



# The View From My Window

~ a personal journey through mental health

by *Jackson Fisher*

## Chapter 6

*“I’m not ashamed to say I’m mentally ill, but that doesn’t mean I’m mentally weak” – Robin Lehner, 2019 National Hockey League Awards.*

It’s sometimes amazing how things line up; for those who don’t know, since my last entry I’ve had a lot going on. Among other things I have committed to Lakehead University in Thunder Bay (meaning I’ll move far away from home in August), I was awarded a bursary from Open Doors, I finished the last high school course I will ever need to do and am actively looking to join the work force. I had this update planned out about a week or two ago and I was just waiting for time to type it out as I was finishing up culminating and exams. However, it’s not all that I have done and want to share what truly motivated me to sit down and get this done.

It’s the quote I lead with. Robin Lehner is a goaltender in the National Hockey League who bounced between a few different organizations as he struggled with off-ice, mental health issues. At the beginning of this past season, he went public with his struggles showing amazing courage to share his issues with the sports world, empowering himself and others who fight in silence. He had the best season of his career and preformed as one of the top goalies in the league, leading his team to the playoff. More importantly he continued (and continues) to stay healthy and fight to end the stigma around mental health issues. The quote is from the NHL awards as he accepted the Bill Masterton award for perseverance and dedication. That’s the short version and it doesn’t do his story justice. I wanted to share the amazing quote and I fully recommend looking into his life story more if you’re interested. This is his full acceptance speech (which begins at 1:56 of the video) to get you started if you want to learn more. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRET\\_ZXj1QI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRET_ZXj1QI)

On top of his truly amazing story and moving quote, what really stood out to me about it is the similarities to my so-called ‘theme’ of this entry. Much like Mr. Lehner and myself, you should never be ashamed of your mental illness; in fact, you should be proud of it. Pain and success are relative. My story is mine and your story is yours, we all go through different battles that might seem big or small from the outside but all that matters is how

they feel to the individual who is fighting them. Not only does this not make us weak, it makes us strong. When everyday is a fight you only get stronger as you progress. It doesn't matter what step you're on or how small it might feel; a step is a step and as long as you keep taking them, you'll get better. Of course, moving away from home to live over 1400km away for university feels like a massive step for me, but it wasn't too long ago for me that I was proudly telling my support team that I left my house and walked to the end of the street. The situation is relative and both are huge steps in their own way and I know for a fact that I would've never done the former without the latter.

Of course, a few years ago if you had compared the two events (leaving my house and moving for school) as the same to me I probably would've laughed because on paper they don't seem comparable at all but again the struggle is relative and compared to how strong I am now the steps are of similar value. A big step for my confidence was accepting my situation and although I thought that came a while ago while sitting in an appointment, I think it truly came only recently. Twice over the last month or so I had moments of pride which were my original motivation for this piece. Once when speaking with my hairdresser and once with a woman at my eye doctors. Both conversations started similarly, I was asked about where I was going to school and what program I'm taking. Both times without any hesitation or extra thought about it I proudly explained I was going into psychology and my reasoning behind it being that I discovered the interest while receiving treatment and I want to pursue this career to help others in my previous situation.

It took a few weeks even after sharing my story through this blog but finally, and naturally, I was proudly talking about my battle without any fear of saying too much and embarrassing myself or oversharing and burdening a stranger. Now I am of course not saying you need to go and explain your intimate details to a stranger but rather I want to show that the positives keep coming even with how long I've been fighting and you should be proud of where you came from. Your mental illness is part of you and that's not something to be embarrassed about.

After all, mentally ill doesn't equal mentally weak.