



EPISODE 55: ESSENTIAL SURVIVAL TACTICS FOR CRISIS

- 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 55
- 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: [00:53](#) Yes, yes, yes. Welcome. As I look out my window right now, it is snowing. Yes, snow in Southern California in April. I'm not even going to pretend I'm, I'm going a little stir crazy. This is, you know, plus everything else that's going on. It's quarantine time. This is maybe week three, week four. I, I don't know. I don't count like some people. Some people were like, I know the exact day that I've been home stuck at home and I'm like, I'm just over it from the beginning. Like I'm over being by myself. Uh, probably the, maybe the biggest thing that hits me is I'm a very active individual. I enjoy movement and I get energy off of moving and being active and being able to leave the house and take a walk and go to the gym. And this weather plus the quarantine put together has just made me so exhausted.
- Speaker 1: [01:45](#) You guys, like, I'm so wiped out. Like I'm just over it. I do. I do say though, I envy those people who can work out and exercise at home. Like that's their normal routine. Um, I might have to trick my brain into doing that if this becomes a regular feature, you know, in future life, I don't, I don't know. I don't even know what to expect, but I really do. Like, I look at the people who can hop on a bike or lift some weights or do some body weight exercises and keep themselves, you know, adequately exercised from home. I just, I'm kinda blown away by that right now because like I, I'm not able to do it. It's a, it's a feeling of like when I'm isolated, I, I'm, I'm never really all that into whatever I'm doing. So yes, I work from home now and that is a, that is a form of isolation is, is working by myself and working on projects by myself and doing all those things from home now.
- Speaker 1: [02:39](#) But it's like, that's not my preferred mode. I definitely like don't get any, there's an optimism that comes with togetherness, right? Like there's an optimism even for introverts that comes

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together when we are together and I'm, I'm missing that renewal. There's like a, a daily renewal for me. Like, let's take it back to the exercise. There's a daily renewal in me, not only physically walking to the gym and performing exercise, but like the people that are there, they're like my second family. And so here I am cooped up at home, quarantined today it's snowing and I'm just, I'm so wiped out. I'm tired. And I do apologize in advance if that comes across on this episode. But there's that, there's, there's, um, I would say two days ago my mental health started to tank and I started to relapse into anxiety and I get the kind of anxiety, I don't know how it functions for you and, and what the features are like in your experience of like chronic, debilitating anxiety.

Speaker 1: [03:49](#) But when mine comes on, it's like a wash of almost like fiery discomfort. Like the, there's a fiery sensation happening inside of my skin and bones and muscles, like the anxiety causes my body to feel tense and on fire. And then of course, two days ago, out of nowhere, my paranoia crept back into the picture. And for those of you who don't know what paranoia is, it's just, it's thinking untrue thoughts that people are like plotting against you or speaking bad against you behind your back or something is happening that you're not aware of, but you know it's happening. And so that's like probably like the easiest way I could describe paranoia in a nonclinical sense. And so that has kicked back in for me and now I feel like everybody has a problem with me.

Speaker 1: [04:49](#) Yeah. Okay. So that's bizarre, right? Like I know that's not true. There is zero evidence for that, but it still feels true. It still feels like I met odds with all kinds of people and I just have to kind of wonder, does that have anything to do with all this isolation? Like in the absence of my connecting to people is my paranoia having a playground, having a playground? I don't know. I don't know. All I'm saying is I'm an introvert. I recharge when I'm alone. You know, I don't thrive in crowds. Um, I can only do like short bursts of high intensity crowds and high intensity socializing and meeting all kinds of strangers. And like the worst case scenario for me is like having to meet somebody and then like entertain them. So, you know, I've taught myself over the years how to get over those situations cause they happen quite a bit for me just with the friend groups that I'm in.

Speaker 1: [05:48](#) But like as an introvert, I don't, I don't thrive on like lots of socializing. But I'll tell you this, every single introvert in the world needs some social connection. Something, this, this isolation, it can't go on forever. Okay. Can't go on forever. I've

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been very impressed with, um, several interactions that I've had inside the Facebook group that meets for this podcast. So that's the bipolar now podcast group on Facebook and highly encourage you to join, especially if you do well in online support environments. Um, there's a lot of amazing people that are with us in there every week I'm blown away by the quality of inner air like interactions that I have and I've had people tell me that they are so extremely thankful for this particular group because it's helped them through this whole season of adapting and changing and having to adjust to a new normal.

Speaker 1: [06:47](#) And so that group is definitely open for you. Just click the link, there is no link. Sorry, just click on over there to join and we'll let you in. And we had a video. So I get on video every Sunday afternoon. I do a live video, I take questions, we explore this podcast a little more in depth and then we have fun and we joke and it's just, it's a really good time. So inside of this week's video, a member posted the question and they said, Mike, do you have any advice on how to stay afloat during this pandemic? And do you know how to prevent yourself from going into that downward spiral because the stress is causing me extreme mood swings. And that's with me even being medicated. And I said, that is exactly what I was going to talk about on this episode this week.

Speaker 1: [07:41](#) So I thank them very much for bringing that up. And I want to just stay state at the beginning of the show. Like this Corona virus isn't the only crisis that you will face in life. Okay? The crisis is the drowning sensation that this person is referring to. They're talking about how do you stay afloat during this pandemic and keep yourself from going into that downward downward pull. It's a, it's a, it's a drowning like the, the way I feel today ever since my mental health tank two days ago is a drowning sensation. So, so here's the thing. Do you know how to tread water?

Speaker 1: [08:23](#) Well, we're in the deep end of the pool. Now you guys like this is the deepest end of the pool. What we're going through as a, as a nation and a world like that, we're in the deep end of the pool. So do you know how to tread water? That's what this person is getting at. And that's what I want to spend a little bit of time on. This episode is just walking you through three essential survival tactics that I have been using and that I have definitely pulled out in the last two days since my mental health tanked. And I'll start out with the very first one. You guys know this about me. If you've been on the show for any length of time, you know that

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I'm all about dialing in that sleep and getting good sleep, getting rested, sleep, getting consistent sleep.

Speaker 1: [09:09](#) You know, I'm all about that because sleep is the number one or can be the number one predictor of bipolar episodes. It's all about your sleep. Are you getting enough? Are you not getting enough? Are you getting too much? What's going on there? So with my sleep, the thing I do every single day and I'm not a hundred percent perfect at this, sometimes it gets away from me and I'll get into the cycle of how your bedtime routine can get pushed later and later and later as part of the cycle of this illness. I'll get into that just a little bit, but like with sleep I got to protect a bedtime, which means I got to establish a bed time and for me that bedtime is pretty dang early because I like to wake up early and get a super head start on my day. So I go to bed really early.

Speaker 1: [10:01](#) I'm, I am dropped dead in bed by 10 at at any given day, but I always protect my early bedtime. I have a shutdown routine that I go through. This is everything that I was talking about and I think in episode 18 where I talked about how becoming a pro at sleep is how you're going to be like a first step to becoming pro at living with bipolar disorder. Like I talked about the essential nature of having that clearly identified bedtime and going into the shutdown routine and all that. That's all in that episode. And here's the thing, I go to bed on time. I got to wake up on time. I got an honor my morning wake up time and this has been my downfall lately with the quarantine with just me being stir crazy and like not getting my proper, uh, my, my, my proper flow through my daily routine.

Speaker 1: [10:59](#) Like that has pushed some of my bedtime's to be pretty late cause it's like I'll, I'll be anxious and I'll put off my work and then finally I'll get on the computer and start working and just push through the anxiety. And then by the time I'm done working, it's 10 or 11 o'clock at night, I've already blown my bedtime by several hours. Like then it's very easy for me to wake up late and then that becomes a pattern. What I'm saying is you don't want to do that. You want to have a, a wake up time and you want to honor that. And I would say during this quarantine, just given the extra heightened amount of stress that all of us are under, I would say push your like in bed sleep time, push that closer to nine hours. If you're used to getting six or seven and a half, you know if he used to, he used to that many sleep cycles, like push it out another sleep cycle, go out to nine hours.

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- Speaker 1: [11:57](#) I've been sleeping nine hours every single day during this quarantine and I actually need it and like I can't imagine how messed up I would be if I didn't. So that's sleep. Sleep is super essential to staying afloat. The second thing, the second essential thing for you to do is to have some kind of work activity every single day with the exception of your day off, but every single day you should have either work or activities and you should have it lined up every night before you go to bed. You should know what you're doing the next day. You should plan a full day. If you don't have a planner, now is the time to just get a piece of scratch paper and start planning out the next day. Write down everything you're going to do, you know, connect the dots, write it in order, however that works for your brain to say, okay, this is, these are the things that I'm doing tomorrow.
- Speaker 1: [13:00](#) Like have that go into your subconscious as you go to bed and then when you wake up in the morning, there's not that anxiety of I don't know what I'm going to do today. And that extra energy that it takes to overcome that anxiety in the morning. If you, if you've got activities already lined up, if you got work already on your plate, know what it is and then you got to protect it. So there are priorities in our day and we have to protect them. We have to make sure we are going about our business. We have to make sure we're handling responsibilities, we have to keep on top of tasks. So maybe you keep a task list starting now. Like maybe you know like, okay, when I had extra time, here's five or six things that I can do and you just keep adding to the list, crossing it off you guys.
- Speaker 1: [13:51](#) It feels amazing to cross something off of your list. It's like I done see ya, I love it. And then of course you can play catch up on your task list. Like you can find a day that's a little bit slower and just play catch up or you can eliminate tasks entirely. That's really fun to do. Say earlier in the week you had like something that you put down on your list that needed to be done in your downtime and you get to Thursday or Friday and you're like, that doesn't even matter. I'm just gonna cross that off. Like give yourself permission to eliminate but keep a task list going. And then here's another thing. This is fresh on my mind because since the latter part of last year, and then definitely early this year, January, February, I was looking for a job. I was looking for work. So if you find yourself furloughed or laid off or any thing that has caused you to not have employment right now, it's time to find work.

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- Speaker 1: [14:57](#) Now of course I have to just make a mention for, for our particular illness, for bipolar disorder, you can't be working in the wake of having a significant episode and especially if you know that you're a bipolar one, if that's your particular type of the illness, like if you have had had an exceptional and dramatic and traumatic episode recently, now is not the time to be finding work like you, you get a free pass at just putting back together the parts of your life that are going to work best for you. But then eventually that comes to an end and you feel like you're able to take a risk and go out there and find work again. And what I'll say is if that's you right now and you're just, you're looking for an excuse not to go to work. Um, it's, it's, it's not going to help you during this quarantine, during this whole shutdown of the, of the virus. Like you need to have something that you put your head in your hands to work on.
- Speaker 1: [16:02](#) And if you just can't bring yourself to go get a job or or ask around, cause that's what I did the entire time I looked around. But I also asked around if that is just not a thing, then you need to take this time and you need to take seriously the fact that your work now is to boost your skill. So consider one work skill. Maybe it has to do with your trade. Maybe it has to do with your education. Maybe it's something that you liked about your last job, but you know you just didn't get any time to dive into it. Like now is the time. Now we have to adapt. We've got a skill up. We've got to learn the things that we're going to need when all this goes away in life. Returns to whatever kind of normal is going to be beyond this.
- Speaker 1: [16:56](#) We're going to need or all of us are going to need new skills or we're going to get left behind there. There's a new economy emerging in the wake of this whole pandemic and if you don't adapt and develop new skills, you're going to be left behind. So I wanna encourage you, take the downtime, find something to learn and go after it. But work is so essential. You've got to keep yourself going with a full day. And that's, that's really a good word for all of us. For this disorder in general, I talked to so many people who are high functioning with bipolar disorder, even bipolar disorder one, I find so many people that are high functioning and they all, as I watched them as I observe their pattern of life, they all keep themselves busy. It's a survival tactic no matter what. Like most of the world doesn't know what it feels like to have to survive by like doing things like this, you know, protecting our sleep and having work activities and all the other things I'm going to get into in just a minute here.

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Speaker 1: [17:58](#) They don't understand that we do these things, not because they're nice and good, but because they're absolutely needed for survival. And we're the ones that have to continue after this crisis is over. We have to face more crises. Except they don't, they don't challenge the world. They just challenge us. And so there'll be little pandemics in our own miniature world, right? Like everything that, that face, everything that we face in life is a potential crisis. When you have a bipolar disorder, that's just how it is. So we need to know how to tread water. So banking your sleep is one way. Keeping yourself busy is another way. And then the third and last way that I think, and I don't want to get into so many things that can keep you afloat because this podcast is, is completely, um, it's just completely full of ideas for how to do that. So today I wanted to just zoom in on what I'm doing right now as my mental health has tanked. I'm doing these things right now to protect myself and to stay afloat. So the third thing, the third, and I would say most rewarding thing is that I stay afloat by staying in relationships.

Speaker 1: [19:22](#) But I don't just go to any relationships. I actually focus on the best and absolutely most life-giving of those relationships. Like the people that light me up the most, the people where it's not a lot of work to be around them, the people where it's like you're not being put down or manipulated. Like these are the people that are life giving to you and I focus on those folks. And so yes, even during quarantine I'm having, you know, socially appropriate distanced, appropriately distance interactions with my most like life giving lifers. These are the people that make the difference for me. And so now, now is the time for me to draw closer to interact with, to share my concerns with. I shared my mental health concerns with uh, two of my lifers yesterday and it was just incredible. Like we got together and they gave me some great like outside perspective on what I was feeling as far as the paranoia. And that was really beneficial for me. Like now is the time to focus on those people. You can get them on the phone, you can get them on Facebook, you can, you can get them in real life if it's, if it's um, you know, permissible by you're governed by whatever your state government has said to do during this quarantine. Like you've got to focus on those people right now.

Speaker 1: [20:59](#) You got to focus on right now and now is the time. Think about, think about this in reverse. Do you find yourself inside of a relationship that is just uninspiring? Do you find yourself hooked up with someone who's just uninspiring diff? Do you find maybe even worse, do you find yourself hookup with somebody who tries to control you or who does little manipulative things over

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you? Like now is the time. Now is the time to break up with that person. Okay? You got someone you're hooked up with. You're not married, you're just dating. Now is the time to break up with that person. It's a hard word. I know, but think about it. You need right now. You need life giving relationships, which means you need to cut off. The ones that aren't, and maybe cut off is too harsh because a lot of people don't deserve that. I'm just thinking in the specific instance of like, you might be with somebody and they're no good for you and they don't lift you up. Now is the time to break up. Just do it. Do yourself a favor. Get out while you can. Okay, get out here and here's the other side of that. Get in if you've been thinking about it, if you've been thinking about getting married, even thinking about meeting somebody, if even thinking about dating, if you've been thinking about falling in love now is also the time for that.

Speaker 1: [22:53](#)

In times of crisis, when two people in a romantic love-filled relationship go through that together, there is a bond that is created. It's an undeniable bond. There's a bond of friendship, there's a bond of support. There's a bond of admiration. There is just a beautiful bond that is created between two people in love during a time of crisis because they need each other. It's awesome. So don't let the just the situation in the world keep you from either falling in love or committing to that love. So that's relationships and you can see why the right ones are absolutely essential to get right. We are not to be isolated. People we renew, our optimism is renewed in the light of connecting with other people. It's brilliant. So those are the three things and those are probably the only three things that you need. Going back to our listeners question, uh, from this weekend's video, I would say that sleep and work activity and relationships are the only three things that you're going to need to stay afloat during this time.

Speaker 1: [24:19](#)

Because all these things, they're like, they're protective. Okay? They're in, they have a, they have a nature, like they're protective in nature. Think about sleep, Kate. Sleep protects your mood, sleep protects and enhances your creativity. Sleep protects your physical health, like you know how it is to lose sleep. It's so hyper critical. Well, the same is true of work and any meaningful activity like all of these work activities that I'm talking about, keeping yourself busy, those are all protective in nature. They're going to protect your mood. Again, they're going to protect your mood. They're gonna protect your focus, which is so needed during this time. Focus is so needed during this time and then they're also going to protect your mental health, so the sleep does mostly physical. It's a physical boost,

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but work is a mental boost. Even difficult work is a mental boost and then relationships.

Speaker 1: [25:22](#) I find that just like sleep and just like work relationships are a mood, protecting mood enhancing feature in your life. They give you optimism, they fill you with a sense of support and of course all of that plays right into your mental health. It's, it's easy during these times because look, I'm not immune, okay. I'm not immune to what's going on in our world. I'm not immune to what's happening to my friends with their situations and their finances and their worries. I'm not immune to all of that stuff like I'm going into the downward spiral. Originally four weeks ago when I, when I recorded my first podcast of this whole pandemic beginning to get, um, to escalate, I was like, I was like, you know what? This ain't gonna affect me. And here I am a month later and I'm like, I'm, I'm feeling myself sucked in the, in the funnel, in the downward spiral. It takes effort to stop that kind of momentum. It takes effort to get out of that funnel. And one of the ways that I found to do it is I just, I enacted accountability. I, I put accountability with just one person when my case, it's two people, but I look for those relationships that are sustaining, that are life giving, that are helpful, that are wise and I just state, Hey, this is what I'm getting pulled down into. My anxiety is revving. I'm exhausted, I'm paranoid. Can you help me steer out of this downward spiral?

Speaker 1: [27:16](#) But I say, can you help me by asking me how my sleep is going? Can you help me by asking me how I'm filling up my day with work and activities? Can you help me continue to show up in these kinds of meetings that we have together? That's all accountability is. I'm just saying, these are the things I want to protect because these things protect me and how can you help me stay in conversation about those things so that I don't wind up at the bottom of the death spiral. If you know how to stay afloat, you will eventually catch a wave back to shore and I just want to encourage us that right now that's really all we're looking for. Somehow when all of this passes, we'll be back on shore. We'll be back on our feet and when that happens, you can bet we're going to be looking for ways to do more.

Speaker 2: [28:38](#) Okay.

Speaker 1: [28:39](#) Hopefully that was helpful. I am a fan of keeping things as simple as possible. Simple just works. I'll tell you what, those three things, they just work for me time and time again, so hope you enjoyed that. All right, so next week, next week on episode number 56 my friend Kadine is going to be joining us. She's

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going to be sharing about how to listen to your inner voice and how to let that voice sing. So she's made a big move in her mental health in the last six months, and I wanted her to tell her story here. And so I definitely don't want you to miss it, so I will see you here. Same time, same place. Adios.

Speaker 2:

[29:31](#)

[inaudible]. Thanks for listening to the Bipolar Now podcast at www.mikelardi.com.