



EPISODE 76: FOCUS BEYOND THE MOMENTARY CHAOS

- 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 76,
- Speaker 2: [00:40](#) Well, 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, welcome back.
- Speaker 1: [00:53](#) Welcome back. If you're new to the show, this is the place where we discuss what it's going to take to go through life with a bipolar disorder. And today I just want to dive straight in today. We are talking all about focus, focus, focus, focus, focus, focus, focus. What is it? What is it? How can you get it? And how can you keep it? That's what we'll talk about today. I got a couple of stories just to kick right off the bat here of how incredibly hard it is to remain focused. Uh, especially in a time where literally everyone is in some sort of a state of reaction. And I have friends who are all across the political spectrum from all the way to the left. About as far as you can get to all the way to the right, pretty dang far on the right.
- Speaker 1: [01:51](#) I have friends that are dotted anywhere along that line. And you know, I'll give no details cause we all know who says, what about COVID and about black lives, we all know, but it's like every single person is in some sort of a state of reaction and I'm no different. I am not immune. I am desperately trying to keep things afloat and going and charting a course forward. That's what I do. That's how I focus. I remain focused on what I want and not necessarily on what is, but how I could get closer to what it is that I want. And one of the things that I want, uh, maybe in a personal and selfish way, one of the things I want more than anything else is for my group membership, which is the peace plan for bipolar. I want that to turn into the program that flips somebody's life in the right direction, faster and better than they ever thought possible.
- Speaker 1: [03:00](#) And so I'm about midway into a nine month program. Uh, this week I just wrapped up production on month. Number five, we talked about routines and, uh, I, I mean, heading into this, it was a disaster. Like I have not produced anything inside the program.

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All my members know this, we went on a little bit of a hiatus. We wanted things to settle in our lives. We wanted to be able to literally focus on the material and how we are guided in a better direction to have the things in place in our lives that are going to protect us from bipolar, destroying all of our hard work. So we're focused on that and we took a time out and honestly it, it needed to happen so that I could pivot because I'm not, I'm not super, super fast at pivoting the direction of an entire program when the rules of the world like have suddenly changed on me.

Speaker 1: [03:58](#) So all I'm saying is my focus on keeping that experience, that membership experience my focus on keeping that like the primary goal in my business right now. That's the only thing that's kept me on the rails. I fear for what could have happened to me during the shutdown, during the gradual release. Like I, I fear for what could have happened to me if I wasn't so focused. And if I didn't recognize ultimately the need to pivot that program and put it together in a more cohesive sense for what we're going to need in these seriously dark days, like dark darkness is all around these days. And so I wanted to plan, you know, plan a better experience and it took focus. I'll tell you what did happen. I got away from the way that I like process what to do and how to move forward.

Speaker 1: [05:00](#) I got away from that and really what pulled me away. It's no secret. I've been pretty open about this on the show. My anxiety spiked during the eventual, you know, as, as the shutdown progressed, um, I went from adrenaline to anxiety to, uh, to very volatile words that start with a capital a, but like my adrenaline that got me through the initial shutdown of the economy here in the U S like that adrenaline faded and it faded within like three or three or four weeks, it just was like, it was totally tapped. I was out of energy. I was running on fumes. I had a massive amount of anxiety about what it was that I was going to do. And I picked up some bad habits, believe it or not. And so now, now that things are kind of opening and now that the story is coming out a little bit more on, on this virus.

Speaker 1: [05:54](#) And now that you know, now that things like, okay, I'm, I'm sort of used to my new life. Like, are you, or are you kind of used to doing things in a new way? You know, like the initial shock of having to like, you know, be careful about what you do in public and the wearing of the masks and all that stuff. Like, you know, I, the shock of that wore off and I ran out of energy and I've been pretty low on energy for several months to the degree that I notice that it impacts what I can get done in a day. And this obviously is bad for me operating my business. It's bad for me

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working with people. It's bad for me working with my agency. That is the job that I'm working right now to bootstrap this whole business. And so I picked up some bad habits.

Speaker 1: [06:41](#) And so, uh, what was really cool was going back through and, and re just re-engaging with what I had when it all fell apart. I totally retooled the way I moved through my week, day by day. And so that happened about three or four weeks ago. I did a total retooling of my week. I have these routines that I can just adjust on the fly and rapidly evolve with whatever is required of me, you know, as my circumstances change my whole week, like my ideal version of my week changes along with it. And so I have to become very agile in how I plan nowadays. And so that was the focus of that a whole month. Like those of you who were in the peace plan right now, that's that email that you got that says that, Hey, there's new training available. And so this is, this is literally like how I jumped from one thing to the next, without getting so like beat up in the process, right? Like bipolar disorder loves to beat me up when I make a big change in my life. When I adjust, when I shift, when I transform. And so by doing it quickly and landing on the ideals, that's how I'm able to stay focused. And so again, focus plays a critical role in the way I operate my weekly life.

Speaker 1: [08:06](#) You know, focus is, is kind of on a sliding scale. You know, it's like on the one side, you know, if you have your mental ability, like it it's, this, it's this notion of being sharp, right. We all want to look and feel sharp because on the other side of that scale is when, when you're like foggy and you feel like you're trudging through the mud, okay. That those are like two opposite extremes light. Like you want to like shift your mental ability more towards the sharp side, but then it can fall off. From there anyone who's experienced a hypomanic episode and bipolar disorder knows what it's like to feel like you are so sharp that you cannot be stopped. Like you are literally so intelligent that like all the books in the world couldn't be filled with the knowledge that is suddenly inside of your brain, like right.

Speaker 1: [08:59](#) Hypomania, hypomania, it's, it's almost like a drug induced state is how powerful it is in our minds. Like on one side we feel like present and aware, you know, and that's different from feeling lost and unaware. And you can totally slide off the map in that direction, but when you're present and you're aware like your, your mental ability to feel awareness suddenly goes into overdrive when you're, when you're sick, right. When you, when you're hypomanic, that that awareness goes into hypo, like it's, it's a, a drive that goes beyond, uh, what you would consider

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your normal cognitive mental ability. Right? And so either way, like whatever you feel yourself going through, whether you're feeling yourself like more on the healthy side, or maybe you're more on the sick side, like you have to be able to recognize where you're at on that sliding scale. And so, you know, I, I kind of, I sketched this out for myself today, you know, like on one side having like just this tack sharp intelligence and on the other side, feeling foggy and sludgy, like I put my X for where I want to be and where I want to aspire to towards more towards that side of sharp, right?

Speaker 1: [10:25](#) Like, that's, that's just common. We want to feel sharp. We don't wanna feel foggy. I also slid my desire. And so this is, this is where focus comes in. It's like, are you focused on the things that are gonna make you more present and aware, or have you lost your focus and you just feel lost and totally unaware, right? Like by drawing these things out for myself, I recognize where I'm at and I'm putting the X today. I'm putting the X more on the aware side, which means I can put it more on the healthy side, like sharpness and awareness. It's healthy, you know, I'm not sliding into any kind of a hypomania, you know, something that's just under a full blown mania. I'm not, I'm not going so far in that direction that I feel danger and it's good. Like, this is how focus helps me.

Speaker 1: [11:18](#) I've been through a lot in the last two weeks, you know, I've produced a lot coming out of some bad habits, but I make them visible, right? Like all those bad habits of like me not sitting and being focused. When I sit down to work, you know, I've had to modify how I approach my work so that I start gaining back those focused habits. You know, I've, I've, I've kind of developed the habit of like going for a drive to reset my mind when I get overwhelmed. And now I'm learning that I can just stay at home, not burn up the gas, driving around town. I can stay at home and think through what it is I want to do in this next step of my day, which I've already mapped out. I've already mapped out my ideal day. I know how an ideal Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday.

Speaker 1: [12:09](#) Right? I know how an ideal Sunday, Saturday, like I know how that is. Cause I've been mapping it for a very long time and I've wound up adjusting it on the fly, according to the new rules of the world. So I can stay focused on getting back to my usual healthy habits, but I couldn't do that without focus. Okay. And part of what I want to share today that is so critical to this is holding onto your focus means you have to hold onto some, just some version of your dream or your dreams, right? You, in order

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to get to your dreams, to get to that desired place, to have whatever it is that you feel like you are just, you are needing and wanting something so bad. And it's big. You're never, what I'm saying today is you're never going to be able to hold onto your dreams without focus. So do you hold onto your dreams? Do you actually focus on what it is that you want?

Speaker 1: [13:27](#) One thing I'm going to share is that I've been forging goals over the last nine years of my recovery. Gosh, I can't believe it's nine years already. Last nine years of my recovery, I've been forging goals for myself. And one thing I've learned recently, and this was in a book and this is by, um, Rachel Hollis and is the book. Title is girl stop apologizing, which is funny to read as a man. But Hey, it works. She talks about having this 10, 10, one. It's something she's done over the course of many years. She now recognizes that she needs 10 goals within 10 or 10 dreams. I should say, let me, let me quote this the right way to, to prove that I actually read the book. She, she drafts 10 years, 10 dreams, and she calls it. I have one goal with that comes out, that emerges from those 10 years and those 10 dreams.

Speaker 1: [14:31](#) So, so do you have a conviction, right? Do you have a conviction to even forge a goal? Because if you do, you're going to need focus. If you're going to go through 10 years and 10 years, by the way is enough time to become a radically better person, a radically stronger person, just 10 years. Okay. I don't, maybe it seems like a lot to you that doesn't seem like very much time to me to become a radically better person, but it takes focus and you've got to forge your goals. You've got to pay attention to what matters to you. You know, I compare my 10, ten one, which is what Rachel teaches the 10 years, 10 dreams. One goal. I look at my 10, ten one versus what I just scratched out into my phone nine years ago. I can remember, I can remember it. So clearly I was taking one of my daily walks.

Speaker 1: [15:33](#) It was winter. I was down by Tavern Bay, which is a area of Lake Arrowhead here. And I was walking around Tavern Bay. And it struck me that I had all of these dreams within me, but I didn't know which one to focus on, but I just charted all of these dreams. And I put them down in a note. And I looked at that note today and say, that's interesting. You were, you were like, really checking out for you. Like you were seriously considering becoming a professor of art. Wow. That's interesting. Right? Like that's not something I chose. That's ultimately not something I was convicted to do with my time and attention and money, like, but I just, I compare all the things that I was interested in doing,

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whether it had to do with relationships or whether it had to do with design or whether it had to do with automotive.

Speaker 1: [16:31](#) Like I just had so many things in there where I was so scattered. I didn't know what to think, but I just kept coming back to it. And my idea of my dreams just kept getting better am talking year after year after year, a constant dialogue in my head, a constant dialogue with God, right? Like focusing on becoming that radically stronger and better person because of the dreams that I was willing to hold onto. And so I remember I wrote down in that note and I checked it just before this episode recorded. I checked that note just to go through and remember like, okay, you know, the goal is right, Michael. You know that this dream is the right thing to have when you have peace about it. When you have patience for it, when you have passion for this thing. And when it gives you a solid sense of purpose, I said, wow, that's how I'll know.

Speaker 1: [17:42](#) And now, as I evaluate where I sit right now, like I'm looking at my studio, I'm seeing all the materials I use to teach through module five on routines for the peace plan. I'm looking, I'm looking at all my sticky notes everywhere. I, and I have this giant weekly calendar that I've just taught through how to assemble an ideal week's worth of passionate patient peaceful and purpose filled activities. I'm looking at, I'm just looking across at what I do and what, what literally, after the whirlwind settled in this thing got produced and all the videos were done and everything was uploaded. It's like, man, of course. I mean, that's how I feel. It's like I have, I have peace about where I'm at. I feel purpose in what I'm doing. I'm passionate about it. I have patients to do this as long as it takes until my vision becomes reality.

Speaker 1: [18:46](#) Right? The thing about focus, you guys, the thing about focus, no matter who you are, but especially when you carry around a bipolar disorder, is that it's just not guaranteed, right? Like our mental health and focus is part of a healthy brain. I'm not, hyper-focus remember just plain old, healthy, present, aware, sharp focus. That's all we're talking about here. Okay. Nothing mind blowing, but it's like that focus is not guaranteed when you wake up every day, right? It is not guaranteed. What I want to say about focus is just so important to have, because as you focus, you start to see the things that matter. You start to see what moves the needle in your life. Okay? And you can redirect focus away from things that aren't producing, that, that, that aren't giving you progress, that don't fill you with peace, like focused people develop so much focus over time that they

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become principled in the way they live. Let me say that again, focused people are principled people and principled people have success. Okay? Principled people get this. They have nothing to be ashamed of.

Speaker 1: [20:16](#) Principled. People have nothing to be ashamed of. Like stigma will literally just erode and die in your life. When you start to focus and live in a principled way, like principals are there. The guidance system that you have right there, personal, this is, um, everybody thinks this is like directly related to morals. It's not morals is about accepted behavior, right? So like in our country or in our culture on a broad scale, on a broader playing field, morals are the accepted behavior or the accepted code. Okay. That's not what I'm talking about. Like I'm talking about principles, not morals. I mean, I love this generation. I'm gentle with this generation. I do love it, but this is an evil generation. And I don't say that lightly because I look around at what it takes, you know, for you to mess up and to have a moral failure, especially for people who live, you know, in, in the, in the public eye, which is something I'm slowly stepping into here, Mike is slowly stepping into the public eye, but it's like, they will crucify you the moment you breach one of their morals.

Speaker 1: [21:42](#) And I don't know how we got to this point. I still love this generation. I, I, I'm still in love with the people who have to live through this insane, completely mixed up backwards and confused generation. But it's like, you know, the instant you are not perfect. You're crucified. You're held up disdained and it's like, they can't, they can't cast you into the trash bin and light the match, like fast enough, right? Like it's, it's crazy to me. It's crazy to me, which is why I go about my life in a principled way, because I know at some point I will have a moral failure. I'm just a human being, but principles are actually more important to me than morals. Principles are my guidance system to keep me in my lane, right. To keep me focused. If I divert my focus and all of a sudden something immoral becomes attractive to me, that's extremely dangerous. Principals keep me on the road. Principles, keep me focused. You know, if I was to go back and see myself, uh, that one winter as I was walking around Tavern Bay, if I would go back, I would tell myself, you know what, Michael, you did it, right? You did it well. And you are principled. You're focused. You're working through the fear of this illness. You're working through the shame.

Speaker 1: [23:31](#) You're focused on the goal. The goal is to go to a people who are in chaos. And when I get there, I need to provide shade, everything on, on my new list, right? My 10, ten one, my 10

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years, 10 dreams, one goal. My one goal is to become as good as I can possibly be as a coach in this space, a coach who focuses on people in chaos, right? And everything flows out of that. I've got this, I've got these dreams. I write them down every morning. There's that? There's a place in my morning routine where I literally write down the 10 years of 10 dreams and that whole goal of becoming the most excellent coach for those in chaos, to literally be able to go and find people in chaos like that. That is that that's everything to me. Once I do that really, really well, then everything else unlocks, like I know I've written down that there's a certain celebrity who has been in the news media recently.

Speaker 1: [25:03](#) Like I want to be friend and coach someone like that. Not even ashamed to say that. That's what I want. Like I want to have within 10 years pull off an art show because it's been too long of me not making art. I have a on my list somewhere. I've got definitely have some properties in mind for different purposes. I I've got one property that I want to create a retreat with and to be able to use, to invite people to retreat. And then there's another property, uh, here on the Lake that's condemned. And so I'm, I'm very focused on what it would take to purchase that property and raise it from the Ash heap and create a family home. I know I've got big dreams for marriage that, you know, when she's ready, when I'm ready, that's going to happen. That's, that's huge. I've got a big dream to set up a scholarship foundation and scholarship people with mental illness and train people with mental illness and like help people with mental illness start businesses that they feel convicted to start.

Speaker 1: [26:19](#) That that's huge on my heart. Like I want for, at some point within the next 10 years, my programs that I designed, like I want them to be required by the U S government stuff like that. Like it's 10 years gives you a focus. 10 dreams allows you to focus on why each one, those dreams matter. Now, maybe I'm not going to pull off all 10 and maybe they're going to modify as I continue to focus on what that would bring into my life. But overall, I've got one goal from 2020 to 2030, I must grow and evolve and become radically better at how I coach people who are in chaos. I'm placing my focus on good desires, good dreams for this generation.

Speaker 1: [27:22](#) So where do you place yours? Look, I know how hard it is to keep your focus. And it's just hard. I mean, when you're experiencing mental illness, right. You know, last week I teased about this new challenge that I've been designing. I've been focused on it. You could say, I am focused on that entire

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challenge. And the challenge itself is created to take on the stigma and remove it out of bipolar for you. Because so much of our focus gets zapped. It's like it's been over cooked in the microwave and we carry stigma about that into our everyday interactions, right? It's been overcooked and now we're embarrassed to serve it. Do you know that feeling? That's exactly what it's like in bipolar disorder. We feel embarrassed to serve our dish, whether that's in our family or around our friends or in the workplace. So I am addressing this head on in our four day challenge, which is coming up near the end of the month of September, the secret to stigma.

Speaker 1: [28:58](#)

Isn't what you think. At least it isn't what I thought, but the secret of mastering stigmas is really quite simple. And I can't wait to take you through it one day at a time. So after walking away from this four day challenge, you will literally say goodbye to stigma for ever. Now. I've never put this all in one place before. So it's going to be an experience and I'll be going through it, live with you each and every day. So in order to be notified about this challenge and how much it costs, just go to Mike Lardi.com forward slash challenge and enter your email. The very moment that the doors opened to this, you will get a notification in your email and that's coming up in just a few short weeks. So that's mikelardi.com/challenge. And I challenge you to sign up today, okay.

Speaker 1: [29:57](#)

Summer sure is winding down, but we have a lot more on the future a lot more. So for next week, I'm going to share the story of what strength is like, true strength, not the kind you see on social media. And we're going to explore how to use that strength to catapult you through every obstacle that mental illness sets in your path, because the way is through the obstacle, not around it, not over it and no shortcuts, but I'm going to catapult you and show you where that strength comes from. You don't want to miss it. And I will see you here. Same time, same place, adios.