

Who does Depression Effect?

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A teenager gives a letter to a therapist explaining what it is like to live with a depressed/bipolar mother.

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Today was a good day. A really good day. But tomorrow will be a god awful day. This is what it is like with living a bipolar mother. When someone loves you so much, you want nothing more to please them. And somedays I would go above and beyond pleasing her. I can be the star of the day, I can do no wrong, but three days later, nothing I do is good enough. The sight of me to her seems to make her want to puke. On a bad day, itâs not just puking, itâs projectile vomiting all over the house, because Lord knows, she wants nothing to do with me.

I am typing this with my head on my knee; my knee blocking the screen unless I screw up and have to go back. So if there are mistakes, please forgive me. I am typing really fast- I have to get this finished before she gets home. Because I was already on her bad side this morning, so itâs crucial that I donât get caught writing this, cuz holy shit Iâd get smacked really hard. That last part isnât true, she has never hurt me, but Iâve been scaredâ I really scared.

My friends say I need help. They say, âJaci, why donât you just go see a counselor, they really could help you work things out with your mom.â But part of me doesnât want help. I am a fixer; I donât want someone else to solve my problems. I am seventeen years old; I can get by on my own. Then thereâs the other part of me really wants help because I donât want to be here anymore.

One night my mom came home and had been drinking with her meds. Let me just add that she is on medication for anxiety, not for being bipolar or even depression. That particular night I had been looking up symptoms of being bipolar on the computer and had left it up on the screen like a dumbass. Mom came in and saw the screen up and got really pissed off. Lately she has really bad anger issues, probably because youâre not supposed to drink when youâre on heavy medication. Anyway, she started throwing shit around and cussing me out. The neighbors called the cops, but by the time they got there, Mom was already passed out. I had to explain to them what happened, but I lied a little bit. I didnât want Mom to get arrested or get taken away from her. See, I really do love her. And she really is a good mom. She just has a chemical imbalance and canât function properly without the right meds.

When I say I really do love my mom, I honestly mean it. I donât just say it because Iâm scared of her getting taken away or anything. She does love me and care for me. We have girlsâ nights and she helps me when Iâm crying about a stupid boy and she helps edit my papers. But when Dad left, it sparked the fire for this horrible disease. I think everything was all in store and set for this disease to take over, but when he left us, it set fire to all of the problems that were already in place. She couldnât function like a normal human being. Thatâs when the drinking started. I didnât think much of it at first; she was really sneaking. Mom used to only drink on the holidays though, so when she started having a glass of wine at dinner I knew something was up.

As soon as she started drinking, she would become brutally honest. Before that, I think she was kind of numb because it hadnât truly sunk in yet that he wasnât coming back. But when she would get alcohol in her system, she would walk around the house blabbing that big ole mouth of hers about anything she damn well pleased. After the honest stage would come the emotional stage where she would blubber like a baby. I guess I shouldnât complain about the crying/emotional stage, itâs a hell of a lot better than this angry/throwing shit around the house stage.

Itâs too hard for me to tell this to you in person, thatâs why Iâm writing it down. I donât mean to hurt your feelings, but I never wanted a therapist, so itâs really hard for me to be honest and truthful against my will. If I write everything down, I can take as long as I want to tell you everything without

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seeing your face and changing the truth to lighten the road. Maybe Iâ€™m so scared to tell a therapist like you because I donâ€™t want you to take my mom away from me. I love her. Sheâ€™s great. But she needs help. Take her off anxiety medication. That is not what she needs. Please. Iâ€™m begging you. She is depressed. And I think she is bipolar. I guess I havenâ€™t explained that yetâ€”Here goes nothing. Please, remember how I love my mom.

Remember how I started the letter by saying that today was a good day but in a couple of days things would not be so good? Itâ€™s almost like her love is conditional on how she feels. If she feels good and is having a goodâ€”no sorry, more like a not horribleâ€”day, then we get along great, there is nothing wrong between us. But heaven forbid if she is having a bad day. Shit, Iâ€™m not gonna lie, Iâ€™m out of the house on those days because she is nasty to me. Iâ€™m the first person she can point a finger at, so she will take her anger out on me. Beyond that though, itâ€™s her mood swings that make me think she is bipolar. Sometimes itâ€™s not even an hour that goes by where sheâ€™s happy, then sad, then crying, then happy, then angry.

The reason I changed my mind and decided to talk to you is because this is wearing on me. Not living and dealing with my mom (she needs a friend and a comforter), and I am capable of that. But itâ€™s the whiplash of emotions Iâ€™m dealing with that hurts me. Iâ€™m starting to believe the things she tells me. I know you are going to ask me what she tells me so what the hell might as well put it in here. She tells me that I am ungrateful, selfish, and controlling. At least those are the three most common ones. People try to tell me that they arenâ€™t true, but why would she tell me them if they werenâ€™t? I know she has a chemical imbalance, but that doesnâ€™t mean she is retarded. She is perfectly capable of handling herself and saying what she means, so it must be true. When a young girl already has self-confidence issues, hearing these things about herself is detrimental.

Do you want to know what sucks, Ms. Kathy? Having to take care of someone at age 15. And I canâ€™t do it very well, I will admit.

Four months later

Dear Mom,

I hope that you are having fun at the house where you are staying. I hope, more than having fun though, that you are learning and getting your illness under control. There is not an hour that goes by that I donâ€™t miss you.

I need to write you this to tell you what your illness does to me. I know that Dad leaving was the hardest thing that has ever happened to you, but Mom, itâ€™s the hardest thing that has happened to me, too. I would like to say that Iâ€™m not bitter, but that would not be true. When Dad left, I lost two parents. I lost Dad, and a big part of you. Not only did I lose you, but I had to take care of you. Shouldnâ€™t it be the other way around? I never had anyone to comfort me throughout this whole time. I needed you to be a mother. Youâ€™re the one who chose to have me as your child, and you should have done your job.

Besides these abandonment issues Iâ€™ve had, Iâ€™ve had self esteem issues as well. I hope that this doesnâ€™t hurt you like it would have before you got help, but either way I need to tell you. You know that I have always had self esteem issues. Iâ€™ve felt fat all my life and never felt pretty. When Dad left, those feelings deepened because I felt like I was the cause of it. But the icing on the cake was the words you said to me. Hearing that Iâ€™m controlling and bossy and selfish is not easy to hear, *especially* when youâ€™re drunk and screaming it in my face.

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I might as well just keep going while I am at it. You ruined \$400 worth of stuff by throwing things. I am not allowed to tell you where I am living right now, but I go home to check on the house and clean it up once a week. It is still not clean from all the stuff you broke. Mom what is broken more than the things though is me. You broke me. You hurt me in ways that I don't even know yet. You didn't even try. You never asked me how I was doing. No, it was always the other way around. I am sorry if this hurts you, but I need to tell you what is going on in my life finally.

I have been going to therapy twice a week and I think it is helping, but it is so hard because she finds things in me that I didn't even know were there. Once you are healthy, I hope that you can come home and we can talk about everything face to face. I miss you so much. You need to know that you really are a good mom and I have so much respect for you. I am sorry Dad left *both* of us. I know you are angry at me for writing that letter to the therapist, but had I not I am not sure I would still be alive.

I pray so much that you are getting better and the medicine is working. I love you so much Mom, please don't ever forget that. You have taught me so much in life, and I am getting stronger by the day. I miss you so much. Get better fast so you can come home.

Love,

Your baby girl

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