



EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

- 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 are listening to The Bipolar Now Podcast, episode 77.
- 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: [00:52](#) What is cracking? It's Mike, back at you once again, and this edition, this whole, this episode is so critical for me. So I'm trusting that it hits you like that too. This is a, this is the show for you. If you're not about to give up, you may feel like you're about to give up because that's how I feel, but that's not where you and I are going to be hanging out for very long. So yeah, this is the show for you. If you aren't giving up on yourself, it's also the show that helps you build a life that can withstand this whole entire world going from well, would it be going from bad to worse? You tell me no matter what falls apart next, let's just say that no matter what falls apart next, I want you to be prepared. I want you ready to jump into your game plan. And that's how this podcast functions. It's a podcast for bipolar. If you know that you want to be strong, which is the subject of today's show. So here we go, yo:
- Speaker 1: [02:11](#) Had a couple of stories that will illustrate this notion of somehow having both bipolar disorder and having strength. And this one is totally different from that one episode that I did on the way back, episode five, that's where I showed you how doing volunteer work in my hometown, how that paved the way for me to feel confident enough to get my first honest to goodness job, you know, post diagnosis, honest to goodness job. Uh, but this episode today, this one's a bit different. I mean, we could probably have five different conversations about strength and they'd all be completely different. So now I am not building necessarily on that episode. I'm more like I'm coming at it from just a different angle, a different perspective. Today's going to be great because right now, as I'm recording this, I'm pulling out of a depressive episode. You heard that, right?

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

- Speaker 1: [03:11](#) Mike gets depressed. I mean, that should come as no surprise, but here's the thing I get. Yes, I get depressed. But I use my action guide, my playbook. I use that to turn, to turn that hot little mess right back around where it came from. Like, I know you want to come play with me right now, but you and I are on restriction. Okay. Depression like you and I are on restriction. So audio's like, I got no time for drama. So I send it right back to that part of my brain that cooks up all of these zany episodes. I mean, man, this holiday weekend was not fun. Um, my sister was in town and uh, that's, that's not why it wasn't fun. Um, but like I love that actually. Like I love when she comes to visit, but here I was getting all of these vibes that a full blown depression is getting ready to pounce.
- Speaker 1: [04:12](#) And so what do I do? I took a page in my challenge journal, which is where all my challenges get documented. And I labeled this one single page. I labeled it early depression and I listed the trigger as my extended family time. And you should see this challenge journal. Um, I don't know whether to be proud of it or concerned cause I have so many entries and so many events and so many identifiers, uh, with all these triggers. But you know, it is what it is. And it functions as the place where I build out all of my formal plays and I, and I say plays for bipolar disorder. Like I, it's what I do to run actions. It's my action guide. And I just run down my list of actions for whatever it is that the illness is trying to invite into my life.
- Speaker 1: [05:07](#) So if you do this for yourself, if you start a challenge journal, you are literally capturing details and making connections and associations like you're taking note of circumstances. You're taking note of context. You're noting all the sensations and dominant thoughts that are going on. Like how all of these things together are eventually going to create for you. If you do this long enough, it creates a three dimensional personal profile of your mental health. It's amazing. It's amazing. And no one can do this for you. It's a it's it's like you have to make it a skillset. It's how you build out the playbook of how you're going to run off offense and defense against bipolar disorder and you know, any, anything else that is going to come bum for a ride in your brain, right? Like anything else that comes along for the ride, you're going to run the playbook against it.
- Speaker 1: [06:03](#) It's awesome. And doing entries like this is so, so cool. Like you're literally feeling consumed with healthy interest in your own condition. Literally feeling like this is what I need to be all about right now. Like I'm jotting down all of the situations and

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

circumstances, all of the things I said and did and felt all of the ways that I was triggered. Like you're noting all of these things in your challenge journal. And it's a healthy interest in your condition, which is, you know, you living with a lethal mental disorder. So this is something that you learn how to do in the first few months of the peace plan, which is your own custom made battle-tested blueprint for that better health that you desire when you have a bipolar disorder like we do. So what I just did by documenting my weekend and identifying the pattern it's been, it's become a pattern of family visits me doing that documentation of saying, okay, family visits equals trigger. What I would like to refer to that in the rest of today's episode is awareness in action awareness in action.

Speaker 1: [07:29](#)

So let me tell you a little story about this labor day weekend. As I was tending to my bipolar depression, labor day weekend in the San Bernardino mountains is like the last hurrah for the visitors. People flock here from all over Southern California to enjoy the perfect sunshine, pristine forests and the sparkling lakes and all that stuff. Like it's kind of a destination and it's especially kind of a destination since COVID-19 has pretty much all of Los Angeles and orange County is feeling like they just need to escape the city. So yeah. So labor day is our final hurrah and now it's like, okay, my can get back to enjoying the Lake trails without having his mask on. So I'm like, yes. Okay. So anyways, it's over now. And the final score is tourists. One mountain, zero. Literally there is trash piled up on every turnout and every stretch of highway in these beautiful scenic mountains, like graffiti on the beautiful boulders, graffiti on the rock, outcroppings, graffiti on the guardrails.

Speaker 1: [08:45](#)

If you love natural beauty, this whole thing is like the equivalent of me. You ever watched those anti plastics videos where it shows like trash in the ocean and fish and turtles and dolphins wining up on the beach, you know, killed by all this garbage in the oceans. Like it's that kind of hard to look at as I drive around, like, I want to go up right now. I want to go up to the highway and just start picking up all the trash like right now. But the problem is there's just way too much for me. Like even if I was to go for this project until Christmas and Christmas, by the way is when they all come back. But you know, it's like, and then you've got the side of the road littered with diapers and, and it's just crazy. Like it's just nuts in, in the winter, it's it all comes back.

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

- Speaker 1: [09:38](#) All the litter, all the broken plastic sleds just left on the side of the road. But anyways, Mike, come back, come back, Mike. Anyways, my experience of entering my dismal and nearly depressed holiday, me putting all that into my challenge journal. It opened my mind is what it did. So it re recording the fact that I almost had a near blown, nearly full blown relapse of depression. Um, just by jotting that experience down in my challenge journal that opened my mind to tackle the trash problem. And so now I've got this awareness in action, right? It's like, it's something I adopted for my particular disorder, but I was able to open up awareness in action for my community, for my community. You've heard me say about black lives. That awareness alone is not enough. It does nothing action speaks. We all know this, but I just have to say it in light of the trashed highways.
- Speaker 1: [10:49](#) Like we could wait all of us mountain folk, we could wait around for the County, you know, to get a bunch of complaints or to take notice. And then maybe they would rally up the local prisoners. And you know, we could, we could drive by people wearing orange jumpsuits, you know, cleaning up trash, cleaning up our mess. Like this is our mess. They left it here, but it's our home. So it's our mess. And if we claim to love this mountain for all the beauty and the quality of life that it has, then we absolutely have to act how many cities fall into disrepute, right. Disrepair, because the citizens ceased to care. Oh yeah. I'm sure. I'm sure they're aware, but if nothing gets done, then people cease to care and it's not like I need another thing to initiate in direct right now. Like, but I'm seriously searching my heart. I'm seriously asking, like how could I sell this vision of community care? Cause this issue is here to stay. It's it, ain't going away. The city dwellers have found us and they've fallen in love. They just have a ignorant and selfish way of showing that love. But I'm searching, I'm searching on this. I'm searching for the wisdom awareness and action needs wisdom in order to do it right.
- Speaker 1: [12:24](#) Awareness needs wisdom in planning. It needs wisdom for carrying out the plans so that a new culture can begin. I've had this vision for quite a few years, but now it's in my face. I envision a new tourism culture here locally. And so I envision that on the one hand, serving tourists and the weekenders, but at the same time, at the exact same moment, I envision a parallel culture, a new culture. And that is one that is centered around hospitality from the locals. And this is a big stretch cave. This takes a lot of like, all right, I don't know how that's going to happen. Cause you know, the locals, they talk a lot of garbage

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

and they, they see the garbage that people leave up here and they give it back in the form of verbal garbage. And they think, no one's listening, but, but I'm listening about what they think about the weekend crowd and all that garbage that comes out of their mouth only adds up to the garbage that's piled on our roads like that doesn't solve anything.

Speaker 1: [13:46](#) So instead of garbage, I want a culture of hospitality, which is so anti-American Oh my gosh. But it is so good. It just has to be experienced. Like I want the locals to be as famous as the Lake. I want the locals to be as famous as the ski resorts, like because of how the locals love because of how the locals care for this nature, how they steward this nature. Like I want, I want this to be a place that has experienced not only in natural beauty, but in people, beauty that's man, that's my vision. And I will not do this alone. Like our topic today is strength and yes, in a roundabout way, I described strength, but true strength is not found in Mike being the hero or the catalyst for hospitality, like true strength is never in an individualism. We're just not meant to be a solo sport. Like in the Olympics, like surely athlete gets the metal, right. But then there's a village of support and trainers that's been behind them all along. So it's kind of deceiving.

Speaker 1: [15:01](#) Strength is not found in individualism. Oh my God, am I, am I still American? Did I just say that like true strength is not found in you making yourself great, true strength is not individualist. It's communal true and lasting and energizing and purpose fueled strength that can only be found in community in community. Which is interesting that I say this because right now I'm taking a break from one of my communities, which is church. So I, I do not participate physically in church, even though they've opened back up here in California. But then again, that's like super interesting, like in terms of the timing, because of my vision for this culture of hospitality, like that's not a vision that fits any one church on this mountain. Like I love them all. But I know from firsthand experience like firsthand longterm, I've witnessed this in person like each church in this community.

Speaker 1: [16:18](#) And there are a ton of them, but each church is just trying to it's that she's just trying to survive on her own. She she's giving it her best shot and it's really hard. But for this vision of mine, this cultural vision, I got to go outside of the box here and this just doesn't jive. It doesn't slot in with how most Western Christian churches operator even teach. But see, the thing is that the

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

Bible wasn't even primarily written to satisfy individuals. It again, do I dare say this? Like the Bible doesn't exist to make you happy. It doesn't exist to make you rich. It doesn't even exist to make you fulfilled. Most of the Bible is actually written. Believe it or not two communities of believers, communities to do specific acts of faith, not alone, not individually as a community to do specific acts of faith as a community. I mean, I could get way in over my head on this, but usually when the Bible is telling you to do something, it's not addressing like you capital Y you like, it's not you individually.

Speaker 3: [17:50](#) It's actually addressing you plural. And we don't have a word for this in every part of the country. But, um, you plural is the equivalent of saying y'all like y'all, as they say in some parts, y'all need to love one another. Y'all need to carry one. Another's burdens. Y'all need to guard your hearts from deceptions. Y'all live together in harmony and stop biting and devouring one another. And that's just like what I'm going to have to say to this mountain. Y'all need to consider others as better than yourselves and y'all need to learn to love the outsider and the tourist within our Gates.

Speaker 3: [18:41](#) It it's gotta be communal or I just, I won't even do it. You know, I'd have to do my best to overlook all the trash and all the missed opportunities to create a great name in these mountain regions. But here's my faith. The mountain will become a better version of itself if the mountain just sees the vision. So yeah, I got a little bit of work to do as if I was bored right now. Yeah. So you're, you're hearing me in all of this. Like you're hearing me say be strong, be strong. Mike's telling me be strong, do something, starting an initiative, be part of something, but maybe you ask how Mike, how can I be strong?

Speaker 3: [19:36](#) Well, if you're following the logic of these examples, then you just need to change that question to how can you be part of a community? And then of course, the next question is how can I be a part of a community when my entire life, the entire rest of my life, including today is threatened by a severe mental illness. Like, can I be a part of a community still? What kind of community would even want me? This is a fantastic question. This gets right at the core of what I want you to experience when we do the whole stigma challenge in two weeks is right driving right to the core of that great question. What kind of community would even want me now?

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

- Speaker 3: [20:30](#) Like now when that is my issue, when, when that mental illness is a part of me and how people know me, like what kind of friends think about communities, small communities, okay. Can we communities within communities, our friend groups, what kind of friends would even want me when they know that I'm plagued with instability? What kind of business in this community would even hire me when I'm full of terminations? Because of my disease, like who would even hire me? What kind of business, what kind of community within a community would bring me on board? What kind of a church would even understand me when I'm divorced?
- Speaker 3: [21:33](#) What kind of lover would accept me for who I am? When me being me has brought me so much regret. What kind, what kind you fill in the blank, fill it in for the specific community that you are dying to be a part of. Let me just tell you, you can look at yourself. One of two ways. You could look at yourself as a risk that most people just aren't willing to take. Or you could look at yourself as a person who is invested in a better future. Are you, are you invested in a better future, better for you, maybe, maybe even more important, better for others. What is it like what's stopping you from being strong inside a community?
- Speaker 3: [22:47](#) Listen, when I started pitching this idea of mountain, strong to my friends and to my neighbors. And when I go to start pitching this idea of the trash as being part of mountain strong, like, do you think my friends and neighbors actually give a damn that I spend 70% of my life afflicted by a brain disorder? Cause I'll just tell you the answer. They don't, they just don't care. What they see is something so different. They see someone who is dying, literally dying to include others in this great and noble undertaking. They don't see a guy who's sick most of the time, or at least in the last 10 to 12 months of his life.
- Speaker 3: [23:48](#) But you know, my life, if it were to end right here, like if I were to prematurely die right here at the end of the show, uh, which is not what I want, but if it were to happen, like if my life were to end by whatever means like the story, that story would be nothing less than awesome. And that's because of where I've come from. Like, it's been nothing but me going from strength to strength. Yeah. There's some terrible valleys there, but I'm willing to bet that these streets will be flooded with people. If I passed away tonight, like flooded with people, people impacted by me inside this community. That's why I've been here so long. That's why I'm staying here forever. For as far as I can tell, listen to this, this is great. I found this reading. I found this reading

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

right when my depression started to uptick and take a run at me, like listen to what it says, this is, this is ancient scripture. It says better. The end of a matter than its beginning.

Speaker 3: [25:11](#) That means better the end of the story than the beginning. Is that not incredible? My story, my life story just keeps getting better all the way to the end, the end of a lifelong diagnosis. I mean, fathom this, the end story of a lifelong diagnosis is far better than the beginning. That blows my mind. Now, check it out. This, this text is not true of everyone with a mental health condition like mine. Like even though I'm telling you like here I am saying basically your people are only as good as the communities they belong to. Which by the way is why people leave communities when they become abusive or abrasive. And I'm including families. When I say communities like what they leave, what I'm saying is not everyone will have a story that turns out better.

Speaker 3: [26:32](#) Not everyone winds up saying my life improved after bipolar, but some can, some people are ignited by their diagnosis. Egg knighted lit up, ready to go hurt and limping, but healing ignited by their diagnosis. Some are ignited. Some are irritated. They're pissed. Why me? Not fair. And then others are basically indifferent, I guess. I mean, they don't care. They're indifferent, but some are ignited and this leads them to find like-minded community. And let me just finish the rest of that text, where I was talking about the whole end of your story, being better than the beginning. Listen to this better. The end of a matter than its beginning, better a patient spirit than a proud one, do not be quickly provoked in your spirit for anger settles in the rib cage of fools, do not say why were the old days better than these four? It is not from wisdom that you ask about this wisdom is as good as an inheritance and even better for those who see the sun for wisdom as a shelter, as money as a shelter. But the advantage of knowledge is this wisdom preserves the life of the one who possesses it.

Speaker 3: [28:29](#) Wisdom, premises preserves the life of the one who possesses it. That's pretty good, right? Strength is awareness in action. It just is. Here's what I know. I'm quite obviously ignited by my diagnosis. I'm ignited by even when the light from that ignition I'm, I'm still ignited even when it seems so dim, you might be stuck living at home. Like I was, you might be 30 years old and not have a clue how to keep yourself alive. Other than to just, I mean, what did I do? I just kept eating the food that my parents

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

would bring home from the store. Like I, I didn't have it in me to face my community.

Speaker 3: [29:33](#) You might be scared in a situation like that. Scared to death to take a job, scared to death, to take a job in this new post COVID economy. Okay. That one will keep you up at night. You might wind up with more questions than answers. The farther you dig into bipolar disorder, you might be upset even that I'm here telling you today to find a community, but here's what I do. I go back to myself. This, this is something that I learned in a Reiki meditation that a friend of mine was teaching over at the gym. She had us go back to our childhood selves and give them a word of encouragement, knowing the path that they would take. And so I, I kind reverse that, you know, I can do that with my childhood self, my S my five, six year old self. I go back to my 30 year old self and, you know, I don't even have, I don't, I don't even wonder what I would say to him. I know what I would say. Cause I'd see that bipolar has him ignited, but scared to take action, like freaked out to join a community all while having virtually nothing mentally or emotionally to even offer that community like a total beginner at his recovery, but committed, ignited.

Speaker 3: [31:11](#) If I saw that young man, I walk right up to him and I'd say, dude, you are such a freaking stud and you don't even know it. So just keep going, just keep going. If you know you're ignited, but it just seems so dim. You gotta just keep going. Okay. Think about that text. What kind of strength in community would you find if you asked for a patient spirit? What if you found the patients that you need just by going through with today, do you think that would comfort you? It was crazy timing, but I really did read that passage when I felt myself slipping into that hole over the weekend. I mean, it just gripped me.

Speaker 1: [32:40](#) I'm probably gonna memorize it actually. Okay, man. I love, love, love, love that I can share my wild visions with you. And it's crazy because I can see myself doing it. I'm driving around, going around each corner, seeing all the trash, just going like, Oh, I could just pull the car over right now, pick up the trash I could, but I can, I can see myself casting the vision to my community. And then I can see the day when I'm like driving around and all the crews are out doing their thing. It's like a one day blitz on the highways and you know, they're working their way up the mountain. And here I am getting my hands dirty with them. You know, I, I actually already did a test run of this. I did it with a buddy not too long ago during the summer. And um, they closed

EPISODE 77: YOUR STORY IS STRONG

off the trails to one of the streams that flows through the area where the Pacific crest trail is. They close it all off. And so my friend and I took advantage of that and we went out there and picked up trash for hours. And so, you know, if one person sees the vision, then you know this buddy of mine he's too. So I'm off to a great start.

Speaker 1: [33:51](#)

Okay. Okay. Wait, wait, wait, hold up real quick. Before we go, do you recall last episode where I mentioned this whole private challenge, just for members of this audience, like, do you remember that I gave away about half the secret today in the content of this challenge, you know, as far as your relationship to community and community is whether it's your friends. It's whether it's your family or your work circumstance, environment, whatever, like friends and family and work. And then it's also relationship to you. You can have community with yourself, believe it or not. So in this special challenge, which is coming up, it's the Freedom Challenge from The Bipolar Now Podcast. That's where I'm taking you through a four day experience of what it's like to shed the shame and the guilt of all the stigmas that come with this disease. The practices you'll get from this challenge are good for an entire lifetime.

Speaker 1: [34:57](#)

And I'm going to be walking with you day by day. And after finishing our time together, you will literally say goodbye to stigma forever. I've never put all this stuff into one place before, and I'm just going to warn you. It's going to be scary and it's going to be fun. And that's exactly how you level up and find the kind of growth that lasts. So to be notified about the freedom challenge and how much it costs, just go to MikeLardi.com forward slash challenge and enter your email. The very moment I opened the doors to this challenge, you will get a notification in your email, and that is coming up in just a few short weeks. So that's mikelardi.com/challenge. And I challenge you to sign up today.

All right, are we good? All right, next up, we got to deal with the natural next question. And that is how good is being strong. If I don't have endurance all gathered together, all the techniques I use to have endurance and that's whether I'm starting a new community or exiting another. And so next week we will extend today's conversation so that you can have longevity in pretty much anything you have control over. And this is super critical. So you don't want to miss it. And I will see you here. Same time, same place, adios.