

## Accepting My Diagnosis

It was my supreme prayer to be healed from bipolar disorder. The summer following my first hospitalization at sixteen, a minister at a church healing service prayed over me to be delivered from my mental illness. Since then, I believed I was. Eventually, after hearing a televangelist preach that we have it within ourselves to be healed, and all we need is faith, I decided it was time to go off my medications and prove healing in Jesus's name. Doubts that I may not have had a serious mental illness after all buried their seeds in my mind and this preacher on TV watered them.

I was 24 years old now and had been married for three years. My husband Chris knew I had my diagnosis, but with the medicine I was taking and therapy I'd had, its symptoms remained in remission for the time we'd known each other.

That spring, I decided to go off my medications. My husband was away on a month-long trip across the world, and I was in my glory as we'd just moved into a new house. Tasks of unpacking turned into micro-manic behaviors. Being home alone in such a state of high-strung energy warranted my mother who was a thousand miles away to call my local police department to keep a watch on me, without my knowledge or consent. This added to my flare up of paranoia while I continued to escalate in psychotic behaviors. By the time my husband returned, we were thousands of dollars in debt (due to a few manic shopping sprees) that became a peak of conflict within our marriage. Things got worse before they got better.

Soon after Chris's return home, I recognized I needed to be admitted into a psych hospital. My husband Chris grew concerned after a few outbursts and finally found an open bed at a hospital a few hours away. My reality soared into delusions and hallucinations, believing things and people

and spiritual forces were at work to hurt me or at the very least, make me the butt of a universal joke. My mind worked to interpret random occurrences in daily life as meaningful, pre-meditated, and significant.

The adult psychiatric wards were a little rougher around the edges than the juvenile one I had been to eight years prior. Despite the stressors of being confined to a hallway with dozens of other men and women dealing with their own mental struggles, the time I spent inside the psych ward was the best place I could be. I needed to be monitored and my medication needed to be administered. All the staff needed to do was re-prescribe my medicines I had gone off originally. Unfortunately, it wasn't discovered until months later that returning me to those meds was all that was needed. Instead, I was trialed on new trending medicines, so my recovery was delayed.

After a few months in and out of the hospitals, I returned home. Since I'd left my previous job before my episode, I spent many days recovering by sleeping, snacking, and expressing my dulled enthusiasm through occasional drawing and writing. After months of refocusing my mind to an equilibrium back on the medications and through talk therapy, my sanity gradually returned. I reclaimed the insight that I needed to remain on my medication to stay well.

Apparently, I had to learn the hard way. Nevertheless, I learned.

Since then, I have remained on my psychiatric medications and active in therapy. By the grace of God I've not had side effects of medications or residual symptoms of bipolar disorder. Not all cases are the same since many with this diagnosis continue to battle with symptoms and setbacks. But for me, I realized that the two pills I take daily are the answer to my prayers. I have since accepted the reality that I have a serious mental illness and must manage it. And that is worth all the peace of mind someone like me can pray and hope for.

About the author: Katie R. Dale has authored *But Deliver Me from Crazy: A Memoir*, on her experiences through the psych wards into recovery, and blogs regularly regarding her reconciliation of her Christian faith and mental illness on [KatieRDale.com](http://KatieRDale.com). She's on social media @KatieRDale and when she isn't caring for her daughter at home, she is out training for a half marathon or 5k with her running buddies. She resides in Florida with her hero in uniform, Chris, and daughter Kylie.