

# MY STORY

By Diane Lyndon

I was 7 years old looking very tiny in my hospital bed suffering a nervous breakdown and depression. I had a teacher who scared me daily with a crack of his pointer stick on my desk during his angry fitful tirades.

I grew up with Bipolar depression on both sides of my family. Both my parents attempted suicide after my sister passed and my mother was on life support after one attempt. Both my parents had to endure electroshock therapy. My father's sister succeeded in her suicide attempt. Several aunts on my mother's side and my grandmother were bipolar. I am and two of my children are as well.

I was on the newest antidepressant of each decade until 12 years ago when I started treating my depression with nutrition.

I no longer experience the manic highs that sent me on shopping sprees that maxed my credit cards. I suffered the other end of the spectrum with what I called my "grey cave" phase. So depressed I would not be able to crack a smile on the mask that became my face. I had suicidal ideations and would flee to my doctor each fall. "Where've you been Diane?" said my doctor. "We've been expecting you."

Seasonal depression has visited me since I was seven as well as situational and bipolar. Medication would flatline me emotionally and I could not create with my writing or poetry and art. When my mother was manic, she would buy houses and when her mother was manic, she once picked up a shotgun and aimed it at her children.

Medication has helped my own children with their battles with depression. I did not like having my creativity snuffed out so I sought other methods to deal with raising my serotonin levels.

In the fall, I increase my Vitamin D consumption daily to 5000 IUs. I have a full spectrum light I read in front of for 30 minutes a day. I also recommend an

infrared sauna. I use a product that I call brain food which gives me great clarity. This is a valuable resource for my 66 year old brain that's starting to forget.

For 48 years of my life I lived on an emotional rollercoaster and thus endured situational depression. Three disastrous marriages, two of them violent, saw me finally be able to escape and recreate myself and my life on a healing path of empowerment. I dropped my caretaker roll and started to work on my own physical and mental wellbeing. I healed.

I keep a steady watch on myself even now. I look for telltale signs that I might be heading in either direction on the bipolar teeter totter. I seek balance but for the most part, I am a high functioning manic. And I have used that energy to always strive to be accomplished at whatever I set out to do.