

I wrote the prose preceding this column a long time ago when I was trying to force myself to recall all the events of this particular manic episode. I couldn't. The details of any manic episode elude me; all the days are a blur. The only thing that I could do was pick out specific memories and the emotions attached. In this event the emotions were complete exhaustion and exhilaration all at the same time. When people have confided in me about their drug addictions and highs, I could relate through my manias.

Mania, for me anyway, feeds on insecurity and weakness – yet uses my strengths to delusion, even myself. I am certain that with the personality traits related to being an only child along with the death of my sister at an early age – I had a strong feeling of life being short and I was definitely in a race against time. You take those elements and mix them with the fact that I have little fear, naturally, and the fact that I have always considered the world a small place and you get one hell of a rush when you fuel it all by mania.

I was never one who had aspirations of having a family or a traditional life. It didn't interest me, still doesn't. I liked safaris in Africa and the flea markets in New Delhi. The people that I admired when I was a young adult were the people that I worked with. They came to work at our offices that looked like something out of a nighttime soap opera. They were dressed to the nine's, drove fancy sports cars and sedans and appeared to be very happy. I was only 20 then, I found it all simply fascinating. I was not a shallow person, actually quite the opposite – but I did love that world. Every day I spoke to someone who just got back from some faraway place and I simply sponged up every experience they relayed to me. I was far from selfish. While I was experiencing this life, I was helping a friend, financially go to school. I was probably helping a lot of people that I didn't realize, I highly doubt if anyone ever had to pay for anything if I were in the room. Regardless, I was excited about my life and my direction and the fact that I was learning so much around all these fantastic “go getters” at work.

It didn't take long, six months to be exact, before I was a part of this elite little club at work. I worked exhaustingly to learn all I could and it wasn't long before new ideas and better ways of doing things started to come to mind. I am not sure when the hypo-mania kicked in. I know in that world, life was cut-throat and I didn't mind, I actually enjoyed that competitive nature and why wouldn't I, I had by past people that had been there for years and with much more education than I. I didn't look back either... I admit that.

It was in my twenties that I first boarded a private jet to New York City. When I look back on that event, I almost want to start laughing... “Who did I think I was?” But when I look at it logically, why would I ever think that anything could go wrong in my life when I was 20 years old on a private jet drinking a 200 dollar bottle of wine when all my friends were on campus drinking beer out of buckets? Most of my friends were gathering up change to go out on Friday night while American Express was calling me and begging me to carry their Platinum Card. I was young and simply defined by the world around me – who isn't at that age?

I had no concept of what Bipolar Disorder was – never heard of it actually. I was simply referred to as the golden boy at work and I wore that badge proudly. While all of this was my reality the next year became something that my mind could not gather around. I had set my

bar at a level that most balanced people could not maintain, let alone someone with an unknown imbalance. I was running out of steam and could not explain why. I went to doctor after doctor. I even had a heart catheterization done by request of a doctor to find out if there was something going on that was depleting my energy. No one ever questioned that it might be somewhat strange that a 21 year old was living and working the way that I was. Why would they, I guess – appearances can be deceiving even to those of us that are living the reality.

I was diagnosed after a suicide attempt, 8 years later. I remember thinking prior to my attempt. “I don’t know what this is – no one can define it, no one understands and either do I – I am done, I am tired and I don’t want to play this game any longer.”

Months after being diagnosed and to this day, I look back on that kid (me) and I am still awed by it. I feel sorry for that kid. Not in a self-pity way, but in a way that I identify with young people that might be struggling with the same. Those “same” manifests in many different ways. The common denominator is the fact that they are struggling with the unknown. An unknown force that could blow anyone out of the water. There is no possible way that I would have been able to do anything different back then. I searched, I knew something was wrong but I knew nothing of psychology and to be perfectly blunt – I lived by a philosophy of work, earn and succeed – no excuses! I remember telling a doctor at Ohio State University (not nicely) that he better find something or find someone that knows what the hell they are talking about – because my life is passing me by while I lie here in a hospital bed! I did fight for myself. I went through hell the months after – a complete turmoil in my mind that I could not understand. I was determined that it was physical and was at a complete loss. I went three months without leaving my apartment. I lied there in tears and pain that I could not explain or define.

I came out of it and went on to climb the ladder again; I also fell into this despair again – this cycle repeated every two years actually. By the time I was 28 going on 29 – I had lived this to the extreme for 9 years. I was tired and honestly mourned my life. I knew my abilities – I proved them time and time again, but those times were dying left and right – I was dying left and right and no one, including myself understood why.

By the time I was diagnosed I had made such a mess out of my life that I became the most hated person in my life. To this day those feelings resonate with family and old friends. With much therapy and much time – I have moved passed most people’s perception because they simply have no clue the pain that I have endured and the determination that I have had to simply be living today, let alone living well.

Believe it or not, there is a point to all of this. The point is: It doesn’t have to be this way for the next 20 year old. I will have gladly lived through all of this in order to make it, not so, for the next 20 year old. Mental Illness Awareness is not some simple minded “cause”. It stops pain, prison, family destruction, suicide, rape, homelessness and all in all – hell on earth and once all that has happened – you can’t get rid of it!

Someone said to me months ago in an email, I won’t say who – “Cory, I don’t understand why you feel the need to tell everyone everything about your life – people don’t need to know

everything.” Needless to say that person has been deleted from my update list – however, this is why. Awareness is why. A pamphlet in the hospital that defines the exact symptoms of what someone is going through. A book that defines similar paths. A website that relays that while it may be a mental illness – life does not have to stop or not progress. This is why I make my life an open book. For anyone to think that it is easy to replay my life, would suggest they have no comprehension of my determination to make sure my life doesn’t replay in someone else’s life or family.

I found this prose that I wrote a long time ago when I was thinking of one of my many manic episodes. I don't often write about mania as it leaves room for much criticism. However, as life gets more stable each day - it is impossible to deny the manic days and it is not justified to ignore them, as they are so much a part of the illness. It is my hope in the next day or so that I will be able to write a column that I have been thinking on for a week or so, however my "muse" has not hit me yet - but when it does, I am certain it will all flow! This prose is full of actual events that happened prior to diagnosis and when I was looked upon as a marketing guru and negotiating shark. It always amazes me how the very illness that has lead to so much self-destruction is the very same force that sky rocketed me to so much success. That is a very frustrating element of this illness. Not only is it frustrating for the consumer, but all that love him or her. Who doesn't want to see their loved one reach for the sky and be all that they can be? But what happens when those capabilities can destroy your loved one as well?

A Manic Monday

Now Boarding, to Paris
First Class only please
That is me, excuse me

A bottle of Bordeaux
A notebook in hand
Oh, you're from the embassy
Nice to meet you, I'm pleased

Your limo is waiting
It's about time

The meeting is at 8
Dinner at 9
Contract at 10
And at 11 it is signed

2 million for the company
40 thousand is mine
The flight leaves at 2
The Rivera is so kind

Have not slept for 28 hours
It is now four
Cannes is now boring me
Monte Carlo I will explore

So many friends
I never knew
They are my buddies
In all that we do

The dancing can't stop
The rhythm is mine
Is he a pop star
A musician
An actor from afar

His glasses are Chanel
Shoes are from Gucci
Pants are Dolce
Is that shirt by Armani

His eyes are ice blue
And his tan is true
He has the right look
And the moves

Haven't slept for 44 hours
Getting quite tired
The body says shut down
The mind says we won't retire

Must be in LA in 24 hours
Guess the sleep will have to wait
Because I am admired

Not sure what has happened
Can't know what transpired

What is real and what is not
I am in Monte Carlo

I feel I am just cargo

I have a career, a job to do
Must get back to LA
And do what I do

In LA I drop
A car waiting in its slot
An applause I hear
As I enter my peers
A success I have encountered
Though I know not what I endeared

Seems I cornered the market
In Paris and Cannes, even Marseilles
A new assignment I will take

The party is now over
I got to my home
I lie awake wondering
And trying to absorb

I still do not know how
Or who I did meet
But the next morning I was off
With a new competitor to beat

Not sure who I am
Not sure that I care
Have no concept at all
Of the great fall