

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) What's up real quick, I have to give a medical disclaimer. The information in this program is not intended or implied to be a substitute for medical diagnosis, treatment, or advice. You are encouraged to confirm any information obtained from this program or through this program regarding any medical condition or any treatments with your physician. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking treatment because of something you have heard or accessed through this program.
- Speaker 1: [00:35](#) You're listening to the bipolar now podcast, episode 28 bipolar now the weekly podcast for doing life on your terms, not the illness. And now here's the host of your show. Hey, what's up? Welcome back. It's Mike here with you on another episode. Oh my gosh, this one, you guys, this one is going to be so good. You know, I put out a series of episodes from number 26 number 27 and now this one, number 28 and they all go together and they're all part of the training that I released with the growth plan for bipolar, which is, you know, my, my coaching compass. It's my, how I structure my way to move people through the peace plan, which is the, a online membership and group coaching program that's coming up in October here. And so ever since I released this series, people have been anticipating each new episode and I have probably not received any more anticipation in any episode of the past as I have with today's episode.
- Speaker 1: [01:42](#) And it is incredible. So, you know, I'm, I'm really like, Oh my gosh, what do I say? I kind of, I talk about this. If everybody wants to know, you know, we're going to talk about depression today. Everybody wants to know about depression. Like, Oh my gosh, what am I gonna say? And, and I, I am like truly putting myself out there right now. You know, if you're new to the show, maybe you saw one of my video ads, this isn't something I do regularly, but for the launch of the peace plan, I'm, I'm building towards that. And so I released, you know, this little piece called the growth plan. And, I didn't anticipate there being such an interest in it. Truly. I didn't anticipate it, didn't anticipate this at all. And I'm putting myself out there as something that, you know, it kinda makes me squirm a little bit cause I, I run into critics and you know, I run into people who leave comments on these videos and they're like, this is terrible.
- Speaker 1: [02:32](#) This guy's gonna rip you off. This guy's a liar. This guy, this guy doesn't know what he's talking about. He's not an expert. This is, so I had, I had one guy say, this is so sad. This guy is just going to get sued like no tomorrow. And you know, as we look into today's episode, topic of depression, you know, depression is one of those things where it's like, okay, my, my brain reacts to that, right? Like I'm a sensitive dude. Um, there's not a whole lot

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

I can do about my internal wiring. It's just my natural reaction to respond to criticism with like, Oh my gosh, my ears are turning bright red right now. Like, what am I going to do? And I'm going to say, and you know, if my critics were all that were out there, that'd be one thing. But there's been so much incredible feedback that I'm really allowing my critics to do something else for me.

Speaker 1: [03:22](#) And this is something I brought up in one of my videos in the podcast group with you guys, those of you who are in the bipolar now podcast group on Facebook. And I covered this one unique because I encountered some criticism and I remembered back in the day I heard a statement and it goes like this, if you want to do well, especially as a public figure or somebody you know whose work is in front of a lot of people, like if you want to do well, turn your critics into coaches. And this was a gentleman by the name of Billy Graham and he did, you know, a ton of work, um, you know, and in terms of like just spiritual guidance for leaders of our country. And a lot of people really looked up to him, you know, as their, as their like national pastor.

Speaker 1: [04:04](#) And he was just a phenomenal figure. And he had that statement that he came up with and he said, make sure you turn your critics into coaches. And I love that. I love that because it depressions one of those things, like it makes me want to quit. You know what if that one comment today, what if that one comment got me to quit? What I do here? What I do with you, what I do with my students? Like what if it got me to quit? Depression is like that. So today it's all about sink or swim. Um, we've got, you know, basically two options when it comes to bipolar depression. We either sink into it or we swim against it or alongside it. And so, um, that's just how it functions. And you know, I think I was over doing this episode for weeks because I was really anticipating like, how am I gonna talk about this?

Speaker 1: [04:52](#) This is, um, this is something that I want to, you know, put in front of you, but I also, I want it to advance the discussion on depression. I've made massive gains in my life. And I'll share with you how I did that, but I have made incredibly massive gains in my life over the frequency and the severity of my depressions. But I also hold with me just the memories of massive amounts of pain associated with this pole of the illness. You know, I, I've been bruised from head to toe when it comes to depression. So I know what it means to sink into it. So today this is just part three of a mini training series. The last three episodes have been a series all having to do with gaining mastery over the symptoms and effects of this disorder. And so today, the reason why I'm sharing this with you, the reason why

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

I got on on the episode last week as well, I do this because I want you to know that you can grow.

- Speaker 1: [05:55](#) So while I still feel uncomfortable when symptoms pop up, I have grown beyond merely reacting to them. I have grown, I can handle this illness like a pro. You know, it's a simple message of the bipolar now podcast, but you really can come to a place where all the things that you put into your life as part of your strategy of wellness, you will be able to handle this illness like a pro. I share that message from my heart every week. You guys are my listeners. You're my tribe. You're the ones I trust. You're the ones that I test ideas out with, like you're the first ones to know about something. And so I just wanted to start right there. You know, bipolar is not just an imbalance of chemicals. That's a myth. It's not just an imbalance or chemically imbalanced that a lot of people love to throw that out there.
- Speaker 1: [06:46](#) Like they know what they're talking about, you know? And I don't claim to know everything about knowing something on bipolar disorder because of the whole biological and physiological side of the illness is something that I just haven't spent a lot of time studying and trying to grasp. You know, I've been more busy with more of the practical day to day. Like, how do we put our lives, you know, in a logical order that allows us to have every bit of leverage that we can against this illness. Like that's what I'm all about. But it's bipolar. It's, there's still a lot of myths out there that bipolar, it's just a chemical imbalance and it's not, I read this, it's a mood disorder that's genetically transmitted. So there's that and it produces an abnormal regulation of nerve cells in the brain leading to strong emotions and intense intermittent episodes of mania, which is what we talked about last episode and depression, which is what we're talking about today, plus a whole other host of symptoms, right?
- Speaker 1: [07:51](#) Bipolar is not just a chemical imbalance, it's a syndrome that means everybody who has it, it affects them in basically the same way from person to person, to person. It's a syndrome that affects your mind, you know, the way you think is altered in bipolar disorder. It affects your body if you feel physically affected, you know by this illness, it's a physical illness. There are also spiritual components to this illness where you feel broken and defeated and unable to move forward. And, and I took last episode, so I'll take it again this episode. You know, just to combat some religious myths that go along with the spiritual aspect of bipolar. And I just want to tell you that it's not because you're living in sin. It is not because the reason you have these symptoms, it's not because are living in sin. It's not because you are possessed.

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

- Speaker 1: [08:46](#) You know that you have some sort of demonic activity going on in your life that can happen, but more than likely not. And it's, it's not because you're somebody who is just unable to fulfill their spiritual destiny and maturity. It's not any of those things. You know, my massive wipe out that I keep telling you guys about from, from here to there, uh, my massive wipe out happened in the context of me being on staff at a church with a pretty decent spiritual maturity going on in my life. I was wild. But, um, there's parts of that that, that aren't entirely bad. And so I just wanted to combat that again on this episode that you know, if, if you live in a religious culture, bipolar disorder is going to be one of the things that they throw at you. And it's like you're doing something wrong obviously.
- Speaker 1: [09:36](#) And I want to be with first person to tell you that that is not true. That is not true. And I get this all the time and it even comes up, you know, recently as I'm launching these video ads, people just tell me, they're like, look, you know what you're saying is whatever. But I just need Jesus and I wish I could just sit down with them and say I don't really know how that's gonna go for you. Cause it didn't go so well for me. Love the guy, love him to death. But my life still smacked hard into a wall and I've had to pick up the pieces slowly and painfully. And speaking of painfully, you know, we talked about it last episode, bipolar, the way I deal with it on this show is a lot like a 12 step program. And the reason I say that is because I'm not trying to fix you.
- Speaker 1: [10:27](#) I'm not trying to rescue you. I'm not trying to correct your behavior. I'm not trying to tell you just buck up and do better. Um, I'm more interested in the internal realities. And so episode 27 on mania was all about like a personal wound for me. I mean, the reason mania T to me personally is such a harder thing to address and why. You know, I am public about my illness, obviously with the show and the work that I do, but that was a very hard thing to bring into the public was just how wounded I was by all of my manic episodes and the totality of their effect on my life. You know, it's, it's, it's a public thing for me. When I think about how my illness played out, my manic episodes were very public and that's hard to live with, you know, versus the privacy of my depression.
- Speaker 1: [11:20](#) And yes, there were, you know, different places where I was able to go to work depressed, but usually it wouldn't last that long. And I would retreat home and I would quit my job and I just would hold up and try and figure out what the heck had happened to me. So depression is not as difficult for me to talk about. It's not as, um, painful to describe to you though. It is painful. Uh, it's not as much as the manic side for me personally, but you know, it's been a slow recovery process. Um, I haven't had any significant or severe episodes of depression in the last

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

eight years, which I'll be honest, like I find that amazing. I find that incredible that it's been so many years, you know, where it's just, it's the more mild and the more sedate version of depression, you know, has, has been a part of my life ever since then.

Speaker 1: [12:13](#) But it's still painful. You know, I'm still hacking a path. And, and now that now that I'm like got a decent path going, you know, I still have to maintain and prune the path as I walk my life up and down every day. Um, you know, the hacking was the, was the major work that I did after my last massive hospitalization, but like after that got done, now I'm just like in a maintenance mode and you know, it's, it's something cool that I wanted, like describe to you so that you can have something to look forward to. And you know, you might be the person where you have a depressive pattern. You see, my depressions were more severe, they call them acute depressions. Um, but yours might be more ongoing. Um, I'm going to bring up an author today. Her name's Julie fast and she does phenomenal work on describing what bipolar is like to live with.

Speaker 1: [13:03](#) And she has some very incredible books that she's authored that have helped me immensely. But she talks, and I remember this, I remember her sharing this in one of her books. She says that, you know, I have a depressive pattern that means that I spend more time in depression than I do feeling well. And maybe that's you. Regardless today we're still going to do some internal work and this is going to open the door, right? Like this is gonna open the door to you may be doing something with a professional, maybe a qualified therapist or social worker or somebody that you can put you know, in your court to help you through doing the internal work on why it is that depressive patterns keep emerging in your life. Um, I will be honest, uh, I had uh, twice I had an interaction with a therapist and um, neither of them allowed me to connect with that person, which is unfortunate because I think we could have done a lot of work if their personality would have been more appealing to me.

Speaker 1: [14:01](#) But they were so clinical and cold that I, I really had a hard time sharing and I had a hard time understanding like why they wanted to keep digging into my history and talking about the past and trying to get me to open up why these wounds were there. And you know, that's important work. So maybe that's maybe, maybe that's something like to enlist, right? Like think about talking to a professional about doing work on your depressive patterns, but more honestly like for me, I've been more of a DIY do it yourself approach. Uh, so I have the privilege of having an incredible psychiatrist who makes time to talk to me more than 10 minutes per visit. Like I can see him for anywhere from a half hour up to an hour. And sometimes I've

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

even been with him as long as four hours after hours just talking. And the thing I love about him is he helps me zoom in on the issues that matter in the present.

Speaker 1: [14:56](#) So what right now matters. And he also helps me reach out and think future. Like, what am I going to be doing and how am I going to be setting myself up for success later by making choices today? So he's really good at like helping me just get clear and get focused and get like organized on what it is that I need to do that matters versus the kind of doctors that I had before that just wanted to explore the past and we got through nine sessions or 10 sessions and I just said, I can't keep paying for this. So it's really up to you. Like you gotta feel that situation out. This podcast is not a place where we really explore that on a professional level because I'm not your professional, I'm just another guy who has this illness and I happen to be very good at it and that's the whole reason I'm here.

Speaker 1: [15:43](#) But think through if you want to enlist, help, do some internal work. That's what we do on this show. We're all about these internal realities and making them work for us. And so, you know, me sharing with you the growth plan is a plan that I wanted to put in front of you. I was just, I'm aware that you can grow. I'm aware that you can progress. Like if you can say, Mike, now that I'm aware of this, what do I do? Well then it starts about following the steps within the stages. And so it's all about progress. You know, we were living in ignorance for a time. Years went by, we didn't know about our diagnosis. And then a light bulb went on. You know, we got shuttled into a doctor's office, we answered some questions. Our life was a mess. Chaos was everywhere.

Speaker 1: [16:32](#) We didn't know what to do next. All of a sudden they said it's bipolar and the light bulb goes on and you're living in the land of awareness. So for those of you that have this guide, you know what I'm talking about. That's where the little sapling tree sits, you know, on the, on the wheel of progress there in the different stages. And so getting into this awareness phase is where we become aware of medications. And I spent a good amount of time last episode, you know, if you want to hear my philosophy on medications, that's a great episode to do it from. I'm just, I'm here to let you know that whether you want to take meds or not, I understand your rationale and I back you up either way because here's the thing. I went through a very long depression. It was mild.

Speaker 1: [17:16](#) It was not like my acute depressions that I had throughout my late teens and twenties it was, it was not heart-pounding like that. It was more of a mild. Every day I just feel low every day. I'm just zapped of energy every day. I don't think well of myself.

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

Every day is just long and I wish it would be over and you know what? I was taking bipolar meds at the time. I have three different medications that I take and I've been on them pretty much from the beginning. There wasn't a whole lot of adjusting going on except to lower the dose. The, the longer I was stable and so my two year depression coming out of my massive hospitalizations, that was something that happened to me while I was taking meds. That quote unquote work, they work but it didn't cure my depression. So I want to clear up that misconception that the right meds are like magic and they'll make everything go away and you'll never have to worry again.

Speaker 1: [18:18](#)

It's just not how it works. Like that's nobody's reality in this illness that nobody can say that, that it just works and nothing ever happened again. And the thing I want to want to stress is that even during this two year depression, like I was alive, so I was going places, I was taking trips, I went to Maui, depressed, which I will always remember because that beautiful paradise just looked drab and sad. And I didn't want to leave the hotel room even though there was a gorgeous beach right outside. And um, you know, I pushed myself to take that family trip and I'm very blessed that they were able to pay for me. But you know what? I wasn't living, you know, I go out to these restaurants, I go back to places where I used to work. I, I tried to do life and I tried to, you know, find myself again.

Speaker 1: [19:06](#)

I was alive, but I wasn't living. I wasn't living. And I don't want that for you. I want you to be living. So today we're talking about depression. You know, it's a little more complex of a set up to master depression. It's more of an ongoing routine and mindset. You know, it's not as simple as the two day turnaround that I shared with you about my manic symptoms. Um, and how I knocked those out so quick. Nowadays, like I've just evolved that process. But you know, today we're, we're, we're talking about not just not a two day turnaround. We're actually talking about a two hour turnaround, which I know, okay, that sounds weird, right? I'm telling you that depression is a lot more complex to manage than mania. So how did, how did my two days go to two hours? Well, here's the thing, I'll explain.

Speaker 1: [20:00](#)

It's, it's like, it's a, it's a strategy. It's a strategy. It's, it's a, it's a moment by moment decision to keep yourself working in this strategy so that you can knock out the symptoms as soon as they show up. And I'm saying, I'm saying for me, I've evolved it to where I can do a two hour turnaround, but really here's the thing, whether it's two hours or two weeks, what I want you to experience as a result of this strategy is I, I want you experiencing less frequency in the cases of depression that you experience. And that's why it takes a broader share a strategy and that's why I'm going to share this. So depression, it's the

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

same symptom every time you know it, it plays out in so many ways, but it has the same causes. There's the same triggers going on and that's why I want you to know that it's a lie.

Speaker 1: [20:51](#) To have to think that you have to fight in a different way every single time it comes up and you have to get creative because you don't, the same symptom can cause you to use the same strategy. And that's why having this growth plan is like having a growth mindset. A mindset for growth is going to lead to that transformation that you want. That's where you're going to experience this two hour turnaround. It's going to lead you to do more of the stuff that you want to do more often. I know, I know. That's like that's really what we're going for here. We want to do more of the stuff that we want to do and we want to do that stuff more often and this is an incredible way to combat depression. I just want you to have assurance that this is the natural byproduct of a growth mindset. So following the plan, working through it, being about it, this is where you have assurance of that two hour turnaround and so does that even sound real? I know it doesn't. That's it. It's a two hour turnaround. It just doesn't sound real. But here's what I'm telling you. It just listened to this strategy. Try it out and see what you think. So here we go.

Speaker 1: [22:18](#) The first step in combating depression, it's just like the first step that I shared with you last week. It's awareness. So in depression, what you want to be able to say is, Oh, I noticed something. Have I felt this way before? And where did that lead me? And so I've tried to describe depression to people as they ask like, well what are you talking about? Like how, how is bipolar like a thing, what does it look like for you? Like help us understand it, describe it a little bit and then I'll end up describing it. And I've actually had some people tell me recently like Mike, um, that's so vague what you're describing. Like everybody goes through that and I call these people the Universalist cause I bounced into them from time to time. They think that everybody has mental illness, everybody goes through it and that you don't get an excuse and you don't get a hall pass and you don't get no sympathy for having what happens to basically everybody.

Speaker 1: [23:18](#) So these are the Universalists when it comes to mental illness. But you know, here's what I told him. I said depression is so many things you guys, suppression is like, it's like when I feel like giving up and surrendering to hopelessness, I feel like giving up. I'm sad I want to cave in, I want to just drop it and walk away and you know, hopefully the earth will swallow me up and cause me to cease to exist. Like that's depression. Depression is my acceptance of myself. That acceptance is basically nonexistent and it also extends to other people too. Like my acceptance of

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

other people. It's just nonexistent. I'm thinking of myself, I'm in my own head and I don't like what I have and I don't like who I am and I don't accept, you know the fact that I have an actual illness that is causing all of this.

Speaker 1: [24:10](#) So that's depression. Depression is also that like feeling where everything is frustrating to you where I'm just so easily pissed. Like people know that version of Mike and it's hard for them to imagine now, but they know like there are, there are times in my past where, because of my depression I was super frustrated and I would just go off on people about nothing important whatsoever. Now I should never go off on people. But it was something I did back when I wasn't in command of my illness. Depression is this, it's, it's, I feel like the least worthy person that I know.

Speaker 1: [24:54](#) I feel like I have no value. Depression is when I get down about everything. So bipolar, depression, it's, it's about the thinking. Usually, you know, anxiety is, is more of a feeling. It's more of a bodily sensation. Um, depression tends to be more in the thinking is, is the difference there. So I get down about everything. Depression is also when things that are like, normally I enjoy them, I find pleasure in these things when they don't like give me anything whatsoever. So an example for me would be making art or maybe getting invited to a car show. Like those things in depression. Those are like normal pleasures that I have normal interests. Those are like the things that I'll turn down because I'm just not feeling it. That's bipolar depression, bipolar, depression shows up in my sleep. Okay, so my sleep changes dramatically. I can be getting too much sleep where every morning I'm just not even setting an alarm.

Speaker 1: [26:00](#) I'll just wake up and stay in bed for three more hours until my body is so agitated that I have to get up. Right. We're not meant to lie in bed that long. We're meant to get our recharge and then get out there and hit it again. But my sleep always changes when I'm going through a depressive episode. I have to get too much or I'm too agitated in my sleep. Here's another thing I discovered and I discovered this early on. I will eat nonstop when I'm depressed, I will go back into the kitchen until there's no food left in the pantry. I will eat everything or the flip side, I could eat nothing at all. So either way my weight is going to change, right? It's going to go up, are going to go down pretty dramatically. And I told you guys in a few episodes, like I put on 30 pounds in three months, which is a lot for me because I'm a little guy, right?

Speaker 1: [26:53](#) 30 pounds is a lot when you're not that big. I eat nonstop. It's more than emotional. You know, depressive eating is just like, you just have to keep putting food in your mouth because you

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

really don't want to go back to whatever it is you have to do. So you'll, you'll take a break or you'll stop what you're doing, something that you need to do and you'll just go and eat and you'll go back and eat and you'll go back and eat. That's bipolar depression. Bipolar depression is like me being restless. Okay. Like got to move around. Can't sit still. And yet I have no energy whatsoever. I can't even shower. That's bipolar depression. How about this? I think there's no value in living. I just don't see the point. I see no purpose worthy of living for, that's gotta be the worst, right? That that is so incredibly difficult to think that there's just no point in living.

Speaker 1: [27:59](#) How about this? Depression is when I'm getting into arguments and I'm straining important relationships, you know, I'm stirred up, I'm irritated. I'll get into a heated argument at the drop of a hat and then because of that relationships fracture and always have to spend time afterwards going back after people and saying, I'm sorry that wasn't me. I'm sorry I said that. I'm sorry I've made you feel that way. You know, depression is me getting into those arguments and pushing boundaries. Depression is also me over analyzing myself. It's me doubting myself. It's like, can, can I really be doing this? Do I really deserve what, what I want? How am I behaving right now and why am I doing that? It's a over analization. And then of course that completely cripples my ability to make decisions. And I remember I have clearly remember a time where I couldn't even decide what folder on my computer to open up to work on something that a project needed to be finished with.

Speaker 1: [29:10](#) Like here I was clicking around, opening windows, closing windows, opening them again, closing again, looking at files, closing a window, opening and not even working. I couldn't even make a decision on the level of open this folder and get the workout and do something. That's bipolar depression. It's also feeling nothing or it can be feeling excessively emotional. So I'm a crier. You know, I, I cried. You know, I tear up from time to time, but with bipolar depression I'm crying excessively. Like I got that box of tissues so handy because I'm just crying and crying and crying. So I either feel nothing or I feel everything and it's overwhelming. I also feel like, no, I actually know when I'm depressed. I know I'm convinced that people are talking about me ever been there ever said, I know that I know that Facebook and Instagram are blowing up with my name right now.

Speaker 1: [30:17](#) I know that people are talking about me and you get paranoid. And the last thing I want to share, just a personal story, is that in depression I feel tension. Just going to something as simple as a lunch or a dinner meeting. It's overwhelming to think about going out, spending time. You know what goes through my mind

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

is what in the world am I going to talk about for 50 minutes with this person I have, there's nothing in my mind. I'm completely blank right now. I'm just, I'm, I'm nervous. Like I don't, I don't want to go out feeling like it's just so overwhelming to go and do ordinary things. That's how you know that it's bipolar depression. And so this is all part of awareness. This is step one. Have I felt this way before and, and this is the important part. Where did that lead me? I remember our friends, the Universalists number, the ones that said, Oh that everybody goes through that. Like, no, you get what I'm saying, right? It's not that everyone experiences these on occasion. It's not that. It's that there's a regularity and there's also a predictability and that is what makes it bipolar disorder. So when someone says that you're just being a wimp, you just suck it up, move on. Do things like the rest of us. Well you can basically tell them to shut their face.

Speaker 1: [31:50](#) So let's talk about some action. So those things pop up. That's our awareness. We recognize it. Now what are we supposed to do? Well, here's my two hour turnaround. And you know what? This is something that I did just yesterday. So I got a late start to my work. My days have been very chaotic, trying to get everything ready for the launch of this membership. And it's just, it's something I've never done before and I'm just following a roadmap and going through trainings and editing my videos and doing all kinds of work, right? So I got a late start yesterday and the later it got, the more I thought my myself slipping into those sensations of depression where it's like, this isn't worth it. You're not good enough. You know you don't have the energy right now, so just let it go. Let it, let it go till tomorrow.

Speaker 1: [32:41](#) And I said, no. With depression, it's all about entering into activity. And then you've got to stay there until you're naturally tired and you're naturally satisfied by the job that you did. And that's typically how it affects us. It affects our, our ability to work. So I've got this book, I'm actually staring at it right now. It's a book by Julie fast and her Dr. John Preston, and she titled it, get it done when you're depressed and this is such a good book. I would recommend getting a copy for yourself. She calls it 50 strategies for keeping your life on track. And it's basically how to punch through depression with some specific methods that she's developed over the years of having lived with bipolar depression. She says for over 25 years and she kicks it off in the first chapter. She titles it, get it done, and don't wait until you feel like doing it.

Speaker 1: [33:42](#) And that is exactly what I ran into yesterday. I was waiting to start work until I felt like it. And this is not typical of me, I know better by now, but I got a late start and I didn't feel like it. And you know what? I just had to get going. This is bipolar

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

depression, this, this is an illness of idleness. And you know what? We're just not designed to be idle for all that long. We're supposed to be in motion. We're supposed to be engaged. And so with my poor depression, it's all about undoing that idleness. You got to remember activity is fuel because activity fuels this whole growth mindset that we're talking about and this is where it will become a two hour pro at depression. So what are my steps to the two hour turnaround? Well, there's actually just one. You got to get your ass in gear.

Speaker 1: [34:41](#) But I know in all anal, in all seriousness, you got to get moving. So I have this story, I will never forget this and I can't wait to get this guy on the show because he's got so much to share, so much that he's witnessed and I just, you know, I want him to be able to come on here and say like, yeah, Mike actually did do that. And he sat me down one day at the first lunch that we ever had together our first time getting back together after my massive wipe out episode. And he asked me what I was doing with my time and I was sharing, well, not much and I'm just resting and I don't know what I need to be doing. And he asked me, he's like, well, when do you get up in the morning? And I said, well, kind of whenever I want.

Speaker 1: [35:26](#) And he said, Mike, you gotta be kidding me. You don't set an alarm. And that will always stick with me. Like I laugh about it now, but I was like, you're right. You're right, you're right. I'm like, gosh, I don't have an alarm anymore. I've gotten so lazy. I'm, I'm eating the idleness of depression. And you know what? That one encounter with my buddy that really got me to think about a turnaround in simple ways. You know, like the, the turnaround really is that simple. You just got to get your button gear. Now, the ongoing nature of how to stay in gear is a little more complex and I'll share that in just a second, but it really is, it's the first thing you gotta do is just start, just start. And it helps if you start on something important. So maybe you've been letting the laundry pile up start on that or maybe you've been putting down, you know, a project that you needed to do for the family.

Speaker 1: [36:22](#) Get going on that just start. You don't have to finish. You just have to work. That's the point of the two hour turnaround is once you get working, it literally has an impact on the way your brain is processing your experience. And now now that you're in motion, you're like, Oh well I can stay in motion. This feels good. I'm not thinking those thoughts anymore of like, you don't, you don't have any business doing this or you're not going to be able to get it done or it doesn't even matter whatsoever where you're irritated and how dirty the house is. Like once you get going on it, you don't have to finish. It just has to be something hopefully important. And then here's the next thing you gotta

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

do is you've got to schedule something after that. I know this is groundbreaking, right? Like this is probably blowing your mind that you got to do stuff that's the antidote to bipolar depression.

Speaker 1: [37:13](#) But really there's an art to doing the things that you want to do that are important. And then having other important things to do after that. And that'll move you through your day and you'll get to a natural conclusion of your Workday and then you'll get to rest and be satisfied. And this is a loop that I do every day. And now of course you can evolve it to, you know, whatever larger scale projects and things you want to work on. Maybe you're going to go back to school or maybe you're in school or maybe you want to do something with your business or grow some aspect of whatever it is that you do at work, like starting things is where to begin. And then having something to do after that. And I suggest writing it down like write it down on a little scratch piece of paper.

Speaker 1: [38:04](#) This is what I'm going to do next. And when you're done with it, you can throw that piece of paper away and it feels so good to look at your work and say, actually did it. I finished. So start have something afterwards and then rest. Now how are you going to protect? This is something bigger. How you're going to protect yourself from a depressive episode spiraling down the toilet and taking you with it. You got to learn how to take pleasure in the natural difficulty of life. Kate, we're doing some serious internal work here. You got to learn how to take pleasure in these natural difficulties that come with life because remember, activity is fuel. Activity is what fuels a growth mindset, and when you're growing, sometimes it can be uncomfortable and sometimes it can be difficult, but that's just life. We've got to learn to take pleasure in it.

Speaker 1: [39:06](#) So what I do, first thing I do is I examine myself for my best and highest use. I think about this intentionally. What am I best at and what is the highest use of my time and my talent and whatever else I want to invest. And I observe that in every season of life. So right now I'm in a business building season of my life. So what I need to do is take pleasure in thinking about that season. So my best and highest use right now is to be a coach for people who have this mental illness that is my best and highest use. It's not going to always be the best and highest use. It's going to evolve. I'm going to develop as a person. The nature of my business is going to evolve and get better and better and better. But I have to take pleasure in thinking about who I am and what I do.

Speaker 1: [40:11](#) It's gotta be enjoyable because what's going to happen next? Step two is I'm going to debate that best and highest use, and I'll debate it with somebody like Daniel with somebody like Austin,

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

with somebody like Philip. These are my lifers. These are the guys who are looking out for me. These are the guys I text every week on my mental wellness and the different stressors that are working in the background to influence my mental wellness. Like these are the guys I debate with. We get on the phone, we see each other, we text, we debate what my best and highest use is. It's incredible. It's a protection, but I take pleasure in debating. Normally I would take pleasure in thinking after the depression has gone right, like after I've wiped it out with my activity and starting on something that I want to do. Once I've done that and I can re return to pleasure in my thinking, then I want to avoid pleasure and debating because I'm a perfectionist, right?

Speaker 1: [41:11](#)

Like I think my thought needs to be perfect or else I'm not going to put it out there for somebody else to think about and to argue back with me whether or not that's the right thing to do. So I have had to learn to take pleasure in the debate and the debate is just this. It's how will I act on my best and highest use? What are my steps? What should I do and I let my guys, I let my family, I let my sister, I let them tell me how they see it, and that shapes me and that will shape the next step. Step three, this is all under protection. This is that complex ongoing strategy that I use beyond my two hour turnaround because look, you don't want to be doing a two hour turnaround nonstop, right? You want to have some kind of protection so that you're doing that maybe once or twice a week.

Speaker 1: [42:05](#)

So pleasure and thinking is the first pleasure and debating as a second. Here's what I do next pleasure in laboring. This is what I did because it's actually very difficult, but what activities are going to keep me busy on exercising my best and highest use? So the laboring, that's the whole two hour turnaround, right? That's where you're taking specific actions on the things that you say need to get done. So there's pleasure in laboring. The fourth thing, I do picture this, all a big loop. The fourth thing that I do is I find pleasure in testing. So I put things out there. I'm laboring at them. They've already been debated. I've already thought about them. Now I'm testing them out, so like this would be the ads that I'm running this week and maybe you came on this show because you saw an ad and I want to welcome you, but I took pleasure in testing and this is hard for me to do.

Speaker 1: [43:12](#)

Maybe this is harder for me. The testing is harder for me than the laboring because in the testing, that's where going to be like, Oh my gosh, is it gonna fly or fail? How's it going to go? But I got to learn to take pleasure. This is where I'm really challenged right now. Me personally, I am personally challenged in taking pleasure in the testing, but the testing is going to ask how are my best and highest activities performing? Right? How

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

am I performing? How is my work performing? You might not be in a business like I am where you need to make products and test them out and where you need to make marketing and test how you, maybe you don't have to do that, but even it's needed. Maybe even just from home, you can think about like, okay, what am I working on?

Speaker 1: [44:02](#) What am I changing? Maybe you're making over the house. Maybe you're thinking about, you know, demoing the kitchen and you know, you've got to think about it and debate it and then the labor comes and then you test it out and see if that's what you like. So the testing is something that I don't enjoy naturally, but I'm learning to take pleasure in the performance. So how are my labor's performing and having pleasure in that is great protection, right? Cause dreading the testing like I naturally do when I dread the testing, that opens me wide up for depression. So I got to learn to take pleasure in it. Oh that's an interesting result. I did not anticipate that. Now I've got to change things right now in the feedback you're entering the fifth part of protection. This is the last part. So thinking, debating, laboring, testing. Now we're in the feedback and that's just saying, how can I evolve even more into my best and highest use?

Speaker 1: [45:02](#) You know, I get that phrase from somebody that I used to work for. And the thing I love about it is it basically makes me like higher status automatically when I consider what is my best and highest use. So what do I do best? What do I bring forth that's better than other people? And what is the most worthy cause for my talent and my time and my labor, my best and highest use? I love that phrase. I remember she shared that with me one time because she was evaluating whether or not to take a job here locally in town. And I say, well, well what does your gut tell you? She says, well, my gut tells me that this is gonna prepare me for my best and highest use. And even though the job doesn't pay very well, the experience is everything. So we need to learn to evolve.

Speaker 1: [46:00](#) It's, it's like a loop. You know, this loop goes through thinking, debating, laboring and testing. And when it comes out of the testing, it goes into a feedback zone. And this is where people are telling you and where you are looking for like how did, how did this come out and what do I need to change to evolve it into an even better thing? It's a loop that continuously evolves higher and higher and higher and that's how it looks to evolve into your best and highest use. And when you do that, remember this is the whole progress plan that we're talking about. The growth plan for bipolar, the progress this like continual looping higher and higher and higher. That is the natural process that is going to allow you to escape the clutches

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

of depression. Yes, it'll still come up, but you'll hack it like a Ninja and you'll go into this protection mode where you're taking pleasure in all of these things and you'll just evolve higher and higher and higher.

Speaker 1: [47:02](#) And that's when the misery of depression just begins to fade. You know, the other day when I got my late start, it took me about an hour and a half, about two hours to get my turnaround. And then, you know what? I didn't finish the work that I was doing, but I moved on to something that I thought was super important and that was editing some videos for my course. And so once I got into that, all of a sudden the time just flew by and I was focused. But you know, getting there was rough. I had to force myself to sit in the trainings, go through them, do the work, and then eventually my mindset of depression, my, my experience of depression, it just lifted. And it allowed me to work energetically and in the pleasure zone. So activity is fuel. And what I want you to do is use it to fuel a growth mindset.

Speaker 1: [47:56](#) How am I continually improving? Cause with depression, it really is sink or swim. That's the reason why we need activity. Idleness is going to tear you apart, it's going to break you down and it's gonna turn you not into the person you want to be. But it's actually gonna turn you into a victim. It's gonna steal the power of your identity. It's gonna steal the power of your future. Always remember that activity is your fuel. Activity is how you feel alive. Remember, I, I don't want you just doing things want you to feel alive. It's sink or swim. And yes, swimming is exhausting. We're talking about life here. Swimming is exhausting. Life is exhausting. It is especially exhausting if you have a mental illness. So one thing that I love to remember when it comes to depression, when it comes to me escaping the clutch, it's all about this continual, consistent improvement.

Speaker 1: [49:07](#) I have this book by Paul Arden and right on the cover, the only thing it says is, it's not how good you are. It's how good you want to be. You know how good you are. This is that sinking feeling for me in depression. That's how good I am. I'm sinking. But how good I want to be. That's the swimming part. I want to be swimming like an expert. You know, life is like a long swim out in the ocean. You know, we've decided we're going to take a swim. We're going to go a long ways. Once you get out there, there's no turning back. You're far from shore. But if you want to be a good swimmer, you absolutely have to stay moving. And then of course once you do that and you come back to shore, then you can graduate to doing things like other stuff that you want to do in the water, like surfing and snorkeling.

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

- Speaker 1: [50:01](#) Or maybe you want to be lifeguarding. You know, I'm talking about the nature of your work. You can, you can graduate from just swimming around and doing basic mundane tasks and getting good at those things you eventually want to graduate. So what I'm talking about, what you do with your ocean activity, you know, whether it's the surfing or the snorkeling or the lifeguarding or any other number of things that you could be doing out in the ocean. You could be fishing off a boat like what I'm telling you to do with your ocean activity, with your work activity. That is what you want to examine for your best and highest use. Do not settle for drowning. When all you have to do is start kicking against the water. It's activity, you know? Then once you get upright, you can float on your back. You know how this feels, you know you can recover for a little bit, get some strength back, breathe.
- Speaker 1: [50:55](#) You're swimming around, but now you're floating a little bit. So when you're floating on your back, look at the sky. Who do you want to be? Who do you really want to be? Don't let depression be the excuse that keeps you from becoming that person. When you're floating on your back in the water. You can also look at the shore. You can look at where do you want to be? Just because we're depressed doesn't mean we can't make the right decisions. What's right is taking a big breath and doing something important. So I give you permission to get on your back and float a little and get a little strength back. And then I want you to dive into something really good.
- Speaker 1: [51:52](#) [inaudible] okay? Remember how you protect yourself. You do it by turning work into pleasure and even if it feels like a pain, handling your depression in a productive way and in an effective manner. This is something that fits into the entire growth plan for bipolar, which is the download from this episode. And it's also if you've been listening to the last two episodes, you've seen me online. This is the guide and I'm telling you that what I talked about. Yes, last, um, I said yesterday, last episode with mania and this episode with depression, these two pieces fit into the growth plan at every single stage. The only difference is you're going to be evolving in the way that you do these protection plans at each step of the way. Cause you're going to gain more experience and you're going to go into that feedback like I talked about where it's like, okay, we did this last time, this part worked, this part works and this part didn't work so good.
- Speaker 1: [52:57](#) So here's what I'm going to change this time. Or maybe I'm going to cut out this part altogether. Like you get better and better and better at how you swim. If we're talking about depression, we're going to get better and better and better, and how you navigate the ocean the farther you progress through the growth plan, because you can't be pro with this illness if you

## EPISODE 28: DEPRESSION IS SINK OR SWIM

don't perfect your approach. So whether that takes you two hours or whether that takes you two weeks, however long it takes you to turn around and depressive episode, you will find that making consistent progress is a massive deterrent to feeling low. So if you haven't gotten it already, this guide is available at [mikelardi.com/growthplan](http://mikelardi.com/growthplan). That's mike lardi dot come forward slash growth plan. Pick up your copy, check it out, and you'll see this is something that grows with you at every stage of the plan.

- Speaker 1:            [53:56](#)            So next week, next week is going to be fun for me. Next week is a really amazing episode that evolved out of something that happened to me, uh, in the last a week or so, I got to go to my 20th annual high school reunion and I actually got to tell my story to a couple dozen people who are curious as to where life had taken me. And so, uh, imagine that for yourself going into that situation, I couldn't have done it without the topic that I'm going to share on next episode. And the topic is acceptance. And this is how do you be accepting of yourself and your story while you're still holding onto the bigger and better version of yourself in the future. And this is this acceptance telling you this is a very mentally healthy, so you don't want to miss it. I will see you here. Same time, same place. Adios.
- Speaker 2:            [54:54](#)            [inaudible]
- Speaker 3:            [55:00](#)            thanks for listening to the bipolar now podcast at [www dot mike lardi dot com](http://www.mikelardi.com)