



STARRED REVIEW

The Faces of Bipolar: The Personas Bipolar Disorder May Speak Through and What They Feel Like from the Inside

Jeremy M. Davis

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In *The Faces of Bipolar*, Jeremy M. Davis recounts his eventual diagnosis and what he calls "the wreckage" resulting from his bipolar mood disorder.

The software engineer/manager has spent his adult life trying to figure out why his "own brain keeps trying to burn everything down" and why there's a gap between the science of bipolar disorder (BD) and what it feels like to live in it. 'Bipolar doesn't just change your mood,' Davis writes. "It can change your entire operating self."

That self has many personas. For the author, they include the "Liar," "Antagonist," "Critic" and "Encourager," among others. These personas are not separate personalities but simply describe what BP symptoms feel like from the inside. While others will experience their own personas, Davis seeks to help BP readers recognize their individual patterns and do the work needed to rebuild, heal and sustain relationships.

Using his ten personas as a narrative arc, the author describes how to recognize and call them out. The Liar voice, for example, amplifies real grievances but overreacts. The Critic offers "the worst interpretation" of any action. The author ends each chapter with what the persona wants, what a clinician sees and helpful suggestions on what to do when a persona appears. He also provides recommendations for loved ones on how to help when episodes occur.

Davis's thought-provoking narrative flows easily as he shares how the disorder altered who he is. He is candid and authentic, writing with true warmth and empathy, as well as deep understanding of his topic. The author's caring approach includes a section on suicidal ideation with a trigger warning as he reveals how he dealt with his own crisis.

As he reveals his challenges and the work he does to help overcome them, Davis's story is bound to help others realize they while they didn't choose their personas, they can still be the controlling author of their lives.

Also available in hardcover and ebook.