



EPISODE 59: WHEN BEING ORDINARY IS A BATTLE

- 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 59
- Speaker 2: [00:41](#) 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](#) what's going on? Hey, it's Mike with you. Pleased to be joining you for yet another week. I always try to announce this show, letting everybody know that this is the place where we gather to try and do life on a different level when we just happen to have a mental illness that sets us back. Every time we get a little bit farther ahead, we get sent right back to where we started. So I want to get us to a place to where we are trying to get it right and to get it right more often because you can't always get it right. But what I'm trying for here in this show, with all my guests, with every topic, with all the reading that I do, all of the ways that I bring everyday life into this show, I'm just trying to paint a picture of what it could look like to get it right.
- Speaker 1: [01:40](#) So we are living with a bit of a summer tease here in the weather, Southern California, the beaches are closed. They opened them for basically a day and they got shut down right away. And so I just, I'm living in that tension of like, okay, we're, we're heading into a great season. We don't know what it's going to look like as far as our recreation. And people are coming out of their wigs. They're just literally there. They've had it, they're over it. It's enough. Let's move on. And, and yet you, and I know it's not that simple. And so, um, I'm just like, I'm struggling to get it to get this part right right now is just being able to stay in one place to get life done. You know, I haven't left this mountain in over a month and so what that's produced for me, and I recognize that this isn't everybody, but I, I have, I have seen an uptick, a giant uptick in my focus.
- Speaker 1: [02:38](#) And I think this focus is just, it's something that's that kind of a bit supernatural. Like I struggled over the last four months, especially with my job search. I've struggled to focus, anxiety has been huge. Depression jumped in there for a little while. I mean, it tore me down and I was struggling and you guys heard

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that every single week back in January and February you heard me struggle for focus and now it's like, here I am because I can't go anywhere. I'm focused and I want to lock this in you guys. Like I want to lock in these new habits. I totally tweaked my, my ideal week around the new things that I have to do. And so because of that, it's just naturally producing in me inability to sit down, stay on tasks, push them all the way through, take the next one and so on.

Speaker 1: [03:29](#) So on this show, you've heard me say time and time again, like occupy yourself, have a big day, do something productive like an, and you've heard me like kind of drill that message home over the last six or seven weeks that we've been on this coronavirus lockdown. And when I recognizes that that is like, that's a call to a specific type of person. Like not everybody needs to go full throttle during this pandemic. Like rest is something that I, you know, I detail how it happens for me, but I don't want you to think that it's like an afterthought or it's not needed. It is absolutely critical to rest. So for you, if this is a season for you where you just need to rest, it's totally cool. Okay, here, hear me on that. It's totally cool to rest the situation that has developed worldwide.

Speaker 1: [04:28](#) And I'm not just talking economic, like there's, there's other factors that affect us every single day when we get up and everything in our life is about restrictions and Homeward bound, like all of these things that we're doing now to occupy our time. Like this can be a very useful season of rest for you. So whether you rest or you want to rock on, I just want you to know like you're welcome, you're welcome with me. You're welcome with me anytime this show exists for you, whether you want to take your time out, like, or take your time and move on and move forward. Like it's, it's going to be okay either way. I just want you to know. And the thing is like with me, you guys, you're always going to get somebody who's pushing you to climb, who's pushing you to go that extra mile.

Speaker 1: [05:21](#) I don't pretend like I'm, I'm just a type of person who says, I'm going to go the extra mile. I'm going to climb on, I'm going to go the distance and I'd love for you to go with me. So when I say like go the extra mile, go the extra mile for you and whatever that looks like, whatever that needs to be, go the extra mile for you. When you do that, it's just going to be natural for you to go the extra mile for others and that is super cool. So like I said, rest or rock on either you're doing well. Okay. This week, this week is a extremely challenging topic for me, which is why I stepped up to it this week is about the ordinary and why this sense of like being satisfied with ordinary, ordinary results,

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ordinary things, ordinary life like how incredibly and massively challenging that is for those of us who live with a bipolar disorder and it's particularly challenging for us because we're wired up in a way that's not like other people, like we have expansive thinking that goes beyond the imagination.

Speaker 1: [06:39](#)

Like there's there's connections that are made in the brain during certain phases of this illness, particularly in the hypomanic stage where your rapid generation of ideas starts to fill the vacuum in your mind and you become consumed with going into extraordinary detail on like whatever particular challenge or goal or vision that is being pulled up for you during that part of the illness. So I get that. I get that you have been exposed to possibilities that are so far outside of the ordinary that it suddenly becomes a massive challenge for you to accept in ordinary life. I know I'm not the only one on this. I know I'm not like I am so consumed with the extraordinary that I've, I've literally had to wipe everything off of my calendar on a Saturday, have complete white space on my calendar every Saturday. Like yesterday was Saturday for me.

Speaker 1: [07:54](#)

So yesterday I had to wipe my entire calendar. I've been doing this lately. Saturday just happens to be the day for me. I have to do this because I'm workaholic. If I don't wipe a day clean and protect that cleanliness, I will literally work through an entire week, seven days nonstop go, go, go. I will not stop working. The only reason I go to bed is because I know I need to stop working is not healthy. It is not healthy to push so hard into all the things that I'm doing. So what I'm, what I'm hoping can be accomplished today is you becoming okay with more and more ordinary results, goals, directions in your life, not being upset that you're leaving something massive. The table that only you out of the 8 billion people on this planet could have done. I, I want to pull away that pressure, that, and this is common, this is common for anybody.

Speaker 1: [09:11](#)

Well, I shouldn't say anybody. This could happen to anybody who experiences the manic pole of bipolar disorder. You are convinced no one can pull this out of your brain. No one can unlodge this from your spirit. You feel this in a very deep connected place within you that you were put on this earth to do something hyper-specific and today I want us to just kind of wrestle away from that to start to detach from having to be extraordinary at absolutely everything. Okay. This is, this is a massive message. Massive. The whole big idea today is, and I had to put it in these terms because it's just so funny, but it's like, I was thinking about this for myself. Like the big idea today is that it's just hard to be ice cream in a cookie cutter world.

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- Speaker 1: [10:18](#) Can you picture that? It's hard to be ice cream in a cookie cutter world. I chose ice cream as a picture because ice cream is so much more dramatic than, than a cookie, right? Like ice cream has all these crazy flavors and there's all these infusions and you can make it with liquid nitrogen and there's like no end to the creativity with ice cream. There's, you ever go down the ice cream aisle and it's like when I was a kid, you know, it was only so much and now you go to the ice cream aisle and that thing goes for like, it stretches a mile. There's so many flavors of ice cream. Ice cream is dramatic. Ice cream is artistic. Like ice cream is so funny. Ice cream melts. You guys, can you relate to that? Have you ever just melted because you were so overly dramatic?
- Speaker 1: [11:08](#) Maybe that's just me. It's hard to be ice cream in a cookie cutter world. You know, my, my personality is, is such that I just identify with being a flavor of ice cream, like being this completely dramatic and artistic flavor of ice cream. Like I'm, I am what the Enneagram, which is a personality profiler that's kind of popular right now. Um, I don't put too much into it. I just read it cause it's interesting, but like I am so I'm not primarily this trait, but I am 98% this trait. I was 99% of my main trait, which is the achiever. But this secondary trait or what they would call the wing on the Enneagram. So my secondary trait strength, however you want to phrase that, is the individualist and I meet and talk to so many people in this audience that I gotta wonder if this is like a wing for almost everybody out there who has to live ongoing with a bipolar disorder like the individualist.
- Speaker 1: [12:14](#) Everything you do has to be different. Like there's a cookie cutter mold. There is no way that you're going to fit into that, right? Like you're the individualist. You got to stand out. I Ben, I have been this way like since childhood, ever since I was a little boy, I was just doing things on my own, doing it my own way. Didn't care if anybody cared. Like I wasn't preoccupied with fitting in, at least not until I realized that I needed other people. Like I got to junior high and I went, I switched over from acute and safe and benign private school in my elementary years and I switched over to a rowdy public school for my junior high school. And right away I knew that I needed to get me some protection. I was on the smaller scale of size four. I was just, I was just, I've always been a little guy and I recognized immediately that there are predators in this school who are walking around in their preteen bodies and I said, I gotta I gotta game up and get me some protection.
- Speaker 1: [13:26](#) Like I felt like the King pin, right? Like the kingpin has to have his body guards around him all the time. Like that's how I felt. So I'd

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go out and I'd like hustle on the basketball court and I'd made sure that I made friends and put on my team, like the biggest kids because I needed me some protection that like that that rugged individualist needed to be protected. And so I was just, I was this way as a child. Like I, I was always like searching and aware of my environment and how I needed to set things up so that I could be safe. Like part of me was, was like, so I play it cool on the outside. Like I'm just trying to play it cool. I'm just trying to be a cool guy. So I'm like James Bond on the outside, you know, I'm calm and collected and all that. But on the inside little Mickey is like a Terminator like picture picture my eyes scanning the playground for the biggest kids that I can recruit to be my body guards.

Speaker 1: [14:29](#)

I remember all of them and they did a good job cause I never got beat up so I know what you're thinking. You're like, okay Mike, we get it like some ordinary kid. You were like, I'm just letting you know that this part of my nature, this wing on my Enneagram test, like the end of the rugged individualist, like the non cookie cutter guy that's, that's been in me for a very long time. So this is very near to my psyche like I under, I innately understand what the individualist thinks and says and does and when it comes to bipolar disorder, I got to say like again, it's just interesting like drive, talent, intellect, all of these things contribute to the battle to be ordinary.

Speaker 1: [15:25](#)

It is so much work to be ordinary. Like the thing I want to encourage you with is make it a goal where you can control how you blend in and how you stick out. I talk about this with my students in the peace plan for bipolar. I, I mentioned this a lot as like that's a good first year goal is to be able to blend in where you want, how you want, when you want and enjoy that. And then the parts of you that you can't help but have stick out cause they're just brilliant, you know, and bright and colorful like, like the peacock side of you like needs to strut. You gotta be able to control when you let that out too. Because mental illness is one of those things where it's like a bipolar disorder is something where you can't always control sticking out.

Speaker 1: [16:21](#)

Okay. Your moods, your how you choose to interact, like in, in your family, how you choose to interact in public at work. Like all of these things. Mental illness creates a situation that you can't always control and that's extremely frustrating and depending on the different acts that you almost can't help but do some of the things that we are so famous for doing in bipolar disorder, like you can't always control that. Like if you could then nobody would know that there's such a thing as mental illness. Like it's an invisible force that creates visible effects. What I'm saying

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today is if you carry inside of you this notion that you were never meant to fit in and you will always stick out, like if, if it's a battle for you to live an ordinary life. What I want to talk about today and just spend a little bit of time with, it's not gonna be a long episode today, but I just wanted to spend a little bit of time talking about how all the parts of you that are amped up because of this disorder, like all the parts of you that are firing too hard, you know, your drive is over revving.

Speaker 1: [17:45](#) You are like expressing your talent in very um, aggressive ways. I guess I could say for myself, like looking back over the last 20 years, just very hyper aggressive displays of talent. Um, overbearing intellect, like beating up people of lesser intellects just for the thrill of it. Like all of these things. What I want to talk about today is a simple aspect of your character that needs to come online and you need to pay attention to it and you need to consider how it is you're going to display this attribute of your character, but that that attribute is none other than humility.

Speaker 1: [18:33](#) Okay? Humility flies in the face of bipolar disorder. Humility absolutely goes against everything you think and feel in that side of you where you say, I wish I could be more up. I wish I could escape this depression and feel alive again. I wish I could go back. And sometimes you learn how to manipulate the going back to feeling up, wired on connected, creative, everything just like zipping in your brain. Some of you are very good at going back to that place. What I'm saying is in order to be healthy and if health, which encompasses mental health, like if health is the goal, then humility is going to get you there.

Speaker 1: [19:33](#) Manias I should say hypomania because the stuff at the deeper into the pool, um, is pretty dark and twisted and incoherent. So it's, it's the early, but people with bipolar to the, that designation in their diagnosis, they've never had a full blown manic episode. They never had psychosis. Like, and I'm not a doctor, so there's just, there's clinical terms that are used in bipolar disorder to describe the different classifications of it. So if you've never gone into full blown mania and you don't know how like scary and awkward and just completely twisted that end of the pool is and you're just drowning in it, like what everybody loves is the hypomania and the hypomania is what creates this driven nature. It creates like intense artistry for people who are people who are like musically oriented. Like this is when they're generating their best work. This is when all the genius production comes out like this.

Speaker 1: [20:37](#) The thing that you, the thing that you produce that's like, man, you were, you were in another like plane when you made that.

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Like that's, that's why it's so addictive. And what I want to say is that that's just part of your design. We don't know why we've been given bipolar disorder other than it might be strongly genetically wired into us, you know, from birth. We might've carried those genes. What I'm just saying is we've got to work with what is, we got to work with the design. So the design of bipolar disorder is that it makes you feel like, and it puts you in the league of the greats. Okay. Like great thinkers, great artists, great uh, sports players, great scientists, great, even great business minds. Like there's, there's an aspect of our design that automatically puts us in the room with those people.

Speaker 1: [21:35](#)

So what I always want you to hear me say is that you need to be great, be great at what you think. Be great at your art, be great at your music, be great at whatever it is you do physically like playing sports, like be great at your science, like be great at your business. I want you to use your design so that you can display what it was made to do. Like show it off, don't throw it away, don't, don't throw away your design because of a bipolar disorder. Like it's part of the mixture. Okay? It's, it's, it's part of the genius. What I do have to call out is the fact that great thinkers, great business people, great scientists, like great creatives, all of these great minds, they all struggle with humility. And that's cause everybody can play the comparison game. Okay. It doesn't take social media to become a thing, to get everybody playing the comparison game.

Speaker 1: [22:44](#)

Look at him, look at her, look what they're doing, liquid they're involved with. Like by comparison, the greats are going to struggle with humility because they see how great they truly are. A lot of times the, uh, the mindset of a great athlete for example, is just so hard wired into them and they've cultivated this persona of greatness and that's what keeps them achieving greater things. Like all these people can kind of come off or maybe completely come off as arrogant, right? I've seen some interviews recently cause I'm fascinated by great sports players. I'm fascinated by the mindset that drives performance. Um, just for me, I mean, I would never push a great performance onto, uh, onto somebody who's just not set up for it or can't even like can even picture what they would use that for. Um, because you know, it's like, jeez, it's so nice to be ordinary, right?

Speaker 1: [23:49](#)

Like it's so nice to not have this excessive burden of needing to be extraordinary. But nonetheless, I watch the videos, I watch interviews, you know, I'm, I'm kind of taken by people who have pushed the boundaries and gone new places and taken like for instance, in sports, like they'd taken the game to a whole nother level. And so like, you know, as they raise the tide, all boats rise.

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Now everybody's got a rise to their performance or they're going to get left behind and they're going to lose, you know, they're going to lose every game. So what I'm, what I'm fascinated by are the people that are out there mixing it up, doing things different and insisting on being great. Like they just can't get it out of them until they give a great performance. So I see a guy like Kobe Bryant and I watched an interview with him ironically right before his tragic passing.

Speaker 1: [24:44](#)

And if you were to watch Kobe Bryant being interviewed about his career, he looks totally arrogant. His face, his body language is the reaction to the questions like arrogant, arrogant, arrogant, right? Like totally could be construed that way. The same thing's true of one of the massive greats before him, which for me, so I live between like two areas. When I was a kid, you know, it was Michael Jordan, he was, he was on the wall. Michael Jordan, his face was in your bedroom every day. And so I get to pick and choose. That's my generation. Like I can pick and choose between Michael and Kobe cause I watched them both, you know, define the game and, and is the same way. I remember seeing interviews with Michael and I know now he's doing other things and he's involved in business and he's worth, you know, he's worth an incredible sum of money in terms of all that he's produced and been involved with. And, and, and Michael's the same way. Like you read some of his interviews, he watched some of his videos. He looks arrogant, he looks full of himself, he looks like, yeah, I am the, you know, try to avoid how much I cuss on this show. I am the, you know what like I, I'm, I'm that, I just am. I can't help it. What I want to say is that with greatness comes the struggle with humility. And the reason that matters is because humility makes you accessible.

Speaker 1: [26:13](#)

Humility makes you accessible. When you know that you're amazing, but you choose to lower it a notch or two, that's incredible. Self control. Like that's, that's you knowing what you're capable of, having all this evidence of what you've already done, but lowering it and putting yourself on the that everybody else, the ordinary person can access. That's important. That's so important. So hear me when I say be great but also be accessible, be accessible. So how do you do that? I'm not going to spend a ton of time pulling this apart today. I, I think I can, I think I can distill it down into like an issue of talent versus service.

Speaker 1: [27:21](#)

Okay. Look at your talent and how are you using your talent, your design, all that you've worked hard for. How are you using your talent to serve others? It's a great question. It's, it's uh, I think of a party, right? Like, imagine that I bought a piece of

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property and I pictured a house that I designed from the beginning. I designed the entire layout, the floor plan, the decks, the gardens, you know, the Lake house. Like all of that stuff. I designed from the very beginning to accommodate people who are going to come and experience parties at this property. Like imagine that I set that all up and then I got it built and then it, you know, it took a long time to build it. But then eventually we had a grand opening and you know, I was to invite like all kinds of people from the community, my friends, family, everybody come and experience this house that got built for the purpose of connecting and experiencing each other. And if I were to invite you into that home and it's all decked out, it's decorated, I've chosen the art, you know, my wife has made it look fantastic and all, everything's just working right. Like everything's just comfortable and jaw-dropping.

Speaker 1: [28:54](#)

Okay, so talent built that house talent design, that house talent. Got it. You know, to become a thing. Talent could make you a nightmare of a person to talk to when you're in that house, like talking about all the different areas, talking about the artwork that you chose, talking about, Oh look at this. We add it brought over from Italy. Like, okay, that's one conversation. Whole other conversation is, thanks for coming to my house. Can I get you a drink? Make sure you sit over here or this is what we're serving tonight. What can we get you? How can we make this experience something that you're always gonna remember K the talent is boasting about the house that got built. The service is the humility to make sure that you're enjoying yourself and the other guests and I'm going to help facilitate that Kate. So humility is like, I don't need to talk about that painting. We talked about that some other time. Humility is I want to make sure that you're enjoying yourself. I want to make sure that you're meeting people that you're going to enjoy. They just think of humility like the guy who built a house, a great big house, and invited a bunch of people to come and celebrate togetherness.

Speaker 1: [30:33](#)

That's how humility works. Like when you have a bipolar disorder and you're capable of building the house cake, consider how you're going to serve. Once that house is built, like once I'm using a metaphor. Once that talent is in play, how are you going to use it to help other people enjoy themselves, to feel refreshed, to feel relaxed? That matters. Humility is seeing others as more important than myself. Humility is the genius of prioritizing other people, which is something our culture is not very good at. If I'm just being honest, we're not. We're not very good at seeing others as more important than ourselves.

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- Speaker 1: [31:31](#) We go back to the party. How different are you going to experience a party in a beautiful, lavish home, a home on the Lake when the owner of the home is too busy talking about himself and how it got built and how him and his wife chose all the furnishings. Humility changes your relationship to the talented. Again, it's that being, it's prioritizing accessibility. It's saying, Hey, come into the living room in my life. I want you here. That's definitely different. That's definitely, that is not cookie cutter humanity. That is not so as we close today, going back to the whole cookie cutter thing and now it's so hard to be ice cream, this, this dramatic food group, how it's so hard to be ice cream in a cookie cutter world. Can you be ice cream? Can you just be like, just be the double chocolate caramel fudge like that. The coffee double chocolate caramel fudge ice cream. That's your design. That's your design, but could you dish it from a very ordinary and unlabeled container? That's what I'm working on. That's what I want people to see. A very ordinary unlabeled container with this extraordinary char dropping full of flavor ice cream inside. Can you be ordinary and extraordinary? I think the answer is yes.
- Speaker 1: [33:45](#) Noticing a pattern. In my conversations recently and I see this desire for more of a, getting to what matters, like what matters more than busy-ness for the sake of busy-ness and money for the sake of money. And, and, and people are telling me they're looking for what, I've heard someone say a wellspring. And one of the things that I love is that like this, this notion of having a source of water that just pours forth from somewhere inside of you. It's somewhere deep inside of you comes this like energy and life force and all of these things that make us feel connected to what we're doing connected to people and like totally energetic and alive. I like that word wellspring. And so I'm going to talk about what I do to not only open that up, but keep it pouring. And so you'll find that next week we're going to get into things that are pretty deep. And I'm actually looking for a, I'm looking forward to talking about how to have a lifetime of the light of youth. You know what I'm talking about? That keeps you going during dark days. You don't want to miss it. So I will see you here. Same time, same place. Adios.
- Speaker 2: [35:08](#) [inaudible] thanks for listening to the bipolar now podcast at [www dot Mike Lardi dot com](http://www.dotMikeLardi.com).