



## EPISODE 44: FEAR OF DISCLOSING MENTAL ILLNESS

- 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. You're listening to the bipolar now podcast, episode 44
- Speaker 2: [00:40](#) 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: [00:54](#) Ah, yeah, your boy Mike Lardi up in this every week. I always use the beginning of the show to clear my thoughts, to get used to hearing my own voice, which is pretty odd if you ever had to do something like this. And to wrap my mind around a topic that I don't have complete mastery on, but nevertheless, I want to do my best to share about and to help probably dispel some fears around the things that we have to deal with in life as we progress into the future that we want when we have a bipolar disorder. So that's what the show's about. Glad to be here with you as always. Uh, not always having a grip on my situation. Um, I feel like difficulty would be the key word for me this past week. I'm in a difficult situation, um, spiritually for those of you who've developed that, that side of your nature, the spiritual side of life, like it, you know, when, when things are just not right there and it's an upsetting situation that you're involved in.
- Speaker 1: [02:02](#) And, um, I just, I, I take comfort in the fact that getting this thing in the open and sharing so freely with friends of mine and other people who support me spiritually. Um, I just love how encouraging it is to make things known and to get counsel and to hear scripture and to hear people praying for you. And it's just, it's such a phenomenal thing to go through a difficult patch with acceptance and support attached to it. And so I just got off the phone a little earlier with a good friend of mine and she was just explaining to me the fact that I have absolute spiritual victory even in the midst of all of this uncertainty and just how amazing that is to have the knowledge of a victory when you're in the messy middle of a bad situation. And so her counsel was so incredible and I'm so grateful for that.
- Speaker 1: [02:59](#) And it just, it kind of frames this entire difficult week for me where I had difficult mornings. You know, I had difficulty getting started. I had difficulty jumping into work. I had difficulty task switching at work because I have so many different tasks that I

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do throughout the day that are completely different from one another. They engage different parts of my brain and, um, and I'm, I'm, I'm faced with a difficult next step in my career. And of course, you know, applying to a job, especially a job where you feel like you've never done something on that level before, like it's a step up for you. Um, it, it can be intimidating. And so I've got, you know, difficulty in facing taking that next step. I asked, I asked myself, I, I say, am I good enough for it? Will I be good enough? I ask, will they accept me, especially if they find out my diagnosis.

Speaker 1: [03:58](#)

Like I, I can't really hide the fact that I've built a business now around helping people with a mental disability. Like that's going to be in the open. Will they accept me? And so I just want you to know if, if you, if you feel as though you know today's topic, we're going to be talking all about fear as it relates to the fear of disclosing mental illness and so if that's you, if you have like if you have any kind of a understanding of what it's like to have to tell someone, to have to open your mouth and let the words come out of your mouth about you having a real life bipolar disorder. It's just a terrifying thing. Disclosure is, it's it. It's if you're fearful of disclosure, it's not just because you're a beginner. Okay. I've been sharing my story. I've been sharing my diagnosis.

Speaker 1: [04:54](#)

Obviously on this show. I share it quite publicly that I have a bipolar disorder. I still have the fear of disclosing my particular unique mental illness. It's not just a beginner thing, but here's what's cool is if you want to be strong, you don't have to feel strong. You just have to keep trying at it. Being strong just means you have to keep trying. I get these reality checks and I'm so thankful every time I get one because I get beat up. I mean it's easy to beat me up and I just, I let this reality come back to me that says, you know what? Once somebody knows me once, once somebody gets me, they're going to want to work with me. They're going to see that I'm a good worker and they're going to want me on their team. It's a want. All of the jobs I have right now, they're a want.

Speaker 1: [06:01](#)

People want me so that they can work with me. It's so cool. I work with co-pastors. That means my local community, I help guide and spiritually direct people into a life that looks a lot more like Jesus. I work with people who want me on that team. That's, that's a cool reality check for me. I have value to my clients. Okay, they want to work with me. I do some high end projects. Kay. I do some really cool stuff and people want me to work with them more and more and not only that, but they'll willingly refer me out to other people. So that other people can work with me. That's just cool. People want to work with me

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once they know me, you know my diagnosis isn't a thing. I had some fear disclosing it initially, but it's not a thing because once they know me, they want to work with me.

- Speaker 1: [06:57](#) My students are the exact same way. You guys know who you are. You know who you are. My members of the peace plan for bipolar, you know who you are. We work together because we want to work together, right? You're working with me because you want to copy some aspect of my management style of this illness for yourself so that you can put together a great dreamy life, a life that you're proud of. So all right, that's me. That's cool. But you know, it's really super awesome. We're not here to talk about me. We're here to talk about you guys and I have a group on Facebook. It's called the bipolar now podcast group, and we meet in there every single day and there are some extremely cool people in there. There's new people showing up all the time. We're learning each other's stories. We're helping each other out.
- Speaker 1: [07:47](#) We don't want each other to repeat the mistakes that we've made. It is cool. Cool, cool. And so today I've got a story. It's a bit of a short story, but it's a really good one. And the person who submitted this story, I'm protecting her identity because I don't want to use names on this show. I don't want anything to be traced back to you. I want you to get the thrill out of seeing your story genuinely impact lives on this show. And so I've got a great one here. Remember today we're talking about fear and the fear of disclosing our mental illness or mental health challenges and so she opens up by saying that, hi, I am very, very she. She wants me to know that she is very newly diagnosed with bipolar. Okay. Can you feel that? I am very, very newly diagnosed with bipolar and I have a large fear of disclosing this to pretty much anybody.
- Speaker 1: [08:50](#) She says, unfortunately my family and my husband's family mostly do not believe in mental illness and they spiritualize it in a Christian way. Saying that Jesus is your doctor and that you need to pray more and those types of things which I really don't need right now and it's also been a high source of stress and anxiety for me for many, many years. She says also, it's probably the reason that this whole um, Christian spiritualization of non mental illness, she says it's probably the reason why it's taken her so long to get diagnosed. She says, I'm in my forties and I have three children. She also says, unfortunately I'm noticing potential signs of bipolar in two of these children and I know that my husband and I will need to become their advocates and also because some of them are already getting labeled by the grandparents as difficult and hard to manage.

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- Speaker 1: [10:00](#) She says life has always been a struggle for me and it didn't always understand why and I thought it was just anxiety, but now I understand myself so much better. I'm really not sure because it is so new, but I really need to find safe people that I can disclose and she calls it disclose the stew. That's cool. That's cool. She says there are few close friends that I would feel comfortable doing. So, but like I said, I'm not really feeling strong enough to combat constant gaslighting about mental illness at every family function. I hope you find that this is helpful. So thank you.
- Speaker 1: [10:49](#) Well, thank you. I want to open this story up a little bit because I think it has some serious gold. The first thing right off the bat that I notice is, um, is the, the whole issue of diagnosis. When you're newly brand new, when, when you're, when this is the first time you've ever encountered the term bipolar as something that is in your life, it's a really sketchy place to be. On the one hand it's like, okay, I'm relieved. I feel good that I have something to point to now. But what you're pointing to is invisible because it's inside you and I just can completely relate to the time in my life where I had this fear of not knowing who in the world I could even talk to this about. Like my family saw it firsthand, my immediate family and I recovered in my parents' home.
- Speaker 1: [11:56](#) But outside of the two of them, I was terrified. What do I share? What do I talk about? How is this going to make sense? What does it mean? Am I a dangerous person? Okay. All these things were floating through my mind and I want you to know it's completely normal when you, when you're brand new to the diagnosis, it is. It's, it's an unsettling because of what you went through because of receiving a term for this illness and because of uncertainty about what the future holds. But here's the first thing that I came to recognize in this story and that is this being diagnosed. All it means is there's just new questions to ask. Getting diagnosed just means there's new questions to ask. One of the things that I did early on was I read, I read a ton and for those of you who've shared with me in the group, I know that you've done this to you.
- Speaker 1: [13:00](#) It's like we want to get to the bottom of this. We want to gain knowledge. We want to figure out like everything that is stacked against us now, we have to totally strategize a brand new game plan. And we don't have a lot of mental, physical, spiritual energy to come up with that plan when you know that the aftermath of an episode has passed. And so one of the things I did was I got books, you know, I'm still collecting books to this day. I am still collecting books on this issue. I read them, I take notes, I have a way of journaling through my reading. And I

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actually just last week I was listening to a podcast from a psychologist and they had a author and a licensed marriage and family therapist. And he had written a book. And I find it fascinating because he titled the book owning bipolar am fascinated by that because the ownership, that's like my core word in my management plan.

Speaker 1: [14:07](#)

And I thought how interesting for a professional to come up with the same term as some regular old Joe like me who's just living with the illness, like how, what are the odds that that exact word would be used? So if you're looking for some good new reading, I'm going to pick this one up. I'll let you know what I think of it. I was pretty impressed from the podcasts. This guy sounds like the real deal. He just sounded like he really cared about patients and families where bipolar disorder factors into their lives. And so the book is called owning bipolar subtitle, how patients and families can take control. And the author's name is Michael Michael Piwik. So see we got another Michael on the game and one of the things that he talked about on that show was the three phases of stabilization. He talks about how there is pre stabilization and that's when you're sick.

Speaker 1: [15:05](#)

Then there is plain old stabilization. That's where you're learning to become. Well and that's where things like reading books like this, that's where these factor into that phase. And the third phase is post stabilization. And that's when you're able to blend into the world and raise a family and do work and uh, other difficult things that come along, um, when you're trying to do life with an active mental disorder. So pre stabilization, stabilization and post stabilization are the phases that he talks about in that book. And I find it interesting because it definitely like completely mirrors the growth plan, which is something that I didn't come up with clinically. It's all observation and firsthand, you know, looking at how we develop in our maturity style with the management of this illness. So pretty much the first thing you have to do, um, and, and the growth plan is just one of the tools that I've created to help you with that. You can find [it@mikeclardy.com](mailto:it@mikeclardy.com) forward slash growth plan. But this is just identifying the who and the how of disclosing your mental illness. Because you just have to ask the question like, okay, who is it that I'm going to share with and how will I qualify them as worthy? You know, not everybody is worthy to hear your story because not everybody can receive it. I've said that numerous times on this show. Not everybody is worthy of your story.

Speaker 1: [16:38](#)

You have immense value and you can't trade it away on people who are going to trash it. People who don't understand that this is an everyday illness that affects millions of people across this country. People who don't understand that there are real

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methods and real strategies that work in pacifying this illness and making our lives work more for us instead of working against us. There's people that don't understand that there's people that might not ever understand that. And the sooner you can identify those people, the sooner you can keep your story away from him and keep it precious and valuable and an asset to you. So that's the first thing is when you get diagnosed, there's new questions to ask as far as who do you disclose to. Okay. So the second thing I picked up from this particular listeners story is it some families just like to spiritualize mental illness.

Speaker 1: [17:44](#)

They like to make it seem as though it can go away with a prayer, a hope. And if you have greater faith and you shouldn't be having these issues, it's, it's, um, gosh, how do I even like put into words my dislike for this whole situation? It's like shame and fear are two things that are never gonna do you any favors. And yet when you hold mental illness over a person in your family, as though it's some spiritual fault of theirs, you're literally plunging them into shame and fear. She talked about getting gaslighted at family affairs. Um, if you've never heard that term before, uh, I actually just learned this today. It's pretty amazing. Uh, the timing of me learning this term because it's something I've experienced recently, but gaslighting is like a psychological tactic that someone will use against another person in order to make them question their sanity.

Speaker 1: [18:44](#)

Uh, so you can see how like it's a form of bullying, right? And it's completely disgusting and it makes me feel sick. And the only thing I can say is that if a family likes to Gaslight when it comes to your diagnosis, you just got to shut it down. You have got to shut it down. Your, your you, you don't have time, you don't have emotional capacity. You don't even have, like, you don't even have anything in you that makes that something that somebody can do to you. And feel like they're doing you a favor. It's not, it's terrible when, when your faith makes you put somebody in a dirty old box, it's disgusting. Your faith isn't blessed if it makes other people's lives a nightmare. And that's what's happening in this story. She's living in a nightmare. She can't live in the freedom of having this diagnosis.

Speaker 1: [19:47](#)

There's, there's a freedom that I want you to have. There's a box that your family is trying to put you in a dirty old box. And here I'm saying is there's a freedom and their faith doesn't give them the right to do that to you. I just want you to know this is, this is another instance where just like before I was talking about the who and the how of revealing and disclosing, um, the, the who has already been identified in this situation. You don't, you don't disclose mental illness to this particular family. You know, this is

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not, this is not the place where you're going to find support and endless compassion. This is, this is not the place where that is going to occur. And I, I feel terrible saying that because it makes it seem as though the family can never change. That's not true that the family could change.

Speaker 1: [20:40](#)

The likelihood though is pretty low because there's an ingrained culture and a culture shame and fear surrounding mental illness. You can find the right people who you really mix well with and then just let your family be your family and that's it. Okay. Tough, tough situation right there on number two. Here's the next thing that I noticed is, um, this is the third thing and is this getting diagnosed? It's not simple and it's not quick. Notice how it took, she said it took me so long to get diagnosed. And of course the reason for that is because of the whole family culture, right? Like there's just a shame, a pervasive shame around the topic of mental illness. So it took a long, long time. And this is actually kind of normal, like depending on what you read, it takes on average nine or 10 years from first symptoms.

Speaker 1: [21:45](#)

So maybe your first manic episode ever to the time that you sit in a doctor's office and they ask you the questions and you say yes, no. Or how long it, you were spent feeling a certain way. You answer all the questions that they ask you and they come to the conclusion it's bipolar. What I'm saying is take from this story that a diagnosis isn't simple or quick, it can take time. Here's number four. Having kids, when you have bipolar means educating them about mental health, here's what I'm really noticing is that they, they took the role, her and her husband, they automatically assumed the role of being advocates. Advocate is someone who stands in place of someone who can't stand for themselves. So children are learning to manage their brains and their bodies and parents need to step in as their advocates. And when the child is at risk for developing, you know, a bipolar disorder, uh, not, it's not conclusive in the research, but it's a, it's a strong correlation between, um, you know, genetic, uh, a genetic predisposition for this particular disease.

Speaker 1: [23:02](#)

And so she says automatically we're, we're their advocates. And we're already having to intervene because they're, some of them are already becoming perceived as being difficult. And so here's the one thing that I want to say next is that number five, the number five thing that I get out of this story is that the struggle is real, but it doesn't always appear in childhood. Okay. Your struggle is real. Remember how she said life has always been a struggle for me. But here's what I'm saying, it doesn't always have to appear in childhood. Yes. It might be someone's upbringing that that causes it, that that causes the, or it might



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not, I mean, environment is quite a trigger for this particular illness. But I wouldn't say that if you were to ask my sister and I who is going to be bipolar when they were grown adult, we would have both pointed to her.

Speaker 1: [23:58](#) So we, we laugh about it because, you know, here I am now as a person advocating for mental health and from, for patients and for people. And um, and she's like, you know that she's like, I'm the one that drove mom and dad crazy. I'm the one who was nuts and she said, you are the, you are the a easy child. And I said, I know. Isn't that just so ironic? It's funny. So yes, the struggle is real, but it doesn't always appear in childhood. And then the sixth and final thing that I took away from this story were the necessity of close friends. This is what I would call real friends. So I think it's better to have one real friend than a thousand people who when the rubber meets the road, they really do, you know good. You know, it's better, better to have one real friend than an Instagram account that is just on fire like a real friend.

Speaker 1: [24:53](#) Here's how you can tell what a real friend is and this is what you're looking for. A real friend is that person who is going to still talk to you after you've made a big mistake. There's still gonna be the one to talk to you after you've had a moral failure. That's the real friend. That's when you know, I get to test this all the time with my guys and with my real friends. I get to test this all the time cause it's like, man, if I were to make a big mistake and I can tell them, Hey, this is a temptation for me, or Hey, this is something that I'm struggling with, or Hey, this is like I almost did this the other day and I would have really regretted it and we work through it and they talk to me because even if I made a big mistake, they'd still be there.

Speaker 1: [25:50](#) Now here's the one that goes a step further. If you make a moral failure, will they still be there? The real friend is, they're not gonna be a detached from it. They're going to feel terrible for you, but they're still gonna talk to you. If you have, if you have a breakdown, and this is an illness, particularly in the manic phase, this is an illness that causes multiple moral failures. Okay? I know them firsthand. I've committed several, my real friends and there's a lot of them. They're still talking to me guys. It is so cool. It's better to have one real friend and a bunch of people who can't really help you. You know, every single week, every single week. Well, actually that's not true. Most weeks, most weeks on this show, I create a lifer guide and a lifer is my term for a real friend, a true supporter. That's a lifer.

Speaker 1: [26:57](#) That's the, the term itself denotes that this person is going to be with you for a long time. So I create these guides on the blog for



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this show and they're real easy to pull up. If you ever go to Mike lardy.com forward slash blog all of the episodes are listed there and you can dive into each one and if you want to have a discussion about that particular topic of that particular episode, there's usually okay. Not always. I'm trying to remember. There's, there's been several times I haven't provided these questions, but they're questions that guide a discussion that help you develop a bond in a deeper relationship with your lifer. And I want to just say, I want to take this show, I want to take this year. Remember we're, we're building out our mental health this year as a project. It's, it's no longer a problem for us. We're, we're working on things. We're solving different pieces of the puzzle. It's a project for us. Okay? Our mental health this year, 2020 our mental health is a project. That's what we're doing together. What I want you to do this year, this is one of the biggies. I want you to discover one real friend.

Speaker 1: [28:18](#)

I want you to discover, okay? That's the process we talked about earlier about being diagnosed means there's more questions to ask. The question we're talking about is who? Who are we going to discover? It takes time. It takes testing. You have to look, look, look, look for that person who's going to be one of your lifers, who's going to be down all the way down for you, like down to get into the thick mess with you down to help you, down to let counsel you down to light a fire under you to move you forward. I always go back to my buddy Austin. He lit a fire under me one day. He's like, Mike, you absolutely are well enough to be living on your own. So why aren't you? And I said, Oh my gosh, you're right. And so we spent an hour or so talking about my life plan cause he's my lifer.

Speaker 1: [29:23](#)

Austin is one of my lifers. I can't wait to get him on this show. So that's this year. That's your task when one of your biggies this year is going to be to discover one real friend. I want you to look, I want you to look and look and look and look some more. And when you think somebody is going to be your lifer, but they proved not to be, I want you to keep on looking. I want you to try and try and try and try for this person. But a real friend is going to meet your energy level. They're going to come meet you right where you're at. So try, try, try, try to find this person and if you want you can let me know. You can get on the podcast group, you can email me. It's it. Is this important to me that you find one real friend this year? So if you want, let me know and let me know when it's real.

Speaker 1: [30:37](#)

Let me be clear about this fear. Okay. One real friend, one lifer, one super supporter. They're not going to make all your problems go away while you, um, sip your lattes every Saturday morning. They're not going to make it go away, but a good lifer

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will help you see the right steps to take and that is worth all the effort and all the risks that it takes to identify them in the crowd. And I know you can do this, you can do this. Okay. So what about next week? Next week is a big one. Um, wow. I'm staring at it right now. I can't believe I'm going to go for it, but next week we're going to talk about anger and how to use it and also how to avoid regretting it. So you definitely don't want to miss it and I will see you here. Same time, same place. Adios.

Speaker 3: [31:44](#)

[inaudible]

Speaker 4: [31:45](#)

thanks for listening to the bipolar now podcast at [www dot mike lardi dot com](http://www.dotmikelardi.com).

Speaker 2: [31:59](#)

[inaudible].