

## A Bipolar's Song: An Inspirational Book of The Bipolar Disease

Paula Sievers



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Bipolar is not an easy road. Within these pages, Paula tells her story of suffering forty years with this debilitating roller coaster of mania and depression. She discusses her relationship with family, friends and the public at large, hoping to dispel the stigma against the mentally ill. It took years for her illness to be diagnosed and many more to be treated properly. However, the culmination of these two professional endeavors has led to a lengthy remission. Through her story, Paula conveys the early stages of illness, which consisted of major depression and psychosis. Although biological, her depression was impacted by her, her doctor's and her parents' lack of understanding about the cause and symptoms of her behavior. Some theories even offered by acquaintances, were an identity crisis, experimental drugs and severe schizophrenia. Although each of these had been denied, it proved how little a handle on bipolar the public grasped. Paula has spoken before many diverse groups and has appeared on television to spread hope of recovery to the public. She is candid about the repercussions of this disease if not caught and treated in its early stages. The success rate is much greater in this case. It is her desire that these words will inspire and comfort the afflicted as well as their families and caregivers. Of course, we all hope that life's insanity will not touch us. However, for those who struggle with it, much compassion, understanding and love is the key to helping these consumers survive. It is an incurable disease but, more recently, treated successfully. Her creative poetry, both whimsical and thoughtful, adds a touch of creativity that warms the soul. Paula's personal thoughts are expressed most clearly here. She incorporates prayer, self, home, romance and childhood to name but a few. Life's issues are great enough without adding a major illness to the equation. Nevertheless, Paula has survived successfully, the death and alcoholism of her husband, raising two children, being uprooted with frequent moves across country and alienation of family and friends. It takes much courage to fight this chilling disease. How can she manage her healthy self? It is a tedious task of visits to her psychiatrist, religious regimens of medication and living out her faith with God's grace and strength. Most importantly, she needs to seek help when symptoms begin to occur by saying, "I'm not right. Please get me help." It is the greatest thing she can do despite the fact that bipolar is devastating and destructive to her self-- esteem. Unlike many patients, she describes her hospitalizations (over nine times) as beneficial as well as horrific. There, her schizoid tendencies are most readily apparent. Visions, voices and imaginary states all play a part in this acute setting. Although the clinical components contribute to the term "bipolar", this author's account of her life's experiences is unique. Every consumer expresses symptoms in varied ways. Consequently, bipolar is difficult to recognize, slipping between the cracks of depression and schizophrenia. She knows that bipolar is episodic and to avoid relapse she is constantly adjusting her treatments. She also knows, because of stigma, when to discuss her illness and when to refrain. Paula's statements are designed to help people recognize the patterns of bipolar in others so that they can steer those affected toward professional intervention. She says that as time goes on and memories of good health add up, the statement "I'm bipolar" rolls across her tongue more easily.

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