



The View From My Window

~ a personal journey through mental health

by *Jackson Fisher*

Mental health is a weird thing to deal with.

You go through so much on a day-to-day basis battling your illness and even after defeating so much the simplest things can be so difficult. Over the next little while through these blog entries, I will be explaining my life and sharing the battle within it that I've had with mental illness.

By looking back, it becomes obvious that my illness affected most of my life. Despite that now being obvious, I wasn't diagnosed until around my 16th birthday when it was determined I have an anxiety/panic disorder. Now I am 18 so my official battle has been going on for over two years. From very early in the 2+ years I knew I wanted to use my experience to help those in similar situations have an easier time. This blog is the first step for me to do that and yet it has taken me months to sit down and actually start writing. In fact as I begin writing this, it is passed the date I would've liked to have been finished all of it by. Now, finally, underway I am going to tell these stories from my life. Though you may not be able to connect to them all, hopefully you can learn somethings and ultimately, I just want you to have reassurance that the system will be able to help you and strengthen your hope that you will be better someday. After all, only a few years ago I was where you are likely now, scared, feeling hopeless and alone. By reading this series you've already taken the first step to get better because you are looking for help, don't take that lightly, it is a huge step and I am proud of you for doing it.

One thing I've struggled with in planning out how to write this is to not be too specific. I am, among other things, blessed with strong religious faith and an incredibly strong team of doctors. I know not everyone has this and I don't want whomever is reading this to think "this won't work for me" because they don't have the same situation. I am not writing a guidebook on how to survive and you won't be able to follow my process step by step since we are all unique. So, instead I am simply going to tell the stories of my life and hopefully give some personal insight to give you confidence. I've had many people tell me I would make it through my battle but, when at my worse it easy to doubt that because it's their job/responsibility to tell me that. I personally lived and still live with mental illness

so I can first hand promise you it is beatable, it won't be easy but you can and will win the fight.

My first story to share with you is the one I've already started and that is my struggle to actually write this. As I will explain in more detail later, I've gone from happier than ever to crashing to the point where I couldn't leave my house for school and now over the last 2+ years climbed back to being very close to "normal" life. As mentioned from very early on, I wanted to do this to help others yet it has taken so long for me to do it.

Unfortunately, the reason why is not something I can share with you, not because I don't want you to know but because I still am not sure. This is something I have wanted for so long and now I've been given the chance and it is so hard. It makes no sense for this to be something I struggle with and yet I am and that is my initial lesson on your battle. It's unfair and it's not going to make sense, but when you battle mental illness your mind is going to play tricks on you. Struggling with something that we think should be easy is even worse because of the expectations we have made for ourselves. More likely than not during your battle you will struggle with things you think should be easy, leaving my house, doing homework or getting out of bed are just a few that I've had. When this happens it is okay, don't beat yourself up because believe me you're not the only one to feel that way. A tip is to try and focus on the things that shouldn't be easy but you are doing them such as waking up each day despite your illness, it is easier said than done but this is a good way to flip the script.

Ultimately, how you get through your down spells isn't important, the fact that you get through them is. So, no matter what just keep moving, it doesn't matter if you run, walk or crawl and it doesn't matter if you need a long break between steps. As long as you don't give up you will make it through, that much I can promise.