

## Editing

It is the editing phase of Harrison's Story and as I was reviewing the countless pages and my mind started to wander...

How often do we edit/review our own lives? Do we take an objective and clear look at all that we have accomplished and not accomplished? Do we hold our own actions and behavior up to the same standard in which we hold others?

Most people can look back on their lives and review it in blocks of time. Elementary School, Junior High School, High School, College, First Job, Engagement, Marriage and then Children are usually the way things go. Not so with those with mental illness.

When I review my life, I see it in episodes, a series of Depressive and Manic Episodes that culminate into what have become me, today. While those my age were having children, I was being hospitalized. While they were getting married, I was running around the world in a complete fog – a fog, I couldn't see.

I sit here today, on this beautiful day and look out my window to the pond, patio and backyard that I grew up on. Many memories were had on these grounds; many imaginative days were spent on the beach of the pond. I look back on that child that played in the stones and diligently practiced how long he could spend under

water. While people (other kids) were around me – I escaped; I escaped into their lives and into my environmental life. When the kids left and I retired to my room, I often did not experience the loneliness of just any only child, but the depths of depression, I remember how I felt on those days – I remember the difference that would occur in me when the curtain closed and I was alone.

To dwell on such times is not healthy, however – to identify with who you *were* is. I can see the rotations of a mind in turmoil and then in chaos. No one knew, no one could have known and I simply didn't understand... it was my secret, my demon.

If I had anything to wish for, it would have been that I could have kept the demon my secret. Let the pain affect only me and only me to fight the daily battle that is instigated.

This is a painful process. The editing of my book has taken me back to memories that I wish I could erase. But, I have to do this and I will do this... because I do not want my memories to be the memories of so many with mental illness. People need help, I may not “connect” with some, some will find my information and writings useless, but some might see a life they don't want to live and others might see a story they don't want told by their child.

In editing my book I have found so many things I have wanted to just edit out of my life and memory. But more than that, I wanted so many times to be able to transfer my thoughts into those that turned their backs, those that beat me, those that raped me. I

wanted them to know who they were doing this to, that I was not bad, I was not selfish and that I was genuinely hurting.

I have a way of being very objective about myself. I know my faults very well. Page after page today, I wanted to beat my head into the wall saying, “why did you do that and if you would have done this....” Then another page takes me to place where I can’t believe a human could be so cold hearted to me.

Every evening, I evaluate my day. I am honest with myself and journal my feelings from the day’s events. There are some I don’t like and maybe I shouldn’t feel that way, but it is what it is. There are countless things I want to say to anyone who will listen. But mostly, there is gratitude for emerging from a living hell. I simply cannot handle young men and women going through my last 10 years – because I know their thoughts and their pain. The experiences of my life did not make me better today, in fact, I was much more of person 10 years ago. Compassion goes a long ways and education goes even further. Reach out to the Mentally Ill, reach out to those in need and if someone takes advantage at first, which they most likely will... it is probably okay. After all it is your ego that gets stung when someone doesn’t do what you want, not your soul.