

Reflections after a manic episode

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Writing about mania is one of the easy bits. There's a false confidence; a belief your words actually matter.

With depression and thoughts of suicide, these experiences are laced with shame. We don't want to admit we've felt like this. This kind of revelation can also be triggering for some; if you feel raw or exposed or both.

The downswing from mania is a rollercoaster with no harness. You come crashing back to earth like a rocket that's run out of fuel. Don't feel sorry for people with mania; they're having the time of their lives. Save your sympathy for the people feeling overwhelmed with depression and despair.

Depression comes when you have to pick up the pieces of what you've done and your energy levels are swinging all over the place. Depression and despair are what people don't want to talk about, so seemingly unrelated to any kind of tangible tragedy. It's the kind of thing that will have people you once called friends running a mile in the other

direction. A huge, huge stigma. With a big cost.

Don't worry, I'm absolutely fine. Things are hard and difficult, but I have the best support network. I'm a lot luckier than many people I've heard about over the years, because I always have people close to me to pull me back from the edge. I always know talking is better than... *not* talking anymore.

It's true what they say; it's always darkest before the dawn. And surround yourself with good people. You feel guilty and ashamed of the things you did while on mania, and there are many regrets. The right people will understand, and they don't judge. It doesn't matter anyway.

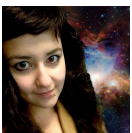
Ultimately, you can't look back, and you have to make your peace with whatever it is that you've done. There's always tomorrow, until there isn't.

Live for today; not yesterday or tomorrow. That's what mania teaches you.

And of course, if you're having serious problems, you know you can **always ask for help**. Call the Samaritans any time on **116 123** if you're in the UK, or **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)** just for men on **0800 58 58 58**.

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