



EPISODE 25: GETTING AROUND OBSTACLES

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) You're listening to the Bipolar Now Podcast, episode 25,
- 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: [00:21](#) What is up? Hey there, it's Mike with you for another show. You know, I love this show. It reminds me, I was taking a walk the other day and, this example came into my mind. So this is not original material here, but, uh, this person, you know, was making the comparison between all the different news networks and how they all basically pick from the same sources. And that's why you get all the same news stories over and over, just, you know, with a different person in front of the camera. And, um, and then they talked about how there's, um, the BBC, which is like this totally different, like offbeat, completely original, like has nothing to do with mainstream media, you know, ABC, NBC, CNN, you know, Fox, all these places. And the BBC is so different. And I just chuckled when I thought of that comparison because I thought that's pretty much how I am here on the Bipolar Now Podcast.
- Speaker 1: [01:21](#) I'm different. I've the got different material. Um, I can admit that I'm a bit weird, like I just am and I own it. I know that I'm a different voice. I'm your voice between the visits. I'm the one who tries to help keep you pointed forward in between all these visits that you have. Um, or if you're outside of the healthcare system and mental health care system, you know, um, maybe encouraging you to seek a way back in, you know, it's a imperfect system and I'm an imperfect voice giving you imperfect strategies. But what I want to do is make sure that you know what it is that you're looking for and then I can give you some clue as to how to go after it. And so it just pleases me so much to be here with you for another episode. Today's episode is going to be difficult for me to share.
- Speaker 1: [02:16](#) Uh, I feel generally bewildered. Um, this week as of this recording, um, at this time I'm, I'm processing, uh, not only, you know, the launch of the course membership that's coming up October 9th, but I'm also processing things that are going on in my personal life. I'm processing things that are happening in ministry. So, uh, as you know, I'm one of the pastors at my local church here and, um, I just, I encounter so many people who are, they are themselves bewildered at all the difficulties that they face, uh, right now. And, and this week was no exception. Um, you know, I had a, just an amazing chance to comfort somebody who had lost their little daughter to CPS. Child protective services got called out. And I just saw the look on her face that morning as we were coming in and out, and I stopped

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to check in and, and I had heard what had happened because the family had called me and asked me if I could help in any way.

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And of course, you know, I wanted to just be there to console and to offer, you know, any prayer or any kind of, um, some kind of encouragement somewhere that this was going to turn around. And, and just remember her face being completely bewildered as she stared at the ground with her eyes. Just so wide open saying Mike, Mike, Mike. I, I don't know. I, I didn't understand what I was doing. I just started drinking again and uh, and she truly, like she truly didn't understand the situation and she was devastated by the loss of her daughter. And that's hard. And I just, I, I feel, you know, I'm, I'm one of those people, I guess you could call them and empath them. I'm learning from, um, my podcast audience. Uh, people tell me that I'm an empath. When I make statements like that, that I can actually feel, you know, the tragedy in somebody's life.

Speaker 1: [04:11](#)

And, um, you know, I can't change that about myself, but you know, I can, I can work with it. And it's just a, it's part of my complex nature and it's things like that. This kind of bewilderment that leads me to our topic for today, which is a difficult topic, but it's the topic of obstacles and by obstacles. Yes, I'm referring to those things that get in our way and trip us up and caused us to fall down and get hurt, you know, obstacles, they're everywhere. That's just reality. You know, one of, one of the obstacles that I ran into this week, um, this, this past week weekend was, um, just the, the story of being invited to go to a social event. And because I have a long history with social anxiety, um, I immediately said, I don't really think that's something I want to go to. You know, the background of all of this is the social event was happening at a local theme park up here in the mountains.

Speaker 1: [05:14](#)

And um, I'd never been to that park before. There was something blocking me from wanting to go there and nothing wrong with the place, but I just, you know, I didn't want to spend the money to go and I didn't never, I really have the interest to go over there and drink and hang out and taking the music and it's like a theme park built around mountain biking. And so, you know, no big deal. It's just not my thing. But I got invited by a special couple and um, they are just new friends in my life and so I wanted to at least acknowledge that, hey, they want to spend time with me. Then I got to honor that and, and like just see if I can have a reasonable accommodation here, you know, and buck up and go against my social anxiety. Cause I knew there's going to be people all over the place at this park because everybody talks about going to this park and, um, and

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I'm the type of person that's like, if everybody's talking about going there, that's where I don't want to go.

Speaker 1: [06:04](#)

And so, um, but I, I'd stopped myself right in the middle of the conversation and said, let me get back to you. I just need like an hour to think about that and I'll get back to you. And I really thought, and I would encourage you to do this, like if you have social anxiety, and I pose this on a live video recently and the response was 100% that everybody struggles with social anxiety. Um, in my particular audience, the thing I would really encourage you to try is to look at the outcome as a story. So for me that night, if I thought to myself, Mike, would you rather be upset and alone and isolated in your apartment? And the story that you said no to this opportunity will just result in you being alone. Is that really the story you want to tell or could you possibly tell the story of I went to a new place, I saw some fun things.

Speaker 1: [07:11](#)

I had a great time listening to music and having a drink and spending time with my new friends and maybe seeing some people that I know. And then I'd come home and I'll be really glad that I spent time outside as a gift of being able to spend time with these new friends. And so I thought about it and I said, yeah, that's a better story. I mean truly it's a better story to say. I went out, I did something, I pushed against my social anxiety, you know, I did end up going and it was kind of like a high school reunion. So feel that with me real quick. Like how many of you are excited to go to your high school reunions? Like I know I'm not, but this is, this is the environment. Like a lot of people that I went to school with, you know, they've come back to live in this area just like I'd come back to live in this area and they need a place to hang out and socialize and this is one of the hot spots.

Speaker 1: [08:09](#)

And so in going there I knew like, okay, I'm bound to see somebody. I know I didn't anticipate seeing like 20 people from my high school class. I mean that was unprecedented. But once I got there, I was so glad and I pushed through the social anxiety of having to come up with something new to say to everybody by just getting rid of that whole like fear of like, oh, I don't have anything original to say. I'm not really curious about what's going on right now. Like I flipped that all around. I just basically said the same things to each new person that I saw and I didn't let it bother me. I mean maybe this is you like you think when you socialize you have to come up with something original and brand new with each individual person that you go up to as you socialize at an event.

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- Speaker 1: [08:56](#) I'm telling you, it doesn't have to be that way. I used to do that all the time. It's exhausting. Especially if you're an introvert like I am. It is exhausting to come up with new material and new questions and try and come up with something brand new. Every time you end a conversation and start a new one, it's just exhausting. So with social anxiety, just the coolest thing to think about is like what would I want to say once this is all over? What is the story here? You know, you got to do what lights you up. I was experiencing a bad day when that person asked me to go out that night, but you know, I had to remember if I was healthy, like if I was emotionally healthy, mentally healthy right now, is this an event that would light me up? And then I looked at the story I wanted to tell and said, yeah, that absolutely would.
- Speaker 1: [09:50](#) And so I pushed through social anxiety doesn't have to be an obstacle. You can turn it around. Think about anxiety in general, just generalized anxiety disorder. It tends to co-occur a lot of times with a bipolar disorder. How are you handling these repeating anxieties? How are you dealing with that? Are they beating you up every time? Like they're a brand new thing? You know, I've, I've said this time and time again that all of these different sensations, all of these different symptoms, they're just recycled. They're rehashed, which is great news because we don't have to fight them with new energy or new tactics. We can just use the same things that work over and over again. And one of the ways that I document what works is I have a dedicated journal just for my challenges and I love this. I literally write down like here's money, here's a whole page devoted to money and I write down how this affects me, how it makes me feel and I don't have money.
- Speaker 1: [10:50](#) How it makes me like respond to people, what I can do to change the situation. What happened as a result of me taking action and then who I can talk to. Like I'm listing all of these things on a page in that journal. It's a journal full of challenges. Highly encourage you to pick up one at the store. Just get a journal, anyone you like and just write challenges on the first page and you can go through and have a whole page dedicated to one challenge that you know you'd know it keeps coming up. So I have the page for money. I have a page for work. You know when I'm out at work, I have a page for stress. I have a page for worry, I have a page for now as a, as of this week, I have a brand new page for anxiety and I know most people would hear that and they would say, oh worry and stress and anxiety.
- Speaker 1: [11:43](#) Isn't that like this? Isn't that the same thing Mike? I mean, what are you talking about here? Like, like no they're not. I mean you take, it takes someone who knows it to be able to say no. There

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are different anxieties. Not the same as worry is not the same as stress. They're relatives, but they're not the same thing. And they fight them and you fight them with slightly different tactics. And so keeping a journal is one way that I break this. And speaking of breaking things, I like to break habits, bad habits. So I have a whole entire habits journal. I know you probably think I'm crazy with all my journals. This is just, this is how I process. Some people process verbally. They talk things out. Some people make images or or workout work their things through art. Um, I just, I happened to write, that's how I work things out.

Speaker 1: [12:35](#) So I keep all these journals, whatever you have to do that works for you, work on it. But here's the one thing I do. I have a habits journal that I break habits or build better ones. And so this week I'll just be completely, completely transparent about this. I wanted to break two habits starting this week and I'm really excited about this and that's one of the keys is you gotta be excited about breaking it. But for one, I wanted to break my addiction to energy drinks. Now I know in our culture it's seen as like just a totally normal thing that people guzzle monster and Rockstar and red bull and whatever else and have, you know, an endless Starbucks fix like guzzling these energy drinks is just a cultural fad nowadays. I get that, but I wanted to break it like I don't like what it's doing to my health and I don't like that.

Speaker 1: [13:26](#) It's like amping me up so that I can work more so that I can make myself more tired so that I'll need more energy drinks throughout the day like DC, how that's pretty as pretty slippery slope that I'm sliding down. I want to break that addiction. Another thing that I want to break, I want to break starting work late and this is something that nobody would know about. Nobody's policing me to start on, start my work on time. I work day, I work from home most days and nobody's policing me on that and it's bothering me that I let my mornings go longer and longer and longer and eventually on the tail end of the day I'm like struggling to get everything done because I've waited so long to get started. So another obstacle is habits, breaking bad habits. So all of these things, these anxieties, social worries, there's so many more obstacles that I could talk about.

Speaker 1: [14:26](#) These are just examples from my life that I wanted to be totally open with you about this week. But they leave, they leave us tired and stressed and they leave us worried and they leave us anxious. You know, obstacles. They're just the reality. They're everywhere. But here's the thing, just cause the reality doesn't have to, it doesn't mean you have to accept them as is. You can do what my buddy Philip likes to call a reframe. And that's where the world becomes full of opportunities. So obstacles, you know, when I think of obstacles and how to respond to

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them in a way of opportunity as a reframe, you know, I think about my life. So think about your life picture like an aerial view of a high school track. He got all the lanes, the white pin striping running around, you know, maybe it's red or green or blue, I don't know what color your high school track was or your college track.

Speaker 1: [15:24](#)

But imagine a track and people are out there training and they're running and they're walking and they're stretching and they're preparing themselves for whatever it is that they're going to have to do for their race. Your life is like a race. And in this race there are hurdles. And as we run, we have to clear the hurdles and ordinary people who don't have to battle it. Bipolar disorder, they can clear their hurdles or sometimes they might get tripped up a little bit, but they just get back up and keep running and they clear more hurdles, clear more hurdles, and they just keep running their race and they have to, you know, dodge and obstacle or two every now and then, but they just keep running. But in bipolar disorder, especially with depression, you know, we, we don't even have the energy to even run towards that hurdle.

Speaker 1: [16:14](#)

We're walking on the track. Maybe we're even standing still looking around, not even knowing which way to go. And that's how depression functions. It just completely disables us. It prevents us from running the race. Think about mania though. Now you're revved up, now you're accelerated, now you're running with your lungs full and your stride completely wide open and you're clearing hurdles and clearing hurdles and clearing hurdles. And what you don't realize is that a big old fat wall has been placed in the track right around the corner and you're clearing the hurdles. And as you clear that next hurdle, you jump right into the wall and smash into it with your face and your body and then you're left there and just crumpled up on the track beat you hit the wall. That's how it is in bipolar mania. I think about anxiety. With anxiety, you're not even really running the race.

Speaker 1: [17:10](#)

You're, you're just kind of like pacing back and forth across the lanes, not really knowing if you want to enter the race at all and you're trying to make progress and you're trying to go and you're trying to move forward, but you're just so anxious that you can't get there. All of these things, these obstacles, these hurdles, there are blocks and walls in the track. These are all things that we have to move through by way of seeing them brand new. We have to see all the different hurdles and obstacles as opportunity. Maybe you need to use another lane. You know when I hit the, I have bipolar one, so that means that it so type ones. We're the ones that we have the extreme

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manias, the ones that you know, you're running around in the street naked and calling yourself Jesus and you're like psychotic and paranoid and all kinds of things.

Speaker 1: [18:06](#) It's just dark, dark, dark stuff can happen at the deep end of the pool of mania. And so, you know, when I hit my wall, it was an opportunity to use another lane. And so as I recovered, you know, slowly but surely I was observing which lane I wanted to run in. Now, one of the things that I had the extreme fortune of being able to do was I had some downtime. I couldn't work. My doctor ordered me off work for six months. Truth be told, it took me eight or nine months to find a job. And when I got that job, it was, I wasn't ready, let's just put it that way. I was not in a frame of mind to be able to work and handle that responsibility. So an amazing opportunity came up as a result of this obstacle. I was able to go in field picture, the picture, the track itch or the high school track.

Speaker 1: [19:04](#) There's grass in the middle. That's usually where they play football and whatnot. I had an opportunity to go to the infield and this was amazing. I actually had the opportunity to reframe my race my entire race. Now you might be thinking, well, I haven't hit a wall that hard, Mike, like I, I'm, I've tripped over some hurdles. I've hit some blocks, but haven't smashed into the wall yet. Like I'm, I'm still able to work. You can still go to the infield. This is really cool. One of the things I did on the infield was I was able to take an activity out of a book that said, define your core values and you'll know what you're aiming for in life. And there was a whole process to this and it was part of the book and I just remember thinking to myself like, this is my chance.

Speaker 1: [20:02](#) This is my opportunity. I was in love with this. Like I wasn't in love with my life. I was terrified at what this disorder could do. And the alarming power and the astonishing speed that it could totally take me from a 10 to a zero. I was blown away by that. That, I mean that broke me. That broke me in a way that took me years to bounce back from. But why when I went on the Infield, I was able to observe the track and figure out which lane do I want, how do I want to run. And I did that by defining my core values. You know, I was talking to a friend recently and he was encouraged to do this. Um, I think it was by his therapist encouraged him to write down like top 10 defining values that make up who you are.

Speaker 1: [20:51](#) And so, um, I thought that was like amazing that they brought that up. It caused me to go look for my journal. Of course, Mike has another journal, right? But I had a journal where I was like first starting to record all of these new, like I could be a new

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person. I could actually get another chance at life. I could actually do this. Like, I can actually get it right this time maybe. And so I started by defining my core values and I'll tell you what, I must've been in a desperate place because I recorded 74 core values. I wanted to stand for something so bad that I wrote down everything I could think of that I loved, that I stood for. And then of course I told myself, that's ridiculous. You can't have 74 core values, let's like try for five. So I narrowed it down to five and as I looked at them this week, I said, wow, all five of those are still top five for me.

Speaker 1: [21:47](#)

That is amazing. I was with with reasonable, you know, with reasonable clarity, I was able to describe my values even in a place where I was depressed and recovering and trying to figure out what to do. But I was on the infield. I'll tell you what else I did during this time. I had no social media. So if you're listening to this and you're at a place where you're in recovery and you're not quite back to work, or you're not socially sorted or you don't feel like you're ready to go back to school and you're kind of in limbo. My advice is to stay away from social media. Now I know that's a tall order. If you consume social media every day, like if you pull out your phone and go immediately to Instagram, I know, but, and this could just be me. I didn't need the added pressure of seeing everybody else's life, the best parts of their life on full display.

Speaker 1: [22:46](#)

I didn't need that. So take it or leave it for what? You know, what you will. Maybe there's wisdom in that for you, but not seeing any social media during that time. Basically going on a social fast and not consuming any social media, you know, for those next six to eight months while I was sorting myself out, like that really allowed me to go a lot farther down the road without competing desires of, oh well maybe you should be more like him or maybe you should do stuff more like him or, and just playing the endless comparison game. I would encourage you not to be on social media if you're going in field and just take a journal or take out a piece of paper and like slap it to your door and say, these are my top five core values. These, these are, these are truly important to me.

Speaker 1: [23:36](#)

This is what makes me a man or for you, this is what makes me a woman. You know? That was my chance. It was my opportunity. The obstacles were all around me and I had smashed into the obstacle very hard. But this was my new chance to run my race in a new way. I want you to have a race worth running. I want you to have a life that you're proud of. And I want you to have a story to tell. So I know I've shared a lot in this short episode, but will you take this mental illness and will you take every other obstacle and will you make it your opportunity? Don't forget you

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have a chance to go in field. When you do, you'll be amazed at the person you discover.

Speaker 2: [24:37](#)

Okay

Speaker 1: [24:44](#)

So if I was to go back and do it all over again, I would embrace the obstacles because the obstacle is the way forward. It forces you to get creative. It forces you to get scrappy and lean. Use My story to push into these opportunities that are right in front of you. They're just waiting, they're waiting on the other side of your obstacle. And so if you're not already in the group, you can bring your obstacle into the bipolar now podcast group on Facebook and let us see where your opportunities might be hiding to get in the group. Just click on over and ask to join. This is a great place to explore today's topic and all the shows here. And there are some seriously cool people in there that I call friends, so don't go it alone. Okay. How about next week? Next week kicks off a three part series and I'm talking about the action plan that anyone can take to grow more mature in how they live with this illness, Aka, have it handled more often. You can't miss this series. I'm so pumped, so I'll see here at the same time, same place as always. Adios.

Speaker 3: [26:06](#)

[inaudible].

Speaker 4: [26:11](#)

Thanks for listening to the Bipolar Now Podcast at [www dot Mike Lardi dot com](http://www.dotmikeLardi.com).