

Episode_5_Keaton.mp3

[00:00:02] Be advised we will be discussing subjects that may not be suitable for all audiences and will include subjects that some will find challenging traumatic or triggering.

[00:00:12] Welcome to you don't fight alone. A podcast sharing the stories of those of us successfully living with mental illness and how we got there. My worst moment would be May 22nd 2009 at about 5p.m. when I overdosed.

[00:00:38] On Tylenol to the point where I ended up in the ICU for four days.

[00:00:43] That was my rock bottom.

[00:00:45] That time and the week following my name is keep keeping like him and I am diagnosed bipolar type 1 and PTSD with dependent personality disorder. It's a whole host of fun waking up May 24th which is two days after the ICU.

[00:01:10] All I could think is I failed at failing. I failed at killing myself. That's the worst kind of failure. I was my apartment super which meant I carried a phone for emergency dials. That was actually provided to emergency personnel. That phone rang it was he's trying to get into my apartment but it was the super phone not my phone and letting somebody in on my own emergency was so depressing to me like I'm already depressed I've already attempted suicide I've already resigned myself to die. But then it felt humiliating to then let emergency staff in like that moment of oh yes I will buzz you into my apartment what I recall of the treatment is pretty clear. For the next few hours I am loaded into the ambulance that takes me to Denver Health. While the paramedics are telling me I'm okay and they are telling me it will be OK. I can tell you're not 100 percent sure if they believe it because they keep asking me when I took it. And I don't know. I am escorted off the gurney by a trauma team that met me at the ambulance. I am taken into a trauma room trauma one room at Denver Health. It has all the bells and whistles and I am surrounded by doctors and nurses and the conversation that was going on is can we even pump his stomach. Would it make a difference. And what options do we have. A nurse screamed at the doctors to let me drink activated charcoal which they did but I remember telling that nurse. I don't think I can do it and I don't remember her exact words but they were along the lines of you can physically do it. Get over your shit and drink the cup which is what I needed to hear because I just was out of it. And because she was so demanding in the correct fashion I sat there and drank charcoal and that is the same thing that you will find on your barbecue grill. It is just ground up into a paste with a little bit of water. It is horrible but it was the treatment decision because it binds with what ever is in your stomach. It binds to everything that is in your stomach is my understanding and they decided not to pump my stomach because it also needed to bind with what was in my intestines because of how long ago I had taken it. They weren't sure if I was going to live as that is going on. I learned that the on call ya doc is actually a toxicologist which universe fates whatever you want to call it worked in my favor because not only did he know what group of meds to apply for Tylenol he knew the amounts off the back of his hand like it was instant. I got I.V. Meds I was in the trauma room for about two hours. I know that because my aunt and uncle are my uncle came down to see me and he saw me first in the trauma room and then they did move me and about the 2 hour point really high class your room still lot of bells and whistles not air everyday. Not one I could walk to. And people kept coming to see me I was confused because people didn't care or that's what I thought I get. Didn't click with me but they only allowed two people back at a time and that line didn't stop and there wasn't judgment. Nobody was shitting on me for trying to kill myself except for me. But it just was an endless line of people I would later come to find out and as we talked about at the beginning of the show I am bipolar. What had happened prior to my attempt was my first manic episode where I spent money starting sometime in April start spending money and I have a couple grand in savings. I have a

seven thirty nine credit score. I don't have any debt. I'm bringing in about double what my living expenses were like. I wasn't living large but I also. Was making an AU fair wage starting in April. Couple grand was gone. I opened a credit card. I went three thousand dollars into debt hit the max on that credit card started acquiring debt. Cough up my life making stupid decisions realizing it and feeling on top of the world going back to the question of my rock bottom wasn't attempting suicide by rock bottom was May 24th when I was no longer manic I was no longer on top of it I was no longer Mr. Invincible I was leading up to it driving at one hundred and twenty miles an hour on my twenty five and I seven because it was fun I wasn't sleeping like I. Looking back there was a period of a couple weeks where my head didn't hit the pillow for longer than 15 minutes and I was up and doing something else. There was a period of three days when they were doing the investigation I call it investigation they were digging into my past with me analyzing this as I was in the psych hospital but a period of three days where I didn't even go into my bedroom I didn't sleep and I felt amazing euphoric great. On top of the world. And what happened May 22nd. I was actually at a church function where I was helping with something entirely unrelated to a wedding that was going on. They were building some cabinets for the sound equipment. They unplugged every piece of sound equipment which doesn't sound too bad but about 40 cables that they just had on the floor I was about to leave for work. I worked. I don't know if it five 30 shift or a 6p.m. shift but it doesn't really matter what is about to leave for work and they come running to me because they have a wedding tomorrow and I had been running sound for them and they're like We need your help. And I didn't know how to say no I didn't know how to say I need to go to work. So I said Yes I got it working. And it worked flawlessly. The sound system functioned again but now I was at least 45 minutes late for work. If I could magically teleport and I was at least half an hour away from where I needed to be to work and I hadn't let them know because communication back in 2009 for me I sucked at it. So I hadn't called to let anybody know it's going to be late. I believe I had missed calls on my cell phone that I didn't answer that I didn't even consider giving back. And so once the sound system was working and I was forty five minutes late if I could teleport I got in my car started driving towards work and I'd later find out I was coming off of a manic high the sort of driving to work I went to the Walgreens kitty corner to my place of employment. I bought the Tylenol P.M. drove home and started ingesting pills and. I wasn't realizing what I was doing until like pill number two. So at that point I wasn't even anywhere near the L.D. 50 I wasn't even anywhere near liver damage but I was like oh I'm trying to kill myself. And I got fully on board with it. Like my mind my subconscious me were fully in agreement that suicide was the best option. I heard it was gonna be an hour late for work and find out my boss wasn't even necessarily mad. I think we were low on ours anyways so. He's like you could have come in an hour late. That would've been fine. But my self-worth was tied up in that and I was coming off a manic high. And so what made sense to me at that time was the best course of action because I'm going to be an hour late for work to a job that I've never been late to before kill myself. That's how I reasoned through that how I ended up in the back of an ambulance in a four day I see you stay in a three day psych hospital stay diagnosed with bipolar. Still not having a fucking clue what that meant because it was acute care and they once you're stable. So once you agree that you're not going to kill yourself today they let you out. Which I agree with but there was no follow up plan. There was no way you should do counseling. There was no. You should go to a psychiatrist. And here's the appointment. They asked had I called and I know I had called somebody but I think I hung up before I even talked to them. So it made the phone calls a breakthrough for me I believe was actually 24 teen after my fifth hospitalization. So I had been diagnosed bipolar. I figured out what acute care was which is good. They get a stable but I didn't know anything other than acute care. So I had a period of three hospitalizations that I had gotten to the point where I knew that I was going to attempt suicide and there was no way of dissuading myself so I would go to the E.R. and they would agree that if I were to be on my own I would try to kill myself so they would admit me to the hospital and I would stay and I would get stable and I could say I'm not going to kill myself today and they would let me go home. And the cycle repeated my fourth hospitalization. I had a doctor who misguided. He told me Social Security disability check I was the only option I had. I would never amount to anything that I should give up

because you have the best care in the world. But reality was for me it wasn't working. After that fourth hospitalization I did get a therapist and his name was Jason. As part of an intensive outpatient program an intensive outpatient program would didn't work for me because you're not allowed to work so you go you have a four hour class five days a week on how to cope how to deal with emotions and then you go home and you don't work and you don't deal with stress and you don't experience anything and you do that. For me it was six weeks and then I went back to work and no paradigm shift had happened and I didn't understand it and so I went back to the same cyclical depression to my second major suicide attempt was at the end of a manic episode that I actually thought I was dreaming. Taking pills. Nope I was actually up. I was actually taking pills. I took a massive amount of Tylenol again. I didn't go to bed thought I went to like so buying the Tylenol. I don't know what was going through my mind because I wasn't thinking like I wasn't consciously thinking I was going to attempt suicide. I was planning for the next day of work. I remember going to my bedroom I remember thinking I remember laying down. I do remember getting up but I thought I was dreaming. And I remember going to my living room. I remember getting water and sitting down with the bottle of Tylenol. I just started taking pills and I'm like Well shit I'm having a shit dream because at this point I really didn't think I wanted to kill myself. When I saw the sun coming up it dawned on me I'm not dreaming. So I called my then girlfriend now wife and I said I will do it again. How's it feel to get that call and hey I sold to the hospital should I pick it up on the way. She said yes. Drove by I picked her up. She was waiting outside. She was rather concerned she was thinking she should probably call nine one one but really didn't know what to do. And it may have been like 6a.m. in the morning. Neither of us are mourning people so I don't think she was necessarily processing it. And especially if you get a phone call and somebody on the other end of the line says Hey Yo Dito Get out. I would do it again like that's probably not a rational state of mind that immediately follows of Okay well where are you okay. No one is now coming to pick her up get to the hospital explain what's going on. They give me the antidote to Tylenol poisoning which tastes like fish and I've been through this before I know this. I start puking because that didn't happen the last time but hey it happened this time I didn't do Tylenol P.M. maybe just Tylenol causes your puke Benadryl suppresses it possibly but.

[00:18:16] Puking.

[00:18:18] Have a psychiatrist well come and visit me while I'm in the ICU.

[00:18:29] Tell me my only option is a disability check who like hey what's not working. Something is not working. If you're back here again and realized like I hadn't figured out to do non cyclical care I'd learned how to do acute care. You check yourself into the hospital you get stable you leave the hospital. Fantastic. Then what. I realized I'd done I was explaining it to him like I wasn't going to work so the skills that I learned for those six weeks just evaporated basically a week or two after I was back at work. I didn't understand how to withstand the stress. I didn't understand how to say no that I need to take care of myself I don't even understand that I really needed to take care of myself. Even though that's like one of the four major things they teach you and I hope he is self care. It didn't click. Get transferred to Porter have Doctor start asking the same questions of doctor from. Day number four the questions of you have family around you you have insurance so let's get counseling you're on meds and I'm expecting him to answer with just collect a disability check. He doesn't. He actually spent two hours with me getting different professionals to come in. He got a social worker to come in. He got somebody who ran the DDT program which is what I hope these skills are. They come from dialectical behavioral therapy but the diabetes program is a three hour class once a week that you do well working. I did D.B. T for seven and a half months three hours every Tuesday night. But you know what I learned those skills I actually learned self care and what it meant to use self care when I had a really stressful day at work. Oh they've been teaching me this thing called self care. I'll light a candle. I'll grab a beer. One beer not get plastered but just relax like self care. A lot of self care is just relaxing but knowing what that means and

relaxing not escaping what's going on not escaping the problems or the stress but like actually sitting in the problems and the stress and seeing today sucked. I got a bad review from a customer at work and that kind of sucks. That doesn't mean I suck or that doesn't mean I'm a miserable person. My worth isn't caught up in what happened today at work. I am a human. There is intrinsic value in being a human. So a very long answer to the simple question of what was the breakthrough the breakthrough was that seven and a half month period that started with the fifth hospitalization. But it started with doctors asking what's not working and not assuming that all I'm ever going to do is collect a disability check and it ended not even after that seven and a half months. But that was the breakthrough but it ended when I discharged from counseling in twenty sixteen when I actually had the conversation with my therapist of.

[00:22:46] Not having breakdowns. I'm not having freak outs.

[00:22:52] I'm not handling like I am handling stress like shit hitting the fan and I'm coping with it. So day to day it is getting up it is doing something and it is going to bed and it is using the skills that I've developed through CBT dialectical behavioral therapy to do that whether that's opposite action which means hey I'm feeling like doing something blank that I define as a stupid action for me I then decide OK I'm not going to do that I'm not 100 percent successful OK sometimes I go and do what I feel like that's do but action for me was I still slip up but my slip ups are smaller like we discussed I spent 30 dollars over budget like I said Whoops.

[00:23:54] But that is the day today we tend to not know how to take care of ourselves as humans.

[00:24:08] So not even just mental disorder patients or mental illness patients or whatever you want to define it. People who have a mental illness would advocate for everybody to at least read about CBT which CBT is dialectical behavioral therapy.

[00:24:27] It was developed by Marcia Lenihan. She is a psychologist who also has borderline personality disorder. She has her P HD. She was like I don't want to keep living like this how do I change how I live. And she did something about it and I am thankful for that because of DV T.

[00:24:51] I am here today. I can go through manic episodes.

[00:24:56] I can go through the depressive episode that comes after and live. I'm not saying everybody needs to do seven and a half months and three hours every week.

[00:25:14] Reading a book about it or reading like a small introduction to it yes I think that would be for everyone and I agree with you it's not necessarily a solution. But is what worked for me and I can't tell you it's going to work for you. I can't tell you it's going to work for everyone. But I do know that the four things are helpful for everybody. I do know that balancing emotions and logic how can you not be behind the fact you can't change what currently is and what has just been. So what are you going to do about it. That was empowering for me realizing I could do something about it. That I can have mania and not make hundreds of stupid decisions irrational decisions not spend thousands of dollars that I don't have was freeing. Realizing that I can have a depressive crash. Still go to work and still get out of bed. Was freeing because the question was What are you going to do about it. And that resonated with me. Wait I can do something about it. I let go of voting reality. I can't change what is. I can't change what just happened but I can change what I'm going to do. I can change how I respond to the situation.

[00:27:18] So looping back what one sentence or what would I have to say. Let go. Fighting reality and what are you going to do about it.

[00:27:42] For more information please visit. You don't fight alone. Dot org. Don't fight alone is supported in part by M.L. H services a service disabled veteran owned small business for your marketing needs. H hyphen services dot com. You don't fight alone podcast is a production of you don't fight alone Inc. Produced and engineered by James Fisher and Keaton like. The information presented by you don't fight alone is not intended as medical advice. If you have mental health questions please talk to a mental health professional.