I highly, highly recommend this book to anybody who's just starting out or could honestly say that they have a few things that they need to learn that is such an incredible tax. I talk about it endlessly. Love her to death. I can't wait to meet her someday. She's one of my heroes. She's a total giant in my life as far as mental health is concerned and I love that.

Speaker 1: [18:40](#)

So everything started with awareness and that workbook, that's where it started, but because I was willing to take a risk and transformed because she was my catalyst, all of a sudden I found myself becoming more and more included in the groups that I knew I wanted to be a part of. Prior to that, for years I was alone. I struggled so hard. I remember, I remember my mom and dad saying, come on Mike, don't you just want to go to the store? Don't you just want to, don't you just want to go out, do something? Don't you just want to go get dinner? And I'd be like, okay, okay. But I preferred to be alone cause I was playing it low risk all over again. Despite everything I've learned in my life about taking risks and loving the gamble and seeing the thrill of the win.

Speaker 1: [19:36](#)

Like despite all of that, I wound up alone. But because of this catalyst, because I was willing to hold that and then transform into someone new and Julie was one of my catalysts. All of a sudden I found myself included in social circles once again. It was incredible. You know, I went from being insecure, you know, and feeling like I didn't want to talk to anybody. I didn't want anybody to know my story. I didn't want anybody finding out that I was incapable of doing life. And so I had to live with my mom and dad. Like I didn't want any of that leaking anywhere. But through the catalyst because I want it to be a new different, I became confident once again and you know, being included in groups, being social, having social freedom, that just increases confidence. You can't help but get more confident. And you know, I was unpredictable before and it's very easy to remember how unpredictable I was. My mind would go back to scenarios in the past saying, oh my gosh, I can't believe you did that. I can't believe you put those people through that. I can't believe you said that. I can't believe you chose to do that. It's just, and then my mind would just naturally focus on fear.

Speaker 3: [20:51](#)

Okay.

Speaker 1: [20:52](#)

But after that catalyst, after I took some risks, after I started seeing myself in a new way as different, a new kind of different, that transformed me into a person who is reliable. And now I have this focus on freedom, not on fear. It's a focus on freedom.

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So it's natural to fear. It is super natural to be free. And that's why it's so rare, right? It's so rare. So these qualities of being included and being confident and being reliable. Like my, my boss loves working with me, Daniel, he's not my boss, but we worked together. Daniel, who you've heard on the show, like he loves the fact that I'm reliable, I get back to him quickly. I execute all the tasks super fast. Like he loves that I'm different now. It took me four years, four years in and I started feeling like I had a turnaround, like a breakthrough.

Speaker 1: [21:56](#) So what results are you looking for? Are you looking from microscopic gains or are you looking to grow leaps and bounds? You have to choose. You have to choose today. You know, I, I had this amazing conversation with somebody who took my course when it was just in Beta and we were trying it out and fixing the bugs and working on all the different activities and just the way it was structured and all these students. Now we're working on this together in a really tight small group. And I remember connecting with one particular student and that relationship has endured to today. And we were on the phone this week and this person was having a difficult time. And I said, well, if you were stable, why would you want to be stable? And they said, well, I don't know. I just don't want to suffer. And I said, well that's not enough.

Speaker 1: [23:01](#) You have to have a why. Why do you want to be stable? Your why is so powerful. It's so immensely powerful to have a big overarching reason for why you want stability. I mean, think about it really. What do you want to do? What do you want to accomplish? What do you want to matter? I say that having a strong, why? A strong reason. A strong purpose meaning I'd say that a why matters more than stability itself. Stability is just a result. It's not an identity. I feel like I need to say that again cause I was pretty good. Stability is a result. It's just a result. It's not an identity. What we need to focus on is an identity. Why do we want this? You know? I can say things like I'm different so that I can what? Like that's my little formula. Now I'm different.

Speaker 1: [24:07](#) I'm a new kind of different. I'm different. So that and then fill in the blank. I'm different so that I can do what matters. Like do what you want, do what you think needs to be done, do what the world needs more of. So I wrote this out. I said I'm different. Mike Lardy is different so that I can show the world how to thrive with mental health and different so that I can show the world how to thrive with mental health. That's a really big why that is exceedingly powerful. That moves me. It stirs my soul. It makes my heartbeat. I'm different so that I can show the world how to thrive with mental health. I love this. I love this so much.

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You've got to come up with a similar statement. Come up with it, journal it, write it down, refine it, test it through.

Speaker 1: [25:12](#)

Other people, get feedback. All you gotta do is say I'm different so that I can, it's a world of limitless possibilities. Your life truly has no limits. I, I had such, I had such an intense moment in, uh, so the pharmacy that I go to has a little book rack and I was in there a couple of days ago and on this book rack or various little um, texts and crossword puzzles and you know, books for all kinds of different topics. And this one book struck me. I've seen this guy before. Maybe you have, his name is nick. Uh, we chick, I'm sure I'm butchering his name. It looks Slovak or somethings. It's definitely European. This guy nick was born, he's young guy. He's probably my age. He was born without any limbs. Can you imagine having no arms and having no legs? His body literally ends, you know, as his at his torso at that is at the pelvic floor.

Speaker 1: [26:33](#)

No arms, no limbs. He's on the cover of this mat of this book that I bought. Smiling joy, just beaming through every pore in his face. He's got joy, he's standing up straight. He looks like he's on a beach, you know, in Hawaii. And the book is called life without limits, living above your circumstances. And I tore into the first chapter this week and I, I'll tell you what, so healthy to read this book. Um, he's a Jesus guy. He's, he's a lot like me, so you'll get a lot of that in there. Um, but truly, truly an incredible message to imagine. Like I just imagined myself being in his shoes as a child, being born with no arms and no legs and your parents are like, we're not going to put you in special education. We're going to put you in ordinary school with everybody else because you're an ordinary child who can accomplish anything.

Speaker 1: [27:30](#)

And they burned that into his mind and into his heart every single day as a child that you can do anything. I thought what an intense eye. I choked up with tears just reading the first chapter. This book choked up. So good. So good. Because, I mean, if this guy can have that kind of joy on his face, can have such a powerful message and empowering message of telling people you're not your circumstances, you are more than your illness or your disorder, your cancer or, or your, whoever's bullying you or whatever is going on in your life, you are more than this. Your life is truly without limits. And when I see a guy like that, you know, and he's married now and he's, he just, so he's just such a, to me like this is yet another catalyst that I can continue along the path that I'm going down, I'm different so that I can, and I want to tattoo whatever I come up with there and land on.

Speaker 1: [28:37](#)

This is where I'm at for now showing the world how to thrive with mental health. That's where I'm at. That's huge. Like, if I can accomplish that and I'll say that I already have and in my

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world, which is my local community in my world, which is you in this podcast, like I'm already showing the world how to thrive, but like I'm wanting to tattoo whatever that becomes, tattoo that on my heart. I'm different so that I can, you've got to have a strong why. You've got to connect to it. Your why matters. It matters more than stability. Remember that your why matters more than stability. I want you to be able to focus on freedom. You know, I want you to be able to say in my four years I received a breakthrough in my life is radically different now compared to the typical person who has to struggle through life with bipolar disorder.

Speaker 1: [29:37](#)

Why don't you to say I'm different so that I can, I want you to be a new kind of different, I want you to be able to be that new person. You know, there's two kinds. There's, there's two kinds of, Mike, there's me before and me after and you know why it's cause I chose celebration over secrecy. I chose celebration over secrecy. I wanted to do things worthy of celebration. I wanted to start to pattern my life over the things that are gonna result in excitement, in enthusiasm, in mastering things that are difficult in overcoming the odds. It's a choice to celebrate a life of celebration that's different than old Mike. When I was alone at home, low risk insecure, just wishing everyday would end so that I could go to bed and hopefully never wake up. That's, that's a secret in my life. You know, I don't, I don't, I don't just tell that to anybody who wants to know my story. You know, there, there, there are secret things about me that I can only bring out to people who understand people like you. You know, but I was living in secrets to get, I was choosing that. So how about you? What are you choosing? Are you choosing celebration? Are you choosing the things moment by moment, decision by decision? They're going to result in celebration and praise. Are you choosing secrecy?

Speaker 1: [31:29](#)

You know, the results speak for themselves. Secrecy ends and social alienation. It just lands you in the land of fear, fear of what's next. Fear that you can never make it. Fear that your dreams are dead. Fear, fear, fear. Celebration is complete freedom when you choose celebration that allows you to walk into situations, scenarios take on challenges, unexpected twists and turns. Tragedies like a life of celebration allows you to go through those things and not be devastated. There's freedom in it. You know, there's two kinds of people with bipolar. There's Mike before and there's Mike after, and the after group is not as big as it needs to be.

Speaker 1: [32:19](#)

I exist to move as many people as possible into the new different category. It's an extremely open agenda that I've got here. I want to move as many people into the new category as I

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possibly can. That's what I've chosen. I've chosen celebration, I've rejected secrecy and I've moved into celebration. So it's your turn to choose. I'm gonna close the show today just by inviting you to go the direction that your heart tells you to go. And I want you to do it not in isolation, but with an ingroup member. People like a suite. We do healthy things, we do things like this. We explore, we ask, we share, we encourage and I want you to do that inside the group that I've created just for this podcast. You've heard about it. If you've listened to this show, you know, weeks before you've heard about it pretty much every single week cause I'm just being, I'm being very open about this and I'm building that group to be a group of people who choose the new different, they choose celebration.

- Speaker 1: [33:36](#) So it's called the bipolar now podcast group. It's on Facebook and um, you know, it's, it's just a place where people come together to be refreshed and to head into the unknown with some new found confidence. And I don't want you missing out. So it's the bipolar now podcast group. It's on Facebook. Just head on over there and click the link to join and I'll let you write in. So that's going to do it for this episode. Next week is a good one. I'm actually really looking forward to next week. I've been preparing for this for quite some time. There's a lot of material that I've never released before that you're going to get in the next episode. So that's going to be all about money. And since I can't do justice to the subject of how to manage your money when you have a mental illness, like I cannot do justice to that in a single episode. So let's just call this part one and we'll do that next week. So until that time, I will see you here. Same time, same place next week. All right. Adios.
- Speaker 5: [34:42](#) [inaudible].
- Speaker 2: [34:47](#) Thanks for listening to the Bipolar Now Podcast at [www dot mike lardi dot com](http://www.dotmike.lardi.com).