

**minny's
infamous
mood
journal**

September 29, 2010,

Today....

I always come back from my therapy appointments with some type of grand insight into my psyche. I drive home from my therapist's office thinking, wow, I sooo get me. And then it dawns on me, I am just as complex as I was 45 minutes ago, what am I going to do to fix what I perceive to be terribly wrong in my life?

Over the past few months, I have come home from my therapist's office vowing to try yoga, meditation, and even Buddhism but what usually happens is that I settle in, take a deep breath and things stay exactly the same as they were before his 45 minutes of practical advice. However, today I tell myself, today it will be different. I say, today I am a responsible, sensible adult capable of making real changes in my life. I say this as though I am asking myself a question partly because I do sooo get me. There are certain aspects of my personality that are predictable, certain behaviors and moods that are just not ever going to change, right?

So today when my therapist tells me that I have a problem with impulsivity I nod my head in agreement because this is not the first time that I have been made aware of this somewhat annoying character trait within myself, (mental note to change my proclivity toward impulsivity). However, he does point out something that keeps coming back to the top of my list of things to do. I am uncomfortable sitting with my own thoughts. I am uncomfortable just existing. I am uncomfortable with certain emotions and when uncomfortable I try to alleviate those feelings by, well, impulsive and often reckless behavior.

His mantra of the day was that I attempt to solve my problems with problems. I believe he mentioned it twice, which possibly means that it is something that he believes that I should ponder on for a minute or two. So, here's what I got out of that minute or two. Yes, I drink alcohol when I'm stressed, which in turn happily helped me gain 30 pounds and spurred several of my physicians to write "alcoholic" on my medical records. I engage in eating disordered thinking and behavior when I perceive myself to be too fat which generally affects my mood, causes me to have more stress, and yes, drink more alcohol. And yes, unfortunately I get bored often when I find my environment non-stimulating, so I enrolled into college part-time. I tell myself that I require the usage of my brain on a daily basis and that staying home all day with 3 children just isn't enough mental stimulation, hence the need for an additional college degree. However, I am so swamped with raising 3 children and trying to focus long enough on pages and pages of boring Graduate level material that I am pulling my hair out almost hourly.. (more stress, hence, more alcohol). And if I were not busy enough, I decided that I was uncertain about whether or not my family was complete, so I added another baby to the mix due next year.

Oh, say it aint true so I whine, could it be? Could I be solving my problems with problems? It is a reasonable assumption, but what do I do to stop adding problems to my list? My list of things to do and work on is taller than me and I'm approximately 62 inches. What I'd really like to do is physically make a list and then tackle each issue one at a time. Boy wouldn't it be something to be able to someday cross "severe intimacy issues" off the list with a giant red marker? And what about "incapable of self-love" next with double X's as it too bites the dust off of the list. Yep, that is what I

thought about as I pondered for a minute or two today after I left my therapist's office. And now, that minute is up, time for a glass of wine. Indeed. However, I sort of remember him mentioning that wine was a bad idea... oh well. That just goes to show you, real change is truly hard work.

September 30, 2010

Change...

Change is inevitable. Whether we do it on purpose or whether it just comes with age, experience or both. I find that once I turned 35 there were several changes that had occurred within myself. Most notably is the fact that I appear to have a lot less patience than I did in my twenties. I have such a short fuse when it comes to the people that I live with, IVR systems, and customer service representatives from India. I find myself using curse words that I had never used before. Since when was it appropriate for me to yell at perfect strangers and get into a screaming match with a prerecorded computer system? And you know it's pretty bad when your three year old tells you to calm down. I wonder about this slow boil that started years ago but now has come to be a daily eruption for me. I wonder, is it possible to turn it down to a simmer?

A year ago, it was my bright idea to move to a Suburban neighborhood, because I had this fantasy that I would be best friends with my neighbors. We would borrow sugar from each other and have neighborhood cookouts. All of our children would be best friends and life would be wonderful. However, flash forward six months later, I freaking hate Suburbia and if I never see this neighborhood again it will be too soon. First of all, I

have never met any of my neighbors, we have made a fine art of ignoring each other. And they all seem to take turns allowing their dogs to bark incessantly during the day and by God, someone is always mowing their lawn at noon. Noise is simply irritating to me in my late thirties, but it never bothered me a decade ago. So, I ask myself, am I getting old? Is this what old age does to you? Goodness, I'm not even in my 60's yet and I'm a cranky, nagging, complaining old person. Where did my easy going, happy go lucky nature slip off to, is it on some extended vacation? Is there some part of my personality holding it hostage and refusing to set it free? Or is it still a part of me, just buried beneath the last decade of bitterness, depression and pain?

What I have discovered, however, is that most of the changes that I have noticed in myself over the years, although most of them have occurred all of a sudden, have been positive. I am much more skeptical than before, certain of what I want to achieve in the world, and not afraid to admit when I am wrong, (however that seldom happens, me being wrong that is...) For the most part I feel that I am trucking along, learning, living, and moving in the right direction. Of course, that means little because my sense of direction has always been lousy, but that could change.

October 1, 2010

Busy....

As I steam roll through my day I have to ask myself, am I filling my life with busy in an effort to detract from several issues that seem to be high on my imaginary list of things to change about myself and about my life in general? Darn therapist putting thoughts in my mind and making me doubt my own motives for keeping myself overwhelmed and occupied, how dare he! Now I have these questions floating about

that begged to be answered and I keep coming back to one truth, I am soooo busy. I thought that filling my life with a gazillion children would bring me peace, give me a family that I didn't have and help make my life complete. I thought that starting to work on my Master's degree would give me purpose and that it could possibly provide career direction. And I thought that home schooling my teenager would keep him out of trouble and be less stressful than wondering where he had been when he skipped third period. I thought, I thought, I thought so many things that now seem to be, well, questionable.

I thought about what the therapist had been alluding to, and he does have a point. I can't remember when I've taken the time to sit quietly and alone with my own thoughts. I drive from appointment to appointment, and I play the radio. In the brief moments of quiet when I am flipping through radio stations, I run a to do list through my mind, and as I am sitting in various waiting areas, I read magazines or struggle to comprehend my next homework assignment. As my day progresses and I have lectured children all day and fiddled on the Internet for several hours, I take time to cook dinner while multi-tasking chores of the household. After dinner, I then collapse, exhausted, and I lay in front of the television until I drift off into slumber. If I had time away from the computer, the cool new phone, the noisy television, the screaming kids, and the barking dog, I just might discover. what?

My mind is racing, my neighbor is mowing his lawn again and I would love to try this new idea of sitting quietly alone with my own thoughts, but my stomach is growling from skipping my last two meals, I am two days behind on a school project and both children are having a contest over who can cover themselves in the most dirt in the backyard. What will I discover about the stability of my marriage, my new career goals, and my true motives for not being able to sit still and settle down? What answers will

come to me in this exploration of self? I'd love to find out, but for now, unfortunately, I am just too busy.

October 2, 2010

Lonely...

I'm experiencing a new kind of loneliness of late. It has become painfully clear that because of the shenanigans that have occurred during the last 8 years of my life that I am now utterly alone and without friends or family. Sure, I think I may have someone to call who doesn't really know me or my situation due from being out of physical contact with me for many years and I think I could twist someone's arm from church to listen to me whine and moan about life, but what would be the point?

I wish I had known how precious friendship was back when I had that sorta thing in my twenties. I wish I had known that its virtually like playing Russian Roulette when you meet new people, hit or miss, mainly miss as far as hitting it off and becoming BFFs. Why was it easier to procure friendships in my twenties I ponder? Hmm, possibly it was because most of my friends were thrown together with me in a college dorm type situation and we learned to bond, connect, and put up with each other. Oh, do I miss those days.

I find it hard to believe that most people would be able to manage their emotions in some type of stable fashion were they to suffer this type of loneliness. Perhaps if you were madly content with yourself, your solitude and had absolute divine faith in your life's choices, never needing the comfort or guidance of another soul, perhaps that could work. For me life has been a constant drama, never a dull moment do I sit in, and all the while never having partaken in the offered comfort of another. What is it like to go through life experiencing loss after loss, picking yourself up by your bootstraps, falling

down in despair, being lost in complete utter darkness while floating on a cloud by mode of escape? Imagine making all of the most important decisions of your life without guidance or support, bouncing clueless through the motions of marriage and parenthood without a proper point of reference. Boy, have I grown tired of do it yourself, and self-help, well, everything.

This loneliness is deeper than not ever having a mother or a father, although they truly think they were available some way or the other, it's really just not quite the same. For you cannot really exist if you are emotionally or physically unavailable to your child when they require your presence the most. And you cannot really exist if you fail at giving your child their most basic need, physical love, and attention.

I had a therapist once who listened to me for a bit and had me perform the most uncomfortable action. She encouraged me to hug myself and talk to myself as if I were my own parent. At first, I thought, this woman is a lunatic, I am never coming back here again. And then I did as she asked. I closed my eyes and hugged myself and told myself that I was special and lovable and who can remember what else. But through the rain of tears that came from just that one exercise, I wondered. When was the last time I had been hugged and loved, in a non-sexual way? Perhaps this loneliness has followed me for many years, and it goes back further than I can even remember.

This is quite simple I think, how could a person traverse through life suffering as much as I have suffered, feeling as much despair as I have felt, wanting to end my life several times and trying, yet never having had the benefit of experiencing the comfort such a simple thing as a heartfelt hug must bring? How is it possible that I want so much to feel what that must feel like, but at the same time I feel I am better off without such attachments?

I often hear my mother talking to me when I succumb to the lonely feeling. She makes me feel guilty for needing comfort and guidance. Why aren't I happy with my independence? Why would I even need another soul? Hell, I can do everything myself. I don't need you or anybody else. I'm completely fine. I'll manage, and yes, don't need any help from anyone. That was her way and I do appreciate it, sometimes. She's the reason I finished college, baby and all. She's the reason I have my own income although I stay at home with the children. And she's the reason I'm working toward my Master's degree even though I don't think I'll ever need it. Yes, she was influential in many ways; she taught me that depending on anyone was a fatal mistake in that everyone would eventually disappoint you in the end. I grew up with the nothing lasts forever mentality and anything and everyone could be substituted, exchanged, and returned to sender.

When I tried to defy her logic and rebelled during my early college years, I was quickly reminded of her lessons by way of my first broken heart. Gee, she was right I thought. Trust, love, and taking a giant leap of faith is inevitably risky and just too painful to do over and over in one lifetime. Perhaps that would be when I learned to shut off all of my feelings when someone surprisingly hugged me as a welcoming gesture. That could be when it clicked to me that it was better to feel nothing than anything at all. And that could be what triggered those memories of the 7-year-old inside of me who was terribly confused about so many things.

But I have been through this in therapy I tell myself. I am no longer holding onto some crappy childhood memories of sexual molestation, or parental rejection and abandonment. I am perfectly over that, and I am certainly over everything that has gone wrong since. Yes, I am a strong, independent yada yada yada... this line just doesn't work anymore, and I wish I could tell my deceased mother to take back most of this crap she

instilled in my brain. Because the lessons I learned as a child, and those experiences that have branded me deep in my soul, are effectively ruining my life. Lonely much? Nah, I'm too angry to really be lonely, much.

October 3, 2010

Anger...

Anger, that feeling of potentially escalating rage, uncomfortable mood swings that festers deep inside of you coloring your actions and driving you to new heights of passionate irritability. Yes, Anger, I know it well, it is an emotion that I latched onto about 8 years ago. First it was an unrecognizable feeling. I had never really known true anger until that point and the uncertainty of how I would react to it was unsettling.

It was in that moment that I discovered that I could be unpredictable, unmanageable, unrelenting, and dare I say, unstable. Yet what had brought this powerful and terrifying emotion into my sphere of recognition? What had virtually eliminated and crushed my faith in humanity and sent me into a spiraling near decade long depression?

I could say that it was one event, and one moment in time but that would be short sighted. What I suspect is that it was a culmination of events leading up to one moment such that when the unthinkable final straw theoretically broke the camel's back, I lay broken instead. The periodic alcoholism, the deep depression, the eating disorders, the episodic angry outbursts all lead back to one event that I cannot get out of my mind; losing my daughter.

I'd like to say that I've accepted it, 8 years later and in a way I have. I am now 3,000 miles away from those memories, in a direct effort to save myself from wallowing in the pain of what eventually became too unbearable to face. Yet the anger is not assuaged, it lies in wait, threatening to strike when I least expect it.

I spent years actively making myself miserable because I felt that I did not deserve to be happy, but all this did was make me that much more, angry. I lived in beautiful countries, spent time on exotic beaches, yet I could not enjoy the evening sunsets, could not as they say smell the roses, because Anger took residence in my soul.

Each morning I would awake dreading the morning sun because another day was there to remind me that I had lost her. I tried so hard not to feel, practiced cutting off all emotions but the anger was all consuming.

One day I looked in the mirror and realized that I wasn't me anymore. All I could see in my once pleasant and jovial smile was Hate. I could remember a girl, so full of love for life and everyone in it. She could smile and feel joy even though her world was falling apart. It was easy to have faith that despite occasional hiccups and bumps in the road, everything would be alright. She was the most positive person I had ever known, because in the face of adversity she clung to Hope and that Hope had always pulled her through.

Where oh where did she go? How is it possible that the girl I used to know, and love has such anger and hate in her eyes?

Hate.. a cancerous type of dedicated emotion borne out of directed anger.

One day I woke up and discovered that I hated myself. The symptoms were clear enough to make the diagnosis. I hated the fact that I made such huge mistakes in life, and it cost me the ability to raise my daughter. I hated the fact that I had hoped and had such a big kind of faith in the world and my purpose in it, that I was totally broken into a million pieces when taken down. But what I hated most of all was that I had loved so deeply in the first place, loved someone so strongly that I was convinced the only answer for

relieving the pain of that loss was to die.

When would I be done punishing myself for failing her? When would I stop the cycle of self-abuse and self-loathing? Do you know how much energy it takes to truly hate? Sooner or later, it becomes second nature. You catch yourself in a moment of enjoyment and it feels so uncomfortable that you instantly stop. You stop because hate has convinced you that you are not truly owing of that type of reality. You are not allowed to take a break from being miserable, remember?

About a year ago, Anger and Hate took a little unplanned vacation. I think it was a sort of temporary sanity that washed over me. I decided that I deserved to be happy. Oh, my goodness, where did that come from? When were Anger and Hate coming back? This is just crazy talk. Somehow, I got it into my head that I needed to accept the loss of my daughter, physically speaking. I would never be able to guide her through life, or have a say in her day-to-day activities. I needed to, as some would say, get over it and move on. Was that possible? Could I create a life for my remaining children and myself without having to see Anger and Hate on a daily basis?

It was something I had to do. The small part of myself that had survived Anger and Hate's reign over my spirit had successfully gained control over a new decision. I would travel 3000 miles in search of happiness and self-love. But where did that leave Anger and Hate? Well, they came back from vacation, tanned, relaxed, renewed and ready for battle. I see them from time to time when I slip up and forget that I am vulnerable to their threat. Heck, I am quite sure I see them now. They are keeping me up nights, wearing down my defenses, beckoning me to surrender the fight. And when my shields are down and I take just one second to ponder on why I feel so upset at life, Anger slips inside my heart and says, "So, remember me, because I remember you and we have

work to do."

October 5, 2010

Forgiveness....

Yesterday while flipping through the radio stations in the car and neglecting to remember that I wanted to abandon that habit, at least temporarily I came upon a topic that I usually try to avoid at all costs, forgiveness. Isn't that something that Buddhas, good Christians and monks practice? Wait, no, it's something like turning the other cheek, ridding yourself of bad thoughts, and letting things slide like water off of a duck's back. Hmm.. perhaps it's about not allowing others' actions, comments or behavior to affect your temperament or alter your perception of life as you know it.

Well then, I must practice forgiveness all the time I think and here I thought I didn't know the meaning of the word. Just because I forgive you for being a total, complete, waste of time and breath doesn't mean that I'm ever going to speak to you again. And even if I do speak to you again, it doesn't mean that things will ever, ever be the same before you ever so slightly offended me. But I forgive you; I just kinda hold a silent grudge against you.

Grudge... feelings of distrust, reluctance, and unwillingness to truly forgive.. a bold triumphant fight against admitting that people are indeed human and make mistakes.

So maybe I'm not getting the whole forgiveness thing after all, because that would require a complete lowering of my defenses. And once that defense mechanism has been instituted, it's a Fort Knox of sorts, and there is no way you are getting in the building ever again.

So, I started to wonder, why do I hold grudges? And why are they piling up on a somewhat frequent basis? When did this start? Why do I constantly shut down and shut out people and then complain that there's nobody there for me?

Something somewhere within me says that Grudge is good, Grudge is safe, and of course, Grudge knows best. For surely if you have hurt me in the past, you will certainly do it again, and again, and again. So, I trust Grudge. Grudge has kept me from loving any man with my whole heart. It has kept me from even knowing how to say the words, I'm sorry. It has cradled me through many storms by convincing me that Trust does not protect you in case of fire. Grudge flatters me by telling me that strength comes not by submission, but by fight. Grudge has never betrayed me, but Trust has.

Trust had me snowed for about a half a second, a second that burned me for a lifetime. Grudge, however, is a band aid, aloe vera that I apply every 4 to 6 hours. Grudge promises that those burns will eventually fade and heal, if only I continue not to forgive.

October 7, 2010

Pain....

While driving home from the doctor's office with a sore ass, I thought about the pain. How frustrating that I have to go in there once a week and receive an injection of progesterone on the side of my ass.. man it really hurts after the shot and is sore for days. Then I have to go do it all over again. Ouch.

As I am rubbing my ass, while trying to avoid pedestrians in the road, the pain intensifies, and I whine and moan but mostly I suck it up. It doesn't hurt nearly half as much as some of the other pain I've had to endure over the last few years of my life.

Physical pain is something that I can ignore even if the intensity is nearly unbearable for the average person to endure. I think they call it having a high pain tolerance. Yes, physical pain, I can tolerate, it's the emotional pain that seems to almost cripple me.

Disappointment...the realization that you are not going to get what you want, a letdown, blatant reality at its best.

I can remember being disappointed when my father didn't come home one day. It would be the beginning of many disappointments. His abandonment started a powerful chain reaction in my life, much like that of a line of dominoes. I used to love playing dominoes, but most of all I loved the idea of how just touching one could start them all falling down. I could do that for hours. Build them up, knock em down. Build them up, then knock em down! I think there was an actual game that you were supposed to play with them, but I never learned, just wanted to play with them like blocks.

After dominoes I discovered that I could stack my grandmother's playing cards on top of each other and make little houses with them. Oh, how I loved to just blow them down like the big bad wolf and the three little pigs. I would get so upset if they fell down before I got to steam roll them with my hands. Maybe I just like wrecking something that was so organized and intact because chaos seemed like so much fun. Or maybe I just wanted to see what was so fun was about taking something that was once perfect and blowing it up to smithereens.

So, when the big bad wolf of life blew my pretty little house down, and I was left laying shell shocked in the smithereens, I couldn't help wondering... would things ever be the same again?

I was so busy being disappointed and sad about missing my daddy that I didn't realize that I was homeless. I had no idea that I was hungry and cold. And how could I have known that the mother that I had trusted and loved was neglectfully leaving me in the care of those who had been continuously abusing me? I was only seven, and then eight, and then wow, fifteen. Time had slipped by like a thief in the night, so quietly stealing valuables from me so that I had no idea what had happened until I had nothing of value left.

But that was years ago and now the disappointments of yesterday no longer seem to matter. Heck, I'm so overwhelmed with the disappointments of today that yesterday's letdowns are but a fleeting thought. That is where the controversy comes in. Is there some lesson that I failed to learn from the past that could help me today?

Chaos... a disorganized mess of activity.

When I think of my life, I usually equate it to being a bit chaotic, ok, honestly, it's really really chaotic. I can't keep a schedule if someone paid me to and I am impulsive to a fault. I marvel at women who can plan their family dinner menus each week because I can't even stick to Friday pizza night. I'm surprised when I can remember doctor appointments and I go to bed each night wondering what it was I forgot to do the day before. Yet even though I don't plan my life around a schedule, I completely and totally flip out when others try to get me to do something at the last minute. Note to self, work on being flexible...

Sometimes I think that I would benefit from having a bit more organization in my life, some type of structure to soothe away the chaos. After all, chaos ceased being fun a long time ago, actually 3 kids and one divorce ago. I now long to fit in line with the other

dominoes, standing tall, straight, and still. But Disappointment keeps knocking me down. It just takes but one domino out of line to throw my whole day out of whack and then a week or so it takes of struggling to get back in line. Oh yeah, I'm a chaotic mess, problem is, I secretly enjoy it that way.

I often get a glimpse of myself at my therapist's office or when I'm reading self-help books. I think, hey, this is a person I'd love to get to know better; maybe I can rescue her from herself. Of course, I'm a bit intimidated by the complexity and intensity of my nature and trying to get past Anger, Hate and Grudge seems like a mission impossible.

However, I do know that I will never be able to withstand Disappointment's morning domino play if I don't at least tackle the chaos and sideline the pain, even if temporarily.

October 9, 2010

Bitterness....

I'd like to blame the pregnancy hormones, or lack of sleep, or my close friends Anger, Hate and Grudge, but I think Bitterness is to blame today. I want to throw myself onto my bed, shove my head under the blankets and have what they call a good cry. I want to sob away the disappointment and the pain and have someone whisper to me that everything will be alright. I want to be weak and pathetic and blow my nose, cry a bit more and wallow in the betrayal that I am feeling right now. But Bitterness won't let me.

Bitterness.... disappointment, anger, pain hate, and grudge having a pity party.

Sometimes I feel like I have multiple personality disorder. I mean, my mood

swings are as dramatic as depicted in the movie "Sybil". This could be why I don't recognize myself in most of the things that I do and say. This could encompass the so-called, "complexity" of my nature. I am just too many emotions personified at any one given moment in time. So, I go day by day in my quest to understand and figure it all out.

Today I recognize that Bitterness is experiencing a major power trip over all of the emotions that I own. Bitterness refuses to let me cry when I need to. Bitterness tells me that to cry about anything relinquishes power and where would I be without my power? Why should I have to face feeling powerless, that is where pain and disappointment come in. Bitterness takes everything that comes at me and passes it on to Anger, Hate and Grudge, which they in turn hand over to Fear.

Fear.. apprehensive reticence, sometimes paranoid abstinence of responding or acting.

Fear clutters my mind with confusion and chaos, and they play musical chairs all day long making me dizzy and exhausted. It's sort of the feeling of not knowing whether you are coming or going, literally. However, I've grown so used to this feeling that quiet makes me uneasy, resting and sitting alone with my own thoughts is, well, frightening.

What could I possibly discover in the quietness about myself that Hate has not already told me about? What is Bitterness hiding from me by refusing to let me cry? And what would happen to life as I know it if I learned to forgive and gave up Grudge? Could I survive without Anger and live with Fear?

I keep Fear close by as a reminder because it is Fear that I despise the most. Fear sits in the back of my mind, waiting, waiting to take Anger's place. It's that emotion that.

cradles you when you're truly happy. It hangs out on the sidelines waiting for a sneak attack play when Joy and Peace are tackling stress and hardship. It makes a winning move when you find yourself clinging to life, clinging to anything you hold dear. Fear bullies your best cheerleaders and makes such a raucous that it can get you off your game. But I don't ignore it, I want Fear to know that I'm not allowing it in the game, even though it has front row seats.

Anger pushes Fear around, gags and ties it up, and keeps a pretty good hold over it most of the time. And for reinforcement, Bitterness will join in, rough Fear up some more until Fear is but a distant emotion in the back of my mind. To tell you the truth, I forget about Fear most days and it's on my list of things to do, barring Fear from obtaining anymore tickets to my games. Although, some unknown emotion keeps slipping it season passes, more than likely, Shame.

Bitterness has me thoroughly convinced that if I allow Fear to take over, I will be paraded by what ifs. What if I tell him how I really feel, and he rejects me? What if I confess that I need him, and he leaves me? What if I tell Anger to take a hike, drop kick Hate, Bitterness and Grudge but I am left with only disappointment and pain? What if I figure out where Happiness, Joy and Peace are hiding, but chaos, fear and loneliness continuing scoring home runs?

I feel like I lose the game either way and Anger has the most trophies. This could be why I have been sitting out for most of the season, shoveling popcorn and hotdogs in my face, wondering where all the cheerleaders have gone. I can't remember the score half the time, but I'm pretty sure that if I ever want to play again, I'm going to have to first figure out how to sweeten old Bitterness.

October 12, 2010

Impatience....

Today on my way to the Rheumatologist's office I remembered that I wanted to practice sitting in silence. That meant that I could skip being annoyed because I can't find a radio station that I like, and I could just enjoy the quiet. I thought about how I couldn't sleep the night before, again, wondered how long that would last. I thought about how frustrating it was that there was frost on my car windows in October. I thought about what I would do while I was left waiting in the doctor's office, studying for class. And finally, I thought about whether or not I was making a wise decision in moving 3,000 miles back to the east coast. Wait.. I thought that I was supposed to be trying to avoid running a to do list through my mind. But I realized that I just can't do it, quiet my mind that is. I almost turned the radio back on but resisted. There were things that I needed to figure out, decisions that needed to be made and in order to gain some clarity; I would need to sift through the chaos.

Impatience... inability to wait, the desire to have things happen sooner as opposed to later.

Impatience has been wooing me for quite some time. It is that dogged compulsion of mine to know NOW, act NOW, change it NOW, solve it NOW. Impatience is best friends with Impulsivity, my other long-time suitor. Thus, having these two devotees

hanging on my every thought, my reaction time to almost everything in my world is hasty and often irrational. I don't get the concept of counting to 10 before you blow your top. I don't understand taking a deep breath, and thinking before you speak. Maybe it all comes back down to being able to quiet the mind, soothe the chaos, and be at peace. Hmm.. interesting concept. Mental note to work on that.

Impulsivity... a response without much thought or preparation, a whim.

When it comes to making a decision, my M-O or mode of operandum is to act on emotion. I often subscribe to the theory that your gut is always the right way to go, a sort of follow your heart type of mantra. Although once I hit the age of 36 I have begun to appreciate taking things a little slower when major decisions are involved. Like in the case of this decision to move back east. I think that I made the best decision at the time to move to the west coast in the first place. After all, I have aging in laws in California and wanted my husband and children to be able to visit them more frequently. I was convinced that the quality of life was somehow superior to the options I had on the east coast, and I wanted to break away from all of the bad memories there and find myself. Ah, finding myself, the eternal quest. But what I really need to do before I can find myself is, excavate.

As I am leaving the Rheumatologist's office, my thoughts are on the go once again. I start thinking about what I need from the grocery store. I forget that I needed to go the post office and I make two phone calls home to see if the house is still in one piece. I become so busy thinking about errands once again that I never did get around to enjoying any type of silent brain activity. I begin to wonder, is it even possible?

Whenever I watch people on television meditating or lying in the sun at the beach, I marvel at them. How relaxed they seem, and how motionless. Maybe its Impatience and Impulsivity that won't allow me to sit still, have a quiet moment, or experience the calmness and rejuvenation of peace. Boy, do I need to dump those two. But that is easier said than done when you're involved in a relationship that is as complex as mine is with them.

Sometimes I try to abate their effect in my life by second guessing myself. Because I know that I tend to act irrationally when I am under their influence, I don't trust myself in most situations. I wonder, do I really want to divorce my husband or is that Impatience talking? Do I really want to move back east or is that Impulsivity again? What I now do to sort out the confusion is to ask myself one question. Is there any rational reason for making this decision? If I can answer in the affirmative, then I am on the right path and I don't totally discount my choices.

So here I am again, attempting to make adult decisions that bear some semblance of responsibility. The decisions that I make don't just affect me, they affect my children, all four and soon to be five of them. I don't feel capable or up to the task. I have reached a point in my life where I'm about to just give up, give in to all of the emotions that are taking over and ruling my every waking decision. If they win, I will just hang out in limbo, moving towards the direction of the strings attached to me like Pinocchio except in cases where I am just too impatient to wait for the little tug of theirs and I sprint forward into the dark abyss of chaos.

October 14, 2010

Avoidance...

Today I skipped my progesterone shot. Heck, I can go tomorrow. I also skipped an appointment with a nutritionist counselor. My ob-gyn thinks that I'm starving my fetus. I then considered dropping out of school, calling in sick to my job motherhood and I wanted to erase everything else that I had penciled in for today. Finally, I thought I'd top the day off by taking the night off from cooking dinner. Hell yeah, dialing the phone and ordering delivery sounds like heaven to me. Yep, today was a big score for avoidance and if I could avoid reflecting on how this is affecting my life, I would.

When I was seven, I learned to become a master at hiding my emotions. It seemed so much easier for me to smile than to cry in plain sight. If something were bothering me, I would just push it in the back of my mind and focus on something more pleasant. I became so practiced at avoiding troubling emotions that it became like second nature. But what I didn't know was that I was only postponing the inevitable.

Of course, I would remember all of the things I had forgotten and of course I would have to experience fear, doubt, dread and sadness, sooner or later. But still, I kept hold of Avoidance, at least I could decide when I was ready to deal with reality. So, for today, I am at it again, putting everything on hold that I can possibly think of.

I often remind myself that if I were not pregnant, things would be so much worse. Avoidance is best served with a pint of vodka, and a few narcotic pills for good measure. For the last few years, I have bounced back and forth from alcoholic to bulimic both habits completely consuming my every waking thought. Who has time to relish in the

pain of loss when there is so much food to throw up? And who has time to be cognizant of a bad marriage, or bratty kids when you're passed out drunk? Yes, Avoidance, I know it well, and it is as comforting as chocolate. The only problem with chocolate is that if you eat too much of it, you may develop a bellyache, or at the very least, a few extra pounds.

October 16, 2010

Vengeance....

So, my husband informs me that he is going on an elk hunt and it will cost an annoying amount of money. He explains that it is something that any avid hunter would strive to accomplish, shooting and butchering this unsuspecting animal. I don't get it; no, I really don't get it. It's not that I don't want to get rid of him for 2 whole weeks, and it's not that I begrudge him some superfluous pleasure in life.. hmm.. wait.. perhaps that IS it. I begrudge him but why? Oh, let me count the ways....

A few years ago, I met my husband online, we fell in love and all hell broke loose. This was before anger, hate, and grudge had ever stepped foot onto the playing field. Sure, I was doused with disappointment and pain, but fear was on an extended sabbatical. For a brief moment I believed that a happy ending was owing to me and therein lay my downfall. I had forgotten everything that my mother had taught me, how to be suspicious, how to doubt that which is seemingly without fault, and most of all how to believe in myself. I blame this temporary memory loss and transient naivety on my love lust relationship with my then boyfriend, current husband.

Blame... attaching fault, attributing an originating source to an event.

I blame my husband for losing my daughter eight years ago. For had I not been so blindsided by his charms and promises, I would have realized that I was fighting a losing battle. Of course, I blame myself as well for every single mistake that I made all of those years ago, but I have anger, hate and grudge to carry out vengeance upon myself. Where does that leave my poor confused husband? Well, he's in the path of bitterness, and I haven't figured out a way to rescue him just yet.

Vengeance.... committing some act due to perceived harm.

I commit acts of vengeance against my husband almost daily, possibly even hourly. How dare he tempt me for any amount of time into forgetting everything that I learned as a child, and all of the lessons that stuck with me during my teen years. What right did he have to promise me, anything? Because when everything fell apart and my vindictive ex-husband won the exclusive right to raise my daughter, I was left remembering. I remembered that hope was a lie, that romantic love was sunglasses often worn at night and that I should never have depended on anyone else but myself. Hate tells me that I will never love my husband again; grudge and bitterness swear that I will never forgive him, and anger has forbidden kindness and compassion to ever intercede in his defense.

Anger, hate and grudge had a drunken party one night and after a few too many beers invited vengeance and bitterness to the party to stay. And I have not been able to

like my husband ever since. So, when he tells me that he wants to blow off for two weeks to hunt, to relax or to do anything, I pause. Vengeance slips in, takes over, causes a storm of reaction and action that all revolve around Envy. For my husband cannot possibly enjoy peace, happiness, or calm. He has no right to forget even for one moment that I begrudge him. And he is certainly not owing of any sort of happy ending in this lifetime or the next. Because Grudge is unrelenting, Anger, Hate and Bitterness are joined at the hip against him, and vengeance is theirs.

October 18, 2010

Shame...

My relationship with both of my daughters is strained. My eleven-year-old refuses to communicate with me, a problem I had not expected until her now pre-teen years. And my three-year-old is that fly you have attempted to swat from in front of your face a multitude of times, but it keeps coming back only to buzz in your ear. I feel that I am incapable of being a good mother to either of them and for this I feel shame.

Shame.. regret, humiliation, an unavoidable painful truth

When my daughter Skylar was born in 1999, it was the most joyous day of my life. She was the one I had hoped for, prayed for and longed for, my very own little girl. All I could think about was pink dresses and little hair bows. I wanted to have the relationship with her that I had never seemed to be able to achieve with my own mother. Every time I looked at her, I remembered that she was a gift, in exchange for the one that I had lost.

Just a year before her birth I had suffered a stillbirth, and the disappointment and pain was unbearable. I believe that the stress and the trauma of that event is when the biology of my already untenable brain evolved for the worse.

I had always struggled with Clinical Depression throughout the years. I can remember wanting to die before the age of 10. I had temper tantrums alone in my bedroom that left several items broken on the floor. I cried for hours at a time, and I was never really happy. Of course, I had concrete reasons for being depressed as a child. My father had been imprisoned and my mother was an angry alcoholic. The depression is also understandable considering I was sexually molested for a time period of five straight years, physically and emotionally abused by my mother and often homeless throughout my teen years. So, depression, I won't define, because for me, it is all too clear.

The year 1999 would eventually be wiped from my memory. Skylar was born in January and the rest of that year is a blur of depression, suicide attempts and something new called bipolar disorder.

Bipolar Disorder... erratic, inability to regulate emotions, extreme thoughts and behavior

I would have expected Postpartum Depression to occur after the birth of Skylar because that I had heard about. However, some disorder in which you switched between depression and mania, WTF? I doubted the diagnosis; I even stopped taking the medication that was prescribed. I knew some mistake had occurred. Why? Because all of my extended family members told me so. I wasn't Bipolar, I was just stressed, and I needed to get on a schedule or follow a routine. I didn't need medication; I needed daycare and maid service. Made perfect sense to me.

Shame crept into my thoughts in 1999 and convinced me that I was broken. I could not be repaired, and all warranties had expired. Actually, Shame touted the bold fact that I was on the human recall list. With all of this in mind I could sit back and play the avoidance game, it was safer that way. There were so many emotions that I did not want to confront that I decided to take the year off and let chaos take over.

When I awoke it was January 2000 and Skylar was celebrating her 1st birthday. I realized that I did not recall her first steps, could not remember her first words and frankly, could not remember much of anything. I felt a certain guilt each time I looked at Skylar, but I knew that not for one moment had I ever stopped loving her. She wore the smile that I had lost, and she contained that old elusive Joy that I had felt the day that she was born. Sometimes I thought that if I held her tightly enough, some of her energy would rub off onto me. She was a lifeline back to reality, the path to my happy ending. I suppose this could be why losing her resulted in completing losing myself. I wasn't just asleep this time, I was awake, but had become something I didn't recognize.

This evolution of character complicates my relationship with Ava. She was the baby girl that I had planned for. I never intended to replace Skylar, but my heart was still aching despite giving birth in 2006 to a boy, Noah. I just wanted the ache to go away but it never did, it just ached worse. When Ava was born in 2007, I struggled with feelings of detachment and an inability to bond with her. I thought, what on earth is wrong with me, no wonder I'm on the human recall list. I can't even love my own child. I was actually annoyed by Ava; she didn't feel like my baby. How could I fix this problem? Would it last forever?

Over time I attempted to understand my feelings toward her. Was it that every time that I look at Ava, I see Skylar? Is it because every time that I brush Ava's hair, I see Skylar's hair? And is it because every time that I adorn Ava with pretty dresses and bows in her hair, I ache for Skylar? Am I still hanging on to those feelings of disappointment and pain, the heartbreaking loss of Skylar?

I had this vision that even though I could not raise Skylar as a full-time parent, I could at least have a close phone relationship with her. We would write letters to one another; swap poetry and we could be best friends as she got older. I would make myself available by video chat, I could offer advice about boys and fashion, and I would have some influence in her life. Sadly though, this didn't happen. Skylar is dogged by feelings of depression, and I have been shut down and shut out of her life. I have no control over what happens in that relationship because I can't force her to talk to me. And if I lived next door to her, I could not force her to see me. The only thing that I do have control over is how much shame I allow in on a daily basis.

Shame is Fear's adoring sidekick, they are the villains in a war with Peace and Joy. Shame says that I should turn myself in and call in my chips because I'm not good enough to win this game. I feel as though I stink at motherhood, and I feel as though I am so worthless that I am bound to fail. Shame says it's my fault that Skylar is depressed, it's my fault she won't talk to me and it's my fault that she doesn't have a mother. Shame plays dirty and hits way below the belt. Shame tells me that even if I were to somehow rid myself of it that Fear would be left behind. Fear is a permanent fixture at the game, because even if Joy and Peace win a few times, there is no guarantee that a devastating loss will never occur.

October 19, 2010

Obsession....

The funny thing about having an eating disorder is that it never really seems to go away. Ok, so actually there is nothing really funny about an eating disorder. Even though I can logically tell myself that it absolutely makes no sense to obsess over calories, especially when I'm pregnant, it comes back to who's in charge. If I can vanquish any and all emotion during the food selection and eating process, then I can usually escape obsession.

Obsession... a merry go round of one thought or idea so incessantly that the only escape is to give in and ride it out.

The eating disorder came out of nowhere and I am not even sure that it was initially about losing weight. Perhaps it was something that could take my mind off of court dates and visitation schedules. I could count calories instead of the days before my next visitation date with Skylar. I could spend 10 hours a day avoiding food instead of facing my fears.

Before I knew it I had whittled down to a slim 115 pounds. But then something strange happened. I still thought that I was fat. My clothes were falling off, I had chest pains from low potassium levels, and I could barely garner the energy to lift my head up most days. The eating disorder had gotten so out of control that I was refusing to drink water. I didn't like the bloated feeling that I got when I drank any liquids. Oh, it was insane. But I was obsessed. Eventually my then boyfriend became aware of this condition and attempted to force me to eat. I didn't want to eat, I wanted to lose 5 more pounds. However, in an effort to appease him I would have chicken and rice for dinner,

or a half a sandwich for lunch. I knew that I had to eat something, and I wanted to show him that I was trying. Yet in the end, each time that I completed eating a portion of my lunch or dinner, I would escape upstairs to my private bathroom, and purge.

Purging is a gross and nasty disgusting act. Sticking my fingers down my throat until I vomited up stomach acid was exhausting. I had gotten to the point where I was purging at least 10 times a day, for about 30 minutes each time. The toll this habit took on my body was obvious, but the emotional setback would be permanent.

Slowly I began to gain weight as I gave up anorexia, but what took anorexia's place was just as deadly, alcohol. I didn't take my first drink until I was 19. My first sexual relationship had ended badly, and my heart was broken, ok being honest, he raped me and stole my virginity against my will. So even though I had promised myself that I would not ever indulge in my mother's bad habit, I faltered. I began drinking like I had been an experienced drinker. When I almost died of alcohol poisoning in 1994 that didn't even put a pause in my game. I just figured that one slight error in judgment could be remedied and made a mental note that 15 shots of vodka in a fifteen-minute time period was a bad idea for someone who only weighed 110 pounds.

Ten years later I found myself in a scary predicament, not only was I drinking alcohol obsessively, but I also had acquired a full-blown case of Bulimia. I discovered that I could temporarily numb the pain by spending 12-15 hours of the day that I was awake, eating, purging or shooting hard liquor. I knew that I was killing myself slowly but somehow, it wasn't fast enough.

Obsession has a way of infiltrating my every thought especially when all of my emotions are out wreaking havoc on my life. It comes to me when I am most vulnerable, when I am trying to make good solid decisions. Obsession tells me that food is my enemy,

and that skinny is better than fat. And while I can recognize that there is so much more to me on the inside than what I weigh, I fail. I fail because Rebellion and Impulsivity say binge, you deserve comfort food, Shame and Fear say purge what you did was wrong, now you're going to be terribly fat. Anger and Hate criticize me for being weak in the first place until I feel so diminished, the cycle starts all over again.

But for now, I am pregnant and I am eating. I am fat, in my opinion, really fat and it's ok. It is about the only time in my life that I can guarantee that Patience is gently holding my hand. Patience says that February is just a stone's throw away, I can be here until then, but I know that no matter how hard I fight to stay, obsession will win in the end.

October 26, 2010

Rebellion...

As a child I was not often rebellious. I did what I was told, and I never questioned my mother's authority. Even when there was no rhyme or reason for my mother's disciplinary tactics, I would suck it up, roll my eyes when she was not looking and without argument, do as I was told. Of course, I had fantasies of running away like most teenagers my age, because my mother was just impossible to live with. I wanted to run away, far away. I just didn't have the means to survive on my own and I had no idea where I would go.

When I left my mother's reign and went to college, Rebellion found me a willing participant. I had no idea what type of trouble I could get into if I allowed Rebellion to tempt me, but I would soon find out. Not only did I rebel against keeping my virginity until marriage ok so that totally wasn't completely my doing, but I also ditched my vow to never indulge in sinful intoxicating pleasures. I woke up one day in a pool of my own

urine in someone else's bed wondering where my innocence had gone. I was a confused and pathetic mess, and the worst part was, I had no intention of changing.

When I look back upon those early young adult years, I see someone in desperate need of guidance and direction. I had landed in college and into a world of temptations and distractions, but without a firm foundation of how to manage them all responsibly. I sometimes feel that way now even though I am in my mid-thirties; confused, lost, pathetic, and hopeless. Did I ever find that firm foundation that I so desperately needed? Did I ever find the guidance and support to steer me in the right direction? And if I had, would I have all of the answers or would I just be able to juggle the problems more efficiently?

Rebellion... going against convention, breaking the rules.

On the days that I see Rebellion are the days that I struggle the most with Fear. I am curiously compelled to listen to my rebellious thoughts, but I am afraid that I am being childish. If I were to listen to Rebellion, I would be packing my bags for parts unknown and driving off into the sunset, leaving behind, everyone and everything. I catch myself at least once a month pushing off Rebellion with Reason. I cannot dump my Schizophrenic Oppositional Defiant Disordered son into the foster care system because I made him a promise when he was born to protect and love him always. Even though I pluck gray hairs out one by one and blame him intensely for my rapidly aging process, I know that I owe him the possibility of having his mother stick by him. I know that I cannot give into Rebellion because I am his mother, whether I love, like it or not.

But because Rebellion remains in the company of such cantankerous emotions such as Anger, Hate, Grudge, Bitterness, and Shame, my thoughts are generally geared toward rebelling against any and all solutions reasonable. I don't want to follow the rules

or adhere to the fine print and most certainly I refuse to live up to any type of burdensome expectation. I want to be free of restraints, make decisions without limitations, and most of all, I really don't want guidance or advice. This is Rebellion at its best. I say that I am a lost confused mess, and that I lack support and direction. But when it comes right down to it, if support, guidance and direction were handed to me on a silver platter, Fear and Rebellion would push it away and Anger, Hate, Bitterness and Grudge would bury it six feet underground.

My goodness I would have to be able to trust in order to accept such things from anyone and I'm still recovering from the last time I was burned by Trust. So, considering I have enough disappointment and pain in my life to last several lifetimes, I rebel. I rebel against love, joy, peace, and happiness. I rebel against God, goodness and sanity. But most of all I rebel against myself.

If I had to be honest with myself, I would change that idea I have of myself as a little girl, never rebelling, and always doing what I was told. I would remember that as Depression grew stronger, Rebellion was gaining a strong and steady foothold. I'd often lie, cheat, steal and break the dress code rules at Catholic school. If I wanted to wear black nail polish but the rules clearly stated that any nail polish should be clear, I'd wear black anyway. And heck, I was seldom where my mother thought I was. If she forbade me from hanging out with someone she felt was a bad influence on me, I'd be sure to be extra careful with my alibi when I left the house. Because I was definitely going where my mother told me not to go. So, in retrospect, yeah I guess Rebellion was always there, tempting me to be bad, daring me to be irresponsible.

For now, I keep Rebellion in perspective with Fear. Fear tells me that if I listen to Rebellion just one more time without Reason's influence the end result could be too

overwhelming to bounce back from. Rebellion told me 8 years ago that only drug addicts and prostitutes lost their children to husbands in custody disputes. Rebellion promised me that if I fought hard with Vengeance I would eventually win. I believed Rebellion was honest, but in reality, it was really my own way of rallying against conventional wisdom, it was a lie.

I often recognize Rebellion when I'm having a bad day. I feel the need to drink wine when I'm not supposed to. I feel an urge to pop pills in an effort to numb my mind into quietness. I want to run, drive, and catch a plane to anywhere. I want to leave everyone and everything behind so that I can lay on a beach somewhere, soak up Anger and Hate like sunshine, surf on waves of Bitterness and Grudge, go fishing for Shame and Fear, and float away from reality on a raft named Apathy.

October 30, 2010

Petulance....

I find myself in the company of Petulance on a somewhat daily basis. My children and my husband, the weather, my weight on the scale, all things seem to cause Petulance to rise within me. Not only do I spend my days giving in to being annoyed, I spend sleepless nights having deep thought filled conversations with my friend Petulance.

Petulance... irritability, impatience, a state of being bothered

I have often attempted to rid myself of Petulance because I recognize that I am spending far too much time being irritated rather than complacent. I remind myself that toddlers will be toddlers, that men will be men and that teenagers will be teenagers. I try to convince myself that numbers on a scale are not the exact sum or worth of myself as a

person and that the weather is just such a trivial thing to be annoyed about. I have yoga and meditation on my list of things to do in an effort to lessen Petulance's influence on me, but Avoidance keeps nudging me on to other more important projects. A few days ago, I sat down to listen to a subliminal relaxation DVD but with Impatience and Petulance on my shoulders I could not sit still long enough to comprehend the simple instructions on how to relax. After about 10 minutes Doubt entered my mind, causing paranoia about the subliminal messages I was allegedly receiving. I thought, I have enough going on in my brain right now, what if these subliminal messages screw me up worse than I already am?! My mind remained unquiet, restless, impatient, and ready to move on to something else. Doubt began to grow as Hopelessness set in. Thus, I have grown petulant with life, with myself, and I doubt that I even know how to overcome this problem.

Doubt... uncertainty, skepticism, disbelief...

When I was a little girl, I had one wish. That wish was to have a family. I wanted a mother and a father, and I was convinced that if I had that, everything would be normal and complete. Each time that I watched television shows like the Cosby Show or the Brady Bunch I would sit in my bedroom alone and dream. For if I could not have this family that I so yearned for as a child, then one day I would create one. My children would not sit for hours alone in their rooms being ignored; they would not be yelled at or emotionally or physically abused. My children would have two functional and capable parents who loved them unconditionally and thought of only their needs. They would be happy, and I would be fulfilled.

After the birth of each one of my children, Doubt seeped in and began to work within me so diligently that for a long time it was the only thing that I believed in. All of

my moods seemed to work together in concert to bolster Doubt's strength, because when in Doubt, almost nothing is certain. Love is fleeting, happiness is a dream within a dream, and promises were made to be broken. Needless to say, my children don't yet recognize that I am failing them as a mother, but Petulance prevents me from showing them otherwise.

Petulance tells me that I am cranky and agitated even without Reason. Petulance taught me the word, "sucks" because Petulance says that everything and everyone truly does suck, and stink, and as a girlfriend in college used to say, "suck blue whale". I believe everything that Petulance tells me because Doubt says what if you're wrong? What if I'm wrong that deep down inside I am a happy, patient, and caring person? What if I level out all of the moods that are controlling my life and I find nothing but an empty half eaten shell? Doubt tells me that these moods have become me and protect me from emotional harm. Doubt summons Fear to prompt Paranoia within me so that I wonder, who would I be without Anger, Hate, Bitterness, and Grudge? Because without them I had Trust, Hope and Faith, yet still they failed to stop the disappointment and pain.

As a child, I ignored Doubt because Faith was so strong and overwhelming. It was a comforting bright light that soothed me during times of traumatic events. It erased my memories of childhood misery and it promised me that even when I felt alone I was cared for and cherished by God. I often see Faith on rare occasions when I go to Church. It tiptoes in quietly and all of the other moods bow down for just an instant. My breath slows and for a moment I find it hard to breathe because I realize that I am finally able to cry. I am crying because I remember what Joy, Peace and Happiness feel like together, without any conflicting emotions interrupting their dance. I begin to think that perhaps if I just keep Faith, and nothing else, everything good will surely follow.

I have struggled to keep Faith from slipping away for a while now each time that I see it near, but it is just out of reach. For my hands are bound by Reluctance and Avoidance. And as most things fall prey to my list of things to do, reaching out to Faith is just penciled in, ready to be erased or rescheduled at any given moment. But somehow, I believe that Faith is patient, that all I will have to do is ask and then receive. Perhaps one day Faith will reign once again, sitting atop Joy, Peace and Hope, if only Fury would stop erasing their footprints in my life, making them hard to find.

November 1, 2010

Restraint...

I thought about my approach all weekend. I wanted to be understanding of someone else's point of view and I wanted to show a smidgeon of respect for it. But I promised myself that I would not budge, and my decision was final. I arrived at my obstetrician's office ready for battle, albeit a minor scrimmage. When the nurse took me back, I tried to warn her before we reached her intended destination. I attempted to save her the trouble of starting a debate, but she was not getting the point. Finally, I explained, "I don't do scales." This was a new face, I had not seen her before and this would explain why she looked so confused, and a bit befuddled. I always feel sorry for putting the nurses on the spot, but it's simple, I refuse to be weighed. Just as the unfamiliar nurse was explaining to me that it was a procedure that had to be followed, I shook my head

side-to-side, standing far behind her and the intimidating mechanism of unwanted numbers and saw nurse Cindy coming toward us.

Cindy is my obstetrician's nurse. She is the smiley, full figured, round-faced nurse who happily gives me my weekly Progesterone shot in the rear. The Progesterone is supposed to ward off early contractions and because I want to avoid going into labor early, I happily oblige. Cindy opines whenever I see her that I should be eating without abandon and that I should be drinking lots and lots of fluids. I listen to her but at the same time I feel guilty for even mentioning my disgust with my weight when Cindy is obviously content with being so plump. Honestly, however, I still haven't figured out how she manages to pull off being slightly intimidating to downright frightening when she is so pleasant and full of jolly in appearance. Perhaps I have visions of her putting me in a headlock until I cry Uncle, and because I appreciate breathing so much, I get on the scale. I dunno, but I promised today, no scale, so...

Even though Cindy came over, smiled and then pointed to the scale as if she were my commanding officer, I did not move. I had been through this with Cindy multiple times before, and even though I let her win on occasion, Rebellion took over today. Rebellion said that if nurse Cindy wanted to intimidate me into submission, I should just refuse to come to any future appointments. That would solve the problem. No more doctor appointments, no more scale, no problem. Ok, but I wonder, could that also mean, no more baby?

Rebellion stood strong, put on a stoic face, and applied Restraint as temporary reinforcement. Rebellion will often use Reason and Restraint as diplomats in order to get its point across. Because nothing sounds worse than a bratty kid crying for candy before

bedtime because ice cream instead of dinner was not enough of a treat. No, Rebellion has figured out that diplomacy is better and bratty behavior and tantrums disguised as negotiation is by far its best ploy yet.

Restraint and Reason looked calmly into nurse Cindy's eyes and used a clever delay tactic. "Cindy, I'll discuss this with the doctor during my appointment." Cindy relented and nodded. I was led away from the mental torture device and gladly waited for my obstetrician to examine me. As I sat waiting, I practiced with Reason and Restraint, employing them to aid me in the inevitable discussion with my doctor. I did promise him the month before that I would agree to monthly weigh ins, but that was before Obsession started nagging me to eat less. This month I find myself telling him, "From this point on, I refuse to get on the scale, ever again." Then I laugh because I realize how ridiculous and insane I must sound to him. He looks stern and serious so much so that I wish there was something that I could say to ease the poor guy's concern. Somehow, I think I failed in this endeavor, as what Reason and Restraint had to say didn't seem to offer much consolation. I asked him, "Even if I weren't eating and the baby was underweight, what could you do? Besides this baby has a green apple taffy addiction so I am gaining weight even if I don't want to, really doc, I'm eating. Trust me, I've recently gained five pounds!" After Reason and Restraint state their position, Fear and Paranoia send me frightening images of me being locked away in a strait jacket while nurse Cindy happily force feeds me jelly filled doughnuts. For a slight minute I think that could be something he could do, heck I no longer say what's the worst that could happen, that phrase is just no longer residing in my vocabulary.

The doctor can sense that Rebellion hasn't left the room and he isn't buying into Reason and Restraint's diplomacy. He doesn't threaten to lock me away or have me force fed, he doesn't threaten to do anything, except maybe schedule an ultrasound in 5-6 weeks to evaluate the baby's growth and development. I breathe a little easier, yet I leave the doctor's office wondering if I have given my obstetrician cause to believe that crazy people should never get pregnant in the first place.

Even though my doctor wasn't very impressed, I adore Reason and Restraint. Because without them, mere strangers would see how I really feel and what I really think about their rules, regulations, and general bullshit. Strangers would see what my family experiences on a frequent basis, true Fury.

Fury.. rage, anger and hate multiplied times five.

Fury is the result of Anger and Hate spending way too much time running rampant about, free, and unsupervised. I first noticed its powerful presence about three years ago. Fury dictates unbridled destruction of personal possessions, physical and bodily harm of others and demands total annihilation of the enemy. The problem with that is that anyone can be deemed an enemy, even me.

Fury has a way of suppressing all other moods because when it dominates there is no room for Fear, Reason or Restraint. When Fury is about all I can do is sit back and watch in utter and complete horror for once it is triggered, Anger and Hate provide its fuel and it can run for miles.

I often wish that I could take back the vile and ugly things that I say and do when Fury has been speeding at about 100 miles per hour with the windows down. When Fury is driving every gentle mood becomes but a blur. Reason, Restraint, Patience, Humility,

and Kindness all fly out the window. All seatbelts and airbags have been disassembled because the impact that Fury will make is no accident. Fury thrives during the split second turn off into the lane of Insanity, the back and forth shifts in gears between Anger and Hate and it absolutely loves the spin out just prior to falling off the proverbial cliff.

Below the cliff and into the water I have fallen at least 1000 times. My wounds are nothing compared to those that I have inflicted upon others. I lay quietly with Patience, drunk with Fear and Shame, occasionally being pushed under the water by Vengeance and Bitterness. I can usually see Peace, Faith and Joy just in the distance, holding out a life jacket for me and something within me says, "just swim." But before I can figure out whether or not I even remember how to swim, Fury rushes over me because it never really left. Fury holds out its hand for me to board its 35-foot sailboat and I can hear Doubt just beneath the cabin saying, "I don't think you want to swim today, you're bleeding and with those guys, Peace, Faith and Joy, you will certainly be eaten alive."

November 7, 2010

Obedience...

I was thumbing through a catalog the other day just prior to Halloween and saw the cutest mug that seemed as though it were meant for me. It pictured a jeweled crown and said, "The Queen must be obeyed." I instantly felt a connection to this coffee mug, the only thing that it was missing were two simple words, "OR- ELSE." No matter how funny I thought it would be to order this mug or to receive it as a present, something was still bothering me. When did I become this overbearing Queen like persona who

demanded that all of her loyal or not so loyal subjects obey her or else? When did I become this loud chastising non-forgiving and complaining ruler? I am suddenly reminded of the Queen depicted in "Alice in Wonderland" and I see myself crown adorned screaming to the top of my lungs, "Off with their heads!!!" I am Anger, I am Fury, and I am Bitterness and I am Hate. Yes, the only thing that would make that mug worth purchasing would be if it read, "The Queen must be obeyed, or else, off with THEIR HEADS!"

Whenever my husband depicts me in this fashion, he makes it seem as if I am some evil wicked Queen who must be obeyed or else, I rage firebomb filled words at him. How dare he speak about me in such a way, how dare he, notice. I suppose it is quite hard for him not to notice when he is in the process of getting his head chopped off on a daily basis. If I had to guess, I would have to say that my poor husband takes a long trip down to the guillotines at least once a day. Hell, sometimes he doesn't even know he's headed that way until the loud thumping sound of his head rolls to the floor and reaches my feet. Oh, it's fast alright, it comes out of nowhere, yet each time I swear to him, that even a blind man could sense that the hooded masked man was just around the corner.

Pity... feeling sorrowful, having compassion

When my oldest son, now 15 turned 2 I recognized that no matter what type of punishment I doled out he would not respond. I tried everything, corporal punishment, restricting privileges and even positive reinforcement. Absolutely nothing would get that child to stop misbehaving, he simply would not obey. Years later it was brought to my attention that he might be suffering from Asperger's disorder, a high functioning type of autism. Suddenly I felt Guilt, Shame, and Pity. I understood why he could not obey or

would not obey and I wanted to stop feeling Disappointment and Pain whenever his symptoms were obvious to me, but I could not. This child's behavior continued to cause me distress. He was no longer a 7-year-old with high functioning Autism, he was a teenager with Oppositional Defiant Disorder and possibly Schizophrenia. This child was my worst nightmare come to life. Not only would he never obey because he refused to obey but there was absolutely nothing, I could do about it because of his mental illness. Having my hands tied in this way, not being able to teach my son or help him to regain sanity is tantamount to falling without a parachute. Here I am falling into a bottomless pit of helplessness that I created and all the while I am thinking, I bet I could find something to break my fall, if only he would obey.

Pity is my teenager's strongest ally. For nothing but Pity stops me in mid search when I am scouring the Internet looking for residential schools to send him to or when I have my fingers on the phone ready to call in for information about foster care. Pity reminds me of the time when I was pregnant with him and sends visions of how elated I was when he was born. Pity recounts each and every single day of his infancy for me and shows me that at no other time in my life was I happier. Pity wants me to hold on tight to memories; it begs me to remain loyal to my son. But I, I detest Pity, because there is simply no logic in it. For goodness sakes can't I feel Pity for him while at the same time chanting, "Off with his head?"

No, no no I think, this is precisely the predicament I find myself in. I have lost touch with Compassion, Empathy and Mercy. I have been too busy ruling with an iron fist, making impossible demands of my kingdom and disposing of subjects whenever I see fit. How can I have time for Compassion when I'm too busy being offended? How

can I experience Empathy when I'm filled with so much rage that any other point of view besides mine is but a drop of water attempting to put out a massive fire. And how can I show Mercy when Anger demands justice and justice has only been served when Vengeance says so.

I guess it all comes back to Grudge and Bitterness in the end. They take note of each, and every offense committed by my husband and my teenager. Together they make a detailed log because apparently, they are building some type of case file. That file has piled up so high in my mind over the years that each time that a new offense occurs I immediately throw the book at them. They receive the harshest treatment because they are repeat offenders who refuse to adhere to the rules of my society. Sometimes I see Mercy headed toward me with a paper shredder, threatening to shred those case files to bits. Mercy wants Forgiveness and Trust back in play because without them there is no way that I can even allow Mercy to show its tenderness. I have nearly reached out for Mercy's paper shredder as I am falling into that dark and bottomless pit of helplessness. I nearly reach out for it when my husband says the words, "I'm sorry," or "I love you." I nearly reach out for it when my teenager says that he just wants to sleep the days away to make life go by faster. I actually do feel Pity for them and yes there is logic in Pity, because I feel sorrowful, I feel compassion, I feel Mercy for just a minute for I am human. I love them but at the same time I have their case files and they are guilty. Anger denied them a jury trial and Grudge says that they are not eligible for parole any time soon. Fury demands that their punishment be swift and carried out by a hooded masked man named Scorn.

November 14, 2010

Defeat....

Today I feel undeniably defeated. I am handling my son's rapid descent into mental illness by banishing him to his room. I believe that this is the only way to cope with his illness until I can figure out something better. He spends his time out of room by either kicking the dog, hitting his younger siblings out of frustration or coming up with delusional conspiracy theories about his parents. I have come to the logical conclusion that I cannot help him. All I can do is request to increase his medication dosage and keep his psychological evaluation appointment scheduled for next month. I feel utterly helpless. I can't even force him to do his schoolwork at this point. God I am failing miserably in every way, but I feel that it was an impossible task to begin with.

I worry often about the future of my teenager, especially when he refuses to prepare for getting his GED and definitely when he insanely announces that he doesn't need to ever get a job. I wonder, is there hope for Andrué?

Apathy.. lack of emotion or excitement

I first noticed that something was intrinsically wrong with Andrué the closer he grew toward his teenage years. I questioned his apathetic and stoic appearance, his blank stares and quirky behavior. However, the older that Andrué became, I feared that his numbness toward the world was not just due to autism, but Schizophrenia. I throw my hands up in defeat when he argues with me that yes, he can become the President of Mexico even though he isn't a Mexican citizen. And I shake my head sideways and tell him to please stop talking to me when he ventures to discuss imaginary racial issues

within our household. For years he denied that he was African American, however this year he is being suppressed by his parents because of the color of his skin. I swear if I hear, "Is it because I'm black?" one more time from Andrué I am going to, well, send him to his room. I feel incapable of parenting him and incapable of making any sort of impression upon him. Logic and Reason are no match for his complex and random way of thinking. He is convinced that anything I say is wrong or terminally stupid. He is just like a typical teenager, but with a psychotic twist.

I took him out of school this Fall because last Spring he started skipping classes to hang out with a girl he admired. My mind immediately jumped to the possibility of grandchildren at age 36. Perhaps I panicked and allowed Impulsivity to take over but all I know for sure is that until I can get Andrué diagnosed and on the proper medication dosage, he will remain safely at home under lock and key.

I often envy Andrué's ability to portray Apathy. Of course, at times, I can see bits of Anger and Anxiety within him. I see them when I tell him he's not going back to school any time soon. I see them when he's frustrated because he wants his cell phone privileges back. I recognize them for brief moments but just as soon as I think that they might boil over into a sustained mood of any length of time, Apathy returns. How well he hides it all when I am watching. But I know that Rebellion is haunting him because I can see Relief in his eyes when he says no to me. I can see Anxiety slip away from his body when he makes his mind up by refusing to try. And I cannot even recognize that Anger ever led the way for him when he is knee deep in delusion.

November 20, 2010

Panic....

Just a few years ago, or what could seem like yesterday, I delivered a stillborn baby. I was a few weeks into my second trimester, and I was blissfully unaware that a problem was developing. The culprit was my cervix, for some reason it did not remain closed, it opened up prematurely and I went into labor. I was informed that because my water had broken and due to the prematurity of the infant there was absolutely nothing they could do. I would spend the next several hours in mental anguish, physical pain, and locked in Denial.

After the delivery I refused to look at the tiny infant that I had carried for over 4 months. I went home, took to my bed, and didn't get out for quite some time. This was the first time that I became familiar with anti-depressant medication. I was amazed at how much better I felt on medication, it was as if a fog had been lifted. It was then that I decided to try again.

Now as I lay here stranded on bedrest with the looming threat of imminent pre-term labor of a 25-week infant, I cannot help but remember the pain I endured so many years ago. What can I do to avoid having to endure that type of torment and grief? Can I somehow brace myself for the inevitable psychiatric mess that will surely follow having to suffer through such a loss? What do you do when you're knee deep in panic, terror and fear with little emotional support to carry you through day by day? I want to hold on to all of those moods and emotions that make it so easy for me to sit on the sidelines while my life passes me by. I want to hide, run away, drift down shore and come back in 10

weeks when it's ok for me to show my face again. I want to ignore Panic, stuff it in a hole 20 feet deep and cover it with Hope.

Hope... optimism, faith, expectation

Hope has been such a stranger to me for so many years that I honestly do not believe that I would recognize it if it slipped by to pay me a visit. I used to hope for so many things as a child, only to have those hopes and dreams ripped to shreds. I hoped that one day my father would come home from prison and that I would have a family. I hoped that my mother would stop being an angry and depressed alcoholic so that we would someday have a warm and functional relationship. I hoped like so many other women that I would get married, have children and live happily ever after. I hoped that I would follow my passions in life and escape the deep depression of my teenage years. But most of all I hoped that I had suffered enough in life and that the universe, God or Karma owed me the gift of happiness. I hoped that I wasn't being punished or singled out for some reason and that just around the corner I would find Peace. But all I found was Hope, battered, bruised, and beaten beyond recognition. Each time that I suffered a loss, Hope took a fall. My dad never came home, my mom drank herself to death, my baby died, my daughter was taken away from me and my family was forever ripped apart. I was so busy fighting back at the world with Anger that I never really saw Hope slip away.

I'd like to think that I am one of those people that just gets over it. So, this happened, big deal, I'm still standing. I can handle anything that comes my way and I'll seldom cry about it. You wanna take me on, be my guest, I don't need you or anyone, I'll be just fine on my own. It's a hard way to exist, not leaning on anyone for fear of

showing vulnerability because you are always alone in your Pain, alone in your Fear and alone in your Panic. Taking the get out of my life who needs you anyway attitude is just plain addictive behavior that I cannot seem to stop.

I believe it's all about control for me. If I don't have Hope then my hope is never taken from me again. If I don't have dreams, then reality is just as expected. I can accept reality and its ever-changing appearance. I know that in reality the odds are good that I will lose yet another child. I know that losing another child will indeed push me to that familiar breaking point. The only solace I have is that I've been there before. I have sat in a dark pit raging with Fury, stirring up Anger and Bitterness. I have pierced Hope in the chest with daggers of Rebellion and Vengeance. I have been swallowed up by Shame and Fear and now Panic. I am ready to go there again, because in reality, I never really left.

December 3, 2010

Surrender....

Monday was a particularly bad day for me. I went in for my weekly obstetrical appointment and after I was examined, my doctor disclosed to me that it was absolutely imperative that I continue staying off of my feet. He wanted me to have another ultrasound because things are looking "scary", and he doubts that I will be able to carry the baby to full term. I then proceeded to cancel all of my future appointments with Dr. Morose. If there is nothing more that he can do for me for me other than continuously freak me out worse than I already am, what is the point of going?

I spent the rest of the morning and afternoon playing back his words over and over in my mind. I've decided that I just don't want to know. I don't want to know the

exact moment that my cervix begins to dilate. I don't want to know the exact moment that my world will begin to fall apart, again. Really, what would the point be? How can I explain this to Dr. Morose? How can I tell him that having him examine me is an utter waste of time if all I can do is what I'm already doing, complete bedrest? He already thinks that I'm a nutcase and at the very least, a difficult patient. I'm seriously considering having my therapist talk to him. Of course, I'm not sure that it would make any sense to him either.

So, all morning and afternoon I laid in bed, unable to motivate myself to do anything of importance. I skipped schoolwork; I didn't even watch my daily soap operas. Finally, at around 6:30pm I drifted off to sleep. I continued sleeping until 7:30 the next morning. What I discovered when I woke up was something I had never experienced before, Surrender.

Surrender.. submission

Surrender slipped in while Anger, Hate and Grudge were sleeping and the rest of the moods were half awake. And I noticed that Fury had just plain left for the day. How on earth could getting over 12 hours of sleep have placed Surrender in charge for a day? For one day I was without angst. I wasn't mean or angry, loud or obnoxious. The activity surrounding me did not change; my children were still disobeying little brats. My problems were still overwhelming and stressful. The only thing that had changed was my reaction to my environment. I began to wonder, is this what they mean when Christians say "Give it up to God?" Were they referring to this process of surrendering? Oh, it feels

good to let Surrender in, relax and let what happens happen, bracing myself for nothing, just taking things as they come. Of course, this will take some time to get used to because there is really no element of control in Surrender. It requires 100% submission and the relinquishing of control. But how can I hold my hands up high to waive the symbolic white flag if my hands are still tightly bound by War.

December 5, 2010

Scorn...

So, I told my husband that I am finally leaving him. I am packing my bags, moving out, and venturing off to parts unknown, in 6-10 weeks that is. But as soon as I am medically cleared to abandon bedrest, I am sooooo outta here because in my opinion, marriage is stupid. I have made this so-called stupid mistake twice now and the only person I have to blame is myself. So why is it that I have and continue to entertain Scorn?

Scorn.. to regard with contempt or disdain

I first noticed Scorn about 5 years ago, it entered my marriage and it never left. I cannot see past it whenever I look at my husband. Scorn colors everything I say to him with peppered half-truths. Scorn convinces me to keep quiet when I am screaming inside. I hardly ever listen because I find myself screaming outwardly all of the time. I scream and say all of the wrong things. It's as if my mouth opens and I do not fully control the content. I usually find myself dumfounded, scratching my head as my husband is walking away from some brutal word attack. Scorn thou must have another.

I could list 20 or more things that my husband has done to create Bitterness and Grudge within me. I could argue that it's my inability to forgive that gave way to Scorn and Vengeance. I could analyze this marriage to death, but what ultimately matters the most, is can this marriage be saved?

When Scorn and Vengeance rule my heart there is never any turning back. How can I take back the Hate, Anger and Pain in my words? How can I apologize when Bitterness says that I am not sorry? How can I welcome forgiveness when Grudge and Vengeance say "oh hell no." Right now, I feel stuck, immobile, and unable to make change where my husband is concerned. I don't know which way to go in this journey because for now I feel Justified.

January 7, 2011

War...

The battle lines have been drawn on both sides and my weapons are ready. I have the enemy in sight, and I am more than willing to fire. I walk around with live grenades, threatening to throw them at the slightest movement. I do not care if there are civilian casualties and I do not care if I become injured or fatally wounded in the process. I feel like one of those terrorist suicide bombers except I have not convinced myself that I would be dying a martyr. I don't have a cause really. I just know that I am on the warpath and when War is imminent within me, it's just on, oh unfortunately, it's ON.

War.. conflict, a battle

I find myself currently at war with people, places and things. I cannot connect, I cannot tolerate and most of all I cannot negotiate a truce. I feel like a dictator most of the time because I want to rule with an iron fist. I want to make all decisions that concern

anything and everything around me. If someone under my rule falls out of line or breaks the law where I'm concerned, it's no longer off with their heads, it's off to war so that I can personally haul the enemy off to the torture chambers.

I must admit, yes, my immediate family is being held hostage by War. They have each received varying degrees of punishment under my dictatorship and Mercy has yet to rescue them. I want to be able to extract what I need from them effortlessly because I am already bothered that I need anything at all. But it never comes so easily, this exchange of needs, and because of this, I continue in this tyrannical rage. I want to punish, withhold, disconnect, and escape. War says pull the pin, pull the pin, pull the pin. But I'm not so sure.

May 24, 2012

Control....

It has been a while since I have reflected upon how my emotions have controlled my life, my choices, my reactions, and my growth. An entire year and a half has gone by and oh what a difference a year has made, or has it? Over the last year I delivered a baby boy, was homeless with four children and a dog, and after 13 years, I have finally discovered the answer to managing bipolar disorder.

I realized something while I was homeless and so bored to tears that I literally had nothing to do but sleep with my newborn. I realized that I could choose my response to my environment, if and only if, I had sleep. For six months I endured not knowing where I would raise my newborn and the rest of my children. I endured living in a 35-foot motorhome with little privacy and with little reprieve from a crying and colicky infant. For six months I watched as my husband sank into a deep depression as he experienced

the loss of not one but both of his parents. I tried not to have a meltdown when he became suicidal and drank whiskey shots instead of his morning coffee. For six months I felt Guilt, Anger, Shame, Bitterness, Fear and Panic. I thought of comforting things to say when my 5-year-old pointed out to me the real estate section from the Sunday paper and said, "Here's a house mommy, lets buy this one." For six months I slept with my newborn, I walked him in the tiny space between the kitchen and the bedroom as he cried for two hours straight every day and then we slept some more. For six months I envisioned my life with children in a mobile home park, scraping by for quarters to do our laundry, wondering if Noah would be bullied when he started Kindergarten because of our social status or lack thereof. And just where would we be when Noah started Kindergarten? For six months I slept for at least 10 hours a day as my head filled with questions while my heart filled with quiet, curious contentment.

Control.. the ability to choose

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." Viktor Frankl

What I figured out in the motorhome was that I finally had the ability to choose. I could choose to be content and in love with my cranky ass but beautiful newborn. I could choose to ignore my husband when he was apparently just baiting me to blow up in Fury. I could choose to stave off suicidal ideation and depression; I could choose all of these things, if only I had sleep. Could this be the answer to all of my bipolar disorder problems? Perhaps I wasn't Bipolar at all, I was just perpetually sleep deprived. I loved being more in control of my emotions, and being able to tell Anger, Bitterness and Hate when to take a flying leap down into a pool of Peace, Joy and Hope. I loved being able to

be homeless yet still appreciate life, God and Faith. Where had this elusive thing called sleep been hiding all of my life? How come no one told me that it wasn't actually just the colossal waste of time I thought it was? I felt sorta robbed and cheated that I had not discovered this before. Vengeance wanted answers from God and from imaginary foes, but I was too busy being homeless with my newborn, 3 kids and a dog, and a husband I desperately needed to leave. But leave him and go where? The answer to this question and many others was just about the only things I found that I alas still could not control.

May 25, 2012

Halfway...

I was listening to a children's song the other day with the kiddos I gave birth to and live with, and it struck a chord within me, pun intended. The lyrics are as follows: "When you're up you're up and when you're down you're down, and when you're only halfway up, you're neither up nor down." That statement reminds me of the cycles I go through as a bipolar disordered person. When I'm up, I'm definitely up. I call this my delightful hypomanic phase. I can exist on only three hours of sleep for several days at a time without blinking an eye of exhaustion. I entertain all sorts of wonderful ideas, projects, and plans for the future. I remember that I live to create, and I indulge in my first passion which is creative writing. My ideas and thoughts may be often described as "racing" by most mental healthcare professionals. My husband can barely stand to listen to me because I don't notice that the rate at which I am speaking is way too fast for anyone to comprehend who is not also in a hypomanic state themselves. Yes, I love Hypomania, it is familiar, hyperactive, fun, and everything beautifully crazy and Insane. Not that there is anything wrong with Insane.

Insane.. Irrational by common standards, inconsistently consistent

I cannot be certain of how I may behave or act while in a hypomanic phase because that time for me in cycle is very unpredictable. But I can predict how I will react when I am down, because when I'm down, I'm not just down, I'm completely buried. I cannot get up on my own and no way can I get to the halfway point they call sanity. If I am in a hypomanic phase for too long, I sort of make that statement true that everything that goes up must come down. Oh, why can't I hang out in delightful Hypomania for an extended period of time and avoid becoming buried? I suppose it's just not meant to be so I must force myself to sleep so that I may reach the point of normal that which I call halfway.

When I am in halfway mode, I'm neither up nor down and I am able to exercise more control over my emotions. This is quite a boring status update for someone who is used to delightful hypomania and all the burst of energy and excitement that brings. Of late I am trying hard to convince myself to remain in halfway mode, after all, it does make logical sense, and otherwise sooner or later I'm liable to find myself buried again with no room for air, just Fear, Doubt and a little Insane.

May 25, 2012

Fear...

Today was supposed to be a day of rest. Today I was supposed to avoid the computer at all costs. I thought I would actually spend this day reading. What a concept, but alas it did not happen. I found myself on the computer, checking my email, uploading content to my Facebook account and viewing my Twitter feed from my Iphone. This is

utterly ridiculous I thought, try again tomorrow.

For the most part I spent the day exchanging emails back and forth with an attorney regarding a lawsuit I have filed against a hospital. This set of emails forced me to actually read my own medical records. Gee freakin whiz, do I look crazy on paper! Perhaps I live in this bubble of denial, and I am actually the crazy person described on paper. Oh, say it aint so, say it aint so. I laugh as I write this, but I actually wish that I would stop laughing some time and take myself seriously. Perhaps this habit started during childhood, the habit of exchanging my pain for smiles, exchanging my sadness for laughter.

Fear.. a survival mechanism which creates intense anxiety

Fear has been surrounding me lately, ok, smothering me actually. I possibly will die from asphyxiation due to Fear. I am very afraid that I am past due on a bill that usually comes with my name on it. I can't pay this bill right now because of Fear. But if I do not pay this bill and I am sent to collections, the penalty could be death.

Every so often I become too intensely involved with my emotions and moods that the despair causes me to want to harm myself. It has been approximately two years and 5 months since I have been admitted into a hospital for this condition. This is not to say that I have not had the familiar drive by Anger, Despair and Hate to harm myself because I have, but Fear is preventing me from seeking help and solace during the storms of Pain and Disappointment. I have usually paid this particular bill by now. So I continue to accrue this debt, this bill that I feel is just collecting interest over time. I'm afraid that a day may come, and I won't be able to use Avoidance any longer. And then what shall I do? Fear says don't go and don't ask for help because you know what happened to you

the last time. I withdraw, I allow Fear to envelop me and the dance with Dread begins.

May 30, 2012

The Dance...

I often describe the engagement with my emotions as a dance. The courtship for each one is as different as my relationship with them. Some of them are long term relationships, while others are short term or merely a fling. The most troubling of them all are the ones that I consider the one-night stands. Those are the emotions that after I encounter them, I am left feeling as though I really don't know myself at all, most notably of them all, Psychosis. For the most part I try to stay away from the one-night stands, but often times, I'm not the one leading the dance.

I like to think that I am leading most of the time, but occasionally just when I feel comfortable in the dance, one of them will cut in and then the dance changes. I Tango with Anger and Hate so much that I barely notice when Rebellion and Scorn cut in to Salsa. I tap dance around Pity, Shame and Petulance on a daily basis so when Chaos, Impulsivity and Bitterness want to Mambo it's just too enticing to sit that one out. It is, however, the slow dances that affect me the most. The slow dances are quite intimate and make the most impression upon me. I end up in long term relationships with the emotions that court me by way of slow dance. Vengeance, Anxiety, Obsession, Grudge and War all have their own ballads, they never cut in on each other because each stand on their own. When their slow dances are in play there is no chance that I might lead the way for my moves are guided, though calculated and even I never know how the dance will end.

June 5, 2012

Vindication....

My mother unexpectedly died in 2008. For some reason I thought that I would be prepared when the day finally came, but I wasn't. I had this dream that she would stop slowly killing herself with alcohol and that I would finally have a mother. Over the years I had assumed the position of emotional caretaker for my mother, a complete reversal of how things should have been. Above all things, I wanted to take care of her, but ultimately, I needed to save her. Why did I have such devotion to this woman who had broken my heart so many times and had never truly been emotionally or physically available to me as a child? Why would I have given up my own happiness, my life and everything I held dear just to give her the life of normalcy that comes naturally to everyone else but us?

At some point in my childhood, my fantasies changed from what I wanted out of life to what my mother needed. I wanted to please her, but most of all, I wanted her to love me. If I could only save her, she would stop committing suicide, she would no longer be depressed, and we could have that relationship that I had always craved. The day she died, I expected it, but I was plagued almost immediately with Guilt.

Guilt....shoulda, coulda, woulda, why did you or didn't you?

Where was I when my mother needed me the most? Why was I spending so much time and energy on my own life instead of helping her with hers? What kind of daughter was I that I didn't convince her to stop hurting herself? Where was I? Where was I? What kind of daughter just lets her mother kill herself? Anger, Hate, Shame and Guilt snuck in

one night and bashed Mourning over the head until he did not move. I was so busy battling Anger, Hate, Shame, and Guilt that I could not mourn. And by the time the fight was over, I wanted to die too, but Vindication was born instead.

After a few months of going head to head with Guilt and Grief, I discovered that my mother had left behind over a quarter of a million dollars in life insurance behind, but the insurance company was contesting the policy. This was the final straw for me. My mother worked nearly 30 years and kept her life insurance policy in force because she knew it was the only thing she could leave behind for her children. Not only did her employer terminate her three months prior to her death for falling asleep at her desk, but now they wanted to take away her legacy to her children as well. Not in my lifetime, Anger shouted. Over my dead body, Hate chimed in. This is my chance, Vindication piped in. But Guilt and Doubt slipped in their two cents and said, "Hey, but it's been over a year now since her death, how on earth are you going to revive the life insurance policy now?" Just you wait and see War entered in, just you wait and see.

June 13, 2012

Grief...

They say there are five stages of grief and I'm pretty sure that after the death of my mother I pretty much married the fourth stage, which is Depression. Depression and I are longtime friends, in fact our relationship is so tight, I actually think he has a crush on me. Losing my mother gave me a reason to do stupid things in the company of Depression. I drank too much alcohol, I blamed myself, I drank too much alcohol.. did I say, I drank too much alcohol? I'm pretty sure that I was in search of Apathy, but he never came, only the embarrassment and Shame that comes with being a complete drunk.

The worst part about the grieving process for me was that I could never get past

the second stage, which is Anger. I was so angry that my mother had led an unfulfilled life. I stayed up many nights with Depression recounting the years she spent being unhappy. I thought about how afraid she must have been when her father would molest her and tried to rape her. I thought about how scared she must have been to have an insane mother living out her years in an institution. I was angry with my father for leaving her and spending his life in prison instead of with us. But most of all, I was angry with the people who fired her and treated her like garbage in the months before her death.

Vindication... righting a wrong

I remember the day that my mother came home and told us about her new job with the Government. She was very excited and as I was only 12, I had no idea what the big deal was. This would be the same year that I would begin Catholic school, but most of all; it was the same year that I told my mother about the things her boyfriend had done to me.

My mother once defined her feelings about her father's attempted rape of her and the molestation of all of her siblings by him as a scar that never goes away. I recall biting my tongue during this phone conversation. She was obviously intoxicated and during her very intoxicated states I could only listen. She had never spoken to me much about her experiences with her father except to say that she and her five siblings were taken away from him after he boldly tried to rape her on the kitchen table. This conversation was different, she was crying. She was still traumatized after all of these years. And when she said, it's like a scar that doesn't go away; I knew instantly what she meant. But I was too afraid to speak up. The last two times I had talked to her about what her boyfriend had done to me, once at 12 and again at 18 she had broken my heart with her words. She

didn't believe me at 12 and then at 18 she said if it did happen it, was my fault. No way was I going to attempt talking to her now, but as she was drunk and crying about her own experience, I was also crying about hers as well as mine. I wanted her to understand my experience. Why couldn't she be there for me? I was there for her. I was always there for her.

I reached the bargaining stage of the five stages of grief about a year after my mother's death. I thought if I could just sue those bastards for treating my mother the way they did, I could move on to the final stage of grief which is Acceptance. If I could just revive her cancelled life insurance policy that she wanted to leave behind for my brother and I, everything would be ok, and I would have done something to make her proud. I caught myself still wanting to please her, even after her death. It was never about the money that I would get from reviving the discontinued policy; it was always about honoring my mother. Also, suing her employer was never about money either, it was about Vindication. She worked 22 years for them, and from what I could tell she was always sober at work. How dare they make her submit to on-the-job breath tests to check her alcohol levels and force her into outpatient rehab. How dare they humiliate my mommy like that? Why didn't she tell me? Why didn't she confide in me? I knew nothing about this, until it was too late. I would have helped her and maybe she wouldn't have gotten fired and spent 24/7 around the clock drinking instead of having a job to go to every morning. I was going to vindicate her name. I was going to right this horrific wrong. I would make her proud of me one last time and I would win for her.

I knew what I had to do. I sent everyone away. I couldn't afford to indulge in Depression, Anger, Hate and Guilt any longer. They took an unplanned vacation, and I had Vindication to keep me company on the days when Mourning and Sorrow came to

visit. I was dedicated and I was focused. I struggled with Fear and Doubt, but I had Faith and Hope to even out the playing field. And when the day came that I was successful in reviving my mother's cancelled life insurance policy, it was enough. I didn't need to have a long lengthy court battle to sue her employer for what I feel was discrimination. Having a full investigation into their discrimination and making them testify was enough. This was the Federal government after all; it would be tough getting them to admit anything. But I had succeeded in giving her a voice. I had allowed her to speak from beyond the grave. I had proven that she was terminally ill, and this was the cause of her drowsiness at work. She wasn't drunk you assholes, she was dying! But they had fired her, and she was devastated. In the months before her death, she was losing her house, she was denied unemployment benefits and every attorney told her that she did not have a case. She was without hope, and I think she wanted to die. She just gave up. But in the end, I would fight for her.

A little over a year after her death, I had reached the final stage of Grief. I finally accepted her death. I accepted that she had a shitty childhood and for the most part a very shitty life. And now she was gone, without my having been able to save her. But of all things, I had loved her with my entire and whole heart. I had shown her that love each and every time that I saw her and spoke to her. She knew that my love for her was unconditional and that was something that I could hold on to in the face of Mourning. In the end, Vindication didn't really matter because whenever I thought about her and the love we shared for one another, none of the hurt mattered. She knew that I had forgiven her for destroying my faith in love and for shattering my ability to trust others. She knew that nothing she could do or had done would make me not love her. And because I knew she died knowing that there was one person in the entire world who had her back, even

though she died alone, she really didn't. I was there. I was there in her heart and because of this, I was for once, overcome with Peace.

June 14, 2012

Dread...

I have been awake for several hours now and it's only 4am. I don't know whether to make coffee, drink some wine or take a pill to go back to bed. Panic is the nagging voice I hear in my head during times like this, "get some sleep or you know who will come to visit and who knows when she will leave." I want to tell Panic to piss off, but I know he's right and I want to sleep, I really do, but Dread has been keeping me up for the past week.

I have an appointment in six hours with my therapist. Wait, can you call a paid expert witness for a civil court case your therapist? So far, I've had one session with him, and it feels like therapy. I go in, I talk, I cry, and I come out feeling worse than I did when I went in the first place. Oh sure, I get insight, but I'm really not interested in this kind of insight anymore. I feel like Sybil. My moods, my emotions and all of the passions that accompany them are alter egos for me. I don't want to merge them, I want to appreciate them, understand them and coexist with them. If one or more of them want to take over, then by all means, lead the way. Taking brain altering medications and exploring how my childhood and past traumatic experiences shaped my view of the world is really sort of unappealing to me at this point in my life. So, the fact that I need to go in today and talk, cry and explore these things is well, awfully dreadful.

Maniaan irrational state in which reality may appear to be skewed

I live in a rather constant state of mania. However, because I am plagued with so many other somewhat debilitating moods, my cycles of mania are usually described by

my doctors as a mixed state. I remember asking about this when I was newly diagnosed, how on earth can I be both manic and depressed at the same time? I thought mania was supposed to be fun? And I thought that if you were Bipolar you switched between mania and depression? What is this state where you can actually be both sad and irrationally energetic at the same time? To complicate matters, they have now labeled me with the diagnosis of rapid cycling. So, I don't just cycle between Depression and Mania once or twice a year, I dance with those guys simultaneously several times a month. Well if you're going to do something... do it right.

Chaos and Impulsivity love Mania. When she is around, it is anyone's guess what will happen from minute to minute. The drama surrounding her may involve comedy, horror, or a downright tragedy. But no matter how it ends, her time with me almost always causes damage in some way or another. It starts out slowly, sort of like a disease. I begin to notice that everything is going just a little bit faster. My thoughts and ideas are racing through my mind at warp speed. I am so busy in thought and in action that I barely eat.

Sleep is a colossal waste of time and an utter distraction at the least. Life is intriguing and knowledge is addictive. Obsession takes over and Paranoia looms in the distance, waiting to pounce. The symptoms are there, but they are so subtle that often I do not catch the diagnosis until I'm already in the late stages of Mania. I usually try to evict Mania from the premises on sight when she shows up without Depression by her side. However, I am often unsuccessful and only surgical extraction by way of Reason is the only way to get rid of her. It is a potentially dangerous state for me, because the temperature change between Hypomania and Psychosis is a mere 1 degree.

When I was first diagnosed back in 1999, I experienced Mania without Depression. It was the most ridiculous experience of my life. It was almost like I had taken handfuls of psychedelic drugs. I knew that I wasn't myself, but it was incredibly fun to be Reckless. Yet because I had no idea what the heck bipolar disorder even was, I partied with Mania way too long, which led me to her twin sister, that which is Psychosis.

I often remember my times with Psychosis as an out of body experience. I am on the outside looking in, watching the events unfold, unable to interact with myself and others. When Psychosis takes over, all bets are off. Paranoia, Fear and Delusion step on the battlefield and nothing can penetrate their alliance. If I am allowed to exist as their prisoner of War for too long, all of my nefarious moods turn against me. I can no longer bounce back and forth between them with ease because they have massacred Reason, Peace and Hope. Chaos, Shame, Anger and Hate take turns pushing my head under water until I give in. The only answer is escape. I have a desperate need to kill them, kill myself. Because only then and only then will this exhausting dance come to an end.

So, when Panic whispers to me and nudges me to get some sleep, I feel almost compelled to comply. The last time Psychosis stepped in; the consequences were dire, heck someone nearly died. I cannot at all cost, let Mania in, it's just too risky. But what often happens such as what is happening to me right now is that I just didn't notice this soon enough. The symptoms were so vague, so subtle that when the temperature dropped that 1 degree, it was already a tad too late. Reckless steps in with a sneak attack move on Panic and takes over as lead position. She says sleep what a drag; let Mania come out to play so that Dread will take a hike. Impatience is silently holding Reason hostage in places unknown. Rebellion joins in with Reckless and they chime, Mania's not so bad,

we can control her if she comes out alone, just let her come to play for a couple of days and we promise we'll let Reason go. And I did.

June 14, 2012

Mania...

I have recently begun purging again. I have never effectively gotten rid of my eating disorder in the first place, so it does not surprise me that I am engaging in eating disordered thinking. I want to believe that I am more than a number on a scale. I want to believe that my outside is not as important as I make it out to be. I want to love myself even if I am umpteen hundred pounds. I want, I want, I want, to lose freakin weight. Why am I stuck in plateau mode? Oh, I know, it's because I'm 38 years old now and losing weight will be three times as hard after having a baby than it was at 21, 25, 32, 33 and 36. Why can't I be happy just being me? I am still beautiful on the inside? Right? Bullshit.

What I didn't know is that Mania has been here all along. I like to think that I have some control over when she arrives, but she has been influencing my actions and my thoughts all along. She reigns over all of the moods from time to time. None of them can control her and no one quite understands her. She keeps me up most nights, but mostly she takes everything that I know and believe to be true, and she destroys it bit by bit. I know that I am a competent and worthwhile person; this Reason and Logic tell me so by pointing out specific talents that I have been blessed with. But when Mania is around, I feel insecure and Insane. I hate myself, every single little thing about myself. I can always tell when she is in force because Fear, Guilt, Anxiety and Shame pervade. I am confused and uncertain. She leads me in with the disguise of hope and expectation. I'm so busy riding the thrill of hypomania that I don't notice when Mania hits me on the

back of the head. By this time, I am so devastated and bereft that all there is left is to do is to wallow in Misery.

So, I'm purging again, but I don't binge in the first place. I purge everything I eat, and I plot and plan how to lose weight. I'm so busy counting calories and cleaning up my vomit that I don't notice Depression slipping in. And I am so sad, I cry for days and think of ways to die.

June 15, 2012

Dysfunctional...

I found Reason this morning halfway between a half of pint of vodka and 9 hours of sleep. Mania is taking a nap right now, Dysfunctional and Responsibility put her in a sleeper hold, Hulk Hogan style. Responsibility is driving me through the day. I need to forget about having a meltdown because I promised my children a playdate today. I don't have time for a meltdown and it's not about me today. Wait, did I just say it's not about me? I hate Responsibility like I hate snow. Oh, it looks pretty, but it's really a royal pain in the ass. I know the things that I'm supposed to do, but for the most part, I just don't want to do it, generally because I'm too busy being Dysfunctional.

Dysfunctional.. behavior deemed or perceived as the opposite of the norm accepted by societal customs

Dysfunctional pointed me towards a pro ana website the other day and I picked up all sorts of tips for abusing my body in hopes of losing weight quickly. I spent several hours reading the forums whilst I was supposed to be sleeping. Responsibility pleaded a good case for sleep, but Dysfunctional was mesmerized. How could this be? A website completely dedicated to providing information and support for those with an eating disorder? Oh, the information I discovered. I didn't need any help being dysfunctional

regarding my attitudes toward food and weight loss. But now that I've found this site, I have a feeling it's just going to fuel the fire.

Reason, in an attempt to thwart the damage that Dysfunctional will do keeps asking me this one question. What is the big deal about being thinner? Were you so happy the last time that you were anorexic that you want to do that all over again? Dysfunctional cured my anorexia with bulimia and for good measure threw in an alcohol abuse problem on top of it. I know that Reason has a point because no, I was not happy when I was anorexic. I was still just as miserable and depressed as I had always been. I was thin, but why couldn't I just be thinner? I was so ill that I refused to drink water. I didn't want to gain any water weight. I was plagued with constant chest pains, and I was dizzy all of the time. Whenever those around me would force me to eat, out of Guilt, I would eat, but then I would rush off to the bathroom and purge. I wanted to please those around me by appearing to be normal. After a while the disease stopped being about losing weight, it was more about self-abuse than anything. Hate and Anger stepped onto the scene and said that I didn't deserve to eat because eating was too pleasurable for me. I had lost my daughter in a custody battle with my ex-husband, and it was my fault. I continued to deny myself food because I didn't care if I died, but most of all I wanted to deprive myself of any pleasure in life. What kind of mother doesn't get to raise her own daughter and has her taken away? Just starve and die slowly, Hate and Anger said. You're skinny now, but you could be thinner Mania and Obsession chimed in.

There was something freeing in the purging activity. It was as though the weight of the stress that I had been carrying was leaving my body through the purging of food. Dysfunctional began to hook onto this bulimic activity. This dying slowly process wasn't really working, besides, I had tried many times to knock myself off with pills and it never

worked. I mean I would pop fifty tranquilizers and top it off with 5 shots of hard liquor and would wake up the next morning. What the hell? I must have some kind of tolerance. Some 3rd suicide attempt later in 2004 I realized that mixing my anti-psychotic medications and my tranquilizers wasn't going to work. I'd have to take about 200 of each or something insane like that and with my luck; I'd wake up alive but have permanent brain damage. Impulsivity, Hate and Anger started convincing me to use other methods, but Fear would often stop me.

The custody battle began to take its toll on me as losing Skylar made it possible for all of my moods to come out and take turns and participate in the brutal beating and eventual murder of Joy. I began to indulge in an abundance of dysfunctional behaviors, all of which were aimed at self-abuse. So, when Reason steps on site today amidst Responsibility I try to listen carefully. I've been down this road before to self-destruction. It starts with a diet, then it gravitates toward behavior ruled by Impatience and before I know it, Dysfunctional has me purging every single thing I eat and there will be no room in my life for Reason after this begins. As I lose sight of Reason in this process, Mania skews my vision of the past, my present reality and all Logic has hitchhiked off to places unknown. So today as I skip breakfast and become plagued with thoughts of skipping lunch as well, I wonder, is there room for Reason in my life? Can I binge and purge and read pro ana sites, lose weight and still be dysfunctional, but within reason?

June 26, 2012

Anarchy...

Today I find myself extremely lost on a familiar path. Logic and Reason chastise me for falling down into this path again. Impulsivity lost the map and Impatience never wrote down the directions so that I could find my way home. Petulance and Rebellion

probably hid the directions and now I'm totally screwed by Obsession. I am in a dark and lonely place without a flashlight. I might as well settle in for the long haul.

An eating disorder is a terrible affliction. You want to appear as something that you are not. You crave perfection, or at least near perfection. You sit around and nitpick every single thing about yourself that you abhor. You convince yourself that if you could just achieve this one goal, then you will be happy. If you could just make it to the finish line, life will be worth living. Why do you hate yourself so much that you need to be something that you are not? Why do you need to abuse yourself until your body conforms to the high standards that you have set? Aren't you worth more than a number on a scale? Aren't you worth more than a number? Why should the sum of the value of your life be dictated by your physical appearance? Logic and Reason toss these questions at me like a pitcher throwing fast balls at my head. I know that I am being ridiculous and Insane by entertaining this path again, but I turn my head and run so fast from Logic and Reason that I end up miles and miles away, safe in the arms of Anarchy.

Anarchy.. go fuck yourself.

I entertain Anarchy when I refuse to be accountable to anyone for any reason. I don't want to listen to you. I don't care what you are saying. I just want to do what I want to do and when I want to do it and no one trumps Minny while Minny is in Minny's World, the End. When Anarchy is around, I am the boss of everything and anything goes. No one is the boss of me, not even me. The best thing that I can do when Anarchy is around is to submit to its power. No one leads that dance, its steps are not scripted, its ballad, unpublished.

I feel powerless of late. I have a list of things that Logic and Reason gave me to do. Keep Grateful nearby, snuggle Positivity at night and don't forget Responsibility at

all times. But Anarchy has come in, firmly nestled on Mania's coattails and I am not safe. I find myself unable to keep anything of sustenance in my stomach and this is of much concern to me. For just a moment today I had this overwhelming need to cradle myself in my own arms because for just a moment, Pity was suffocating me to death. Empathy and Mercy erupted within me on behalf of myself. All at once I was so sad with Shame and Despair. I thought that just maybe, just maybe, I might be able to find my way out of this pit of darkness. I just might be able to go home, if only there even were such a place.

July 1, 2012

Joy...

"Don't love it so well, it may be taken away from you."

When I was in college during the 90's I did an assignment on Eudora Welty and Flannery O'Connor. I'm not quite sure what I read, hell, I don't even remember which author wrote the quote that would later define the way in which I love. All I can recall is that as soon as I read that line, it resonated within me. A year later I wrote in my journal, "Oh I think that I shall never trust or love with this funny heart of mine. And I so much want to be loved." Somewhere before or after I penned the poem, "The Sadness of Joy" in which I wrote about the loss of Joy. I never want to love Joy so well as it may be taken away from me.

After the birth of my first child, I had a severe panic attack. I remember it as though it were yesterday, even though this occurred 17 years ago. I could barely breathe; I was being slowly suffocated by Anxiety, Fear and Panic. As I sat in the car with my newborn quietly sleeping in his never before used car seat, I put my head between my legs. I saw this on television once and as I did not have a paper bag, I hoped this act

would restore my ability to breathe. While I was sitting in this awkward and embarrassing position a million thoughts ran through my mind. What if someone kidnaps him? What if he dies of sudden infant death syndrome? What if I lose him? I had already loved him before I'd ever met him. I had loved him so much that I married a man I did not love. I had loved him intensely and that love was worth sacrificing anything, even my own happiness. As I began to feel a bit better, I raised my head from between my legs. I thought about that quote that had always been at the forefront of my conscious decisions to love even before I had read it and imprinted it upon my heart. I had promised myself that I would never love again when my trust and love was irreparably broken by my first and only "real" boyfriend. But I had broken that promise I made to myself, and he was Joy materialized, as each of my children have been. Perhaps I could love Joy for just a little while and if it were taken from me as someday it would undoubtedly be, the time spent with Joy would have been worth the loss.

July 11, 2012

Faith...

I am trying hard to replace Fury with Faith, but I am failing. I find myself plotting and planning, calculating and devising a plan. Why do I feel as if I have gone back into the past, discovering paths already once traveled? This road is all too familiar, and I so desperately need a detour. Mercy and Pity arrive just in time as I am folded over as if I am in pain, crying as if I had lost her again, just yesterday. Just yesterday, eight years ago I cried into my hands in prayer, asking God, why, why, why. Just yesterday, eight years ago I felt as though my entire insides had been ripped out. How was I still alive? How was my heart still beating? It hurt that much. I thought from that moment on, that I should and must be dead.

My ex-husband said the words today, Vengeance and Grudge recorded the devastation he stirred within me, and Fury, Vengeance, Anger and Hate had a conference call about it. I am quite sure that they are planning some sort of uprising or upheaval of sorts. No one gets to hurt me this way and lives to tell about it, without scars that is.

Vengeance grabbed me by the hair out of prayer with Faith and repeated my ex-husband's words to me. He said I abandoned my daughter by moving. He said, I abandoned my daughter by moving. And when he said this, I could no longer speak to him, because instead of words, all I had were tears.

It's not the first time he's said this. But it is the first time that I actually believed that he has been saying the same words to my daughter. Of course, it hurts me to hear it, because it isn't true and it's a hurtful lie, but it devastates me more to believe that my daughter has heard it.

The first time that I lost sight of Faith was in 1997. I just couldn't see it anymore over the blur of tears and Agony. I was so angry that God didn't save my baby that I delivered as a stillborn fetus that I was blinded with Sorrow, Pain and Grief. Why did God hate me so much? What had I done? Why had He taken my baby away from me? Days later I regretted not seeing the baby after it was born. I had refused to see her or him. I thought that it would be too painful. But I was wrong. Nothing, nothing could have made my experience of delivering a stillborn baby more painful than it already was. I still grieved, I was still angry and I was still lost.

Guilt swooped in and kept me company while I was recuperating in bed. Guilt said, well, you just didn't appreciate that pregnancy. Maybe if you hadn't said the timing was wrong, you wouldn't have lost that baby. I swallowed Guilt and all his Mantras. It was my fault. Of course, it was. The only living that I could bear to do was to have

another baby. This was the only thing that would make me whole again.

A few months into a trial of Anti-depressants, Faith appeared out of nowhere. The medication had a way of chasing the others away just for a little while. Faith persuaded me that all things happen for a reason and that with her, my baby girl would come to fruition.

And so I took a leap with Faith. I danced in the dark, blindfolded by day and allowed Hope to spin me around in circles. I penciled in a date with Joy and dallied with Peace for about nine solid months. Bliss showed up when she was born and to this day, there has never been a happier moment in my life and since then, I have never seen Bliss again.

I did not abandon my daughter. I could not stand to live without her, so I tried to kill myself a million different ways. And when I tried to live with her every other weekend, I wanted to kill her father a million different ways. The pain of having Bliss dangled in front of my eyes but not being able to touch it, smell it, hold it when I wanted to, was more than I could bear. I finally realized that if I stayed, Bliss would be dead to me forever, for I was close to extinguishing its owner.

I had no choice but to gather up Fury, Vengeance, Anger, Hate and Grudge in the middle of the night and smuggle them off to Mexico. And even then, once safely landed in another country, their planning and plotting did not cease. No, no, their dedication was relentless, and unwavering, it drove me into Madness.

July 16, 2012

Desire..

I have a crush on someone. Why is it that whenever I have a crush on someone it's someone totally inappropriate for my age group, he's married and in no possible way

is the relationship ever going to go past first base? I have given up trying to psychoanalyze myself in this regard. The heart wants what the heart wants, right?

When I was a freshman in college I had a crush on a professor that I worked for. For a long while I would woo him by dropping off love poetry from an anonymous sender. Each morning I would stalk him as he walked towards his mailbox. I would giggle and watch as he read my love poem of the day. I would get turned on secretly as I watched him blush, look around and stuff the poem into his pocket. For several months I did this. I had no idea what would become of this game, or if anything would ever come of it.

He was the geekiest professor on campus. He hadn't even discovered contact lenses at this point. I actually had no idea what attracted me to him other than his intellect. Well, there was something about his goofy grin that got to me. I couldn't place my finger on it, but I wanted this guy, and I wanted him badly. Of course, my virginity was sorta in the way of making this fantasy happen. Awkward...

When I finally got up the courage to tell him that I was his secret admirer, I was already in love with someone else. I still wanted to play with him, but the rules had changed. I told him that we should just be friends, but that didn't stop him from wanting me more. We almost crossed the line twice, but I came to my senses with thoughts of loyalty for my boyfriend. And twice, he came to his senses with thoughts of loyalty for his wife. Ultimately, I believe that it was the thrill of wanting someone that I could not have completely that stimulated me the most. He, on the other hand, was just a dirty old man.

So lately as I reflect upon my love life, wait.. what love life? I mean so lately as I reflect upon my lack of a love life, I pause. I'd love to tell myself that I don't require a

life mate. Who needs the disappointment of love, marriage and divorce? What's that all about when you've already been married twice? Desire seeps into my dreams at night, taunting me with images of pleasure. And as much as I want to ignore her, she doesn't go away. I can remember a time before Anger stepped on the scene where Desire was my best playmate. Oh, the things that we would do, oh the trouble that we would make. Now that I am older, I seem to crave Desire just as much as I used to in my younger years. I still go for the nerdy intellect type of guy, the one who knows way more than I do. I still adore the not so perfect body type, the generous soul, the caring protective fatherly figure. The only problem with this is that I never actually married this guy.

I hate being alone. It has been way too long since I've enjoyed the firm hold of someone's arms around me. It has been way too long since I've believed that I deserve to embrace Desire once again. I think that this current crush of mine is adorable. It's as innocent as a baby's bottom. It's new and fresh and no one has intrigued me this way since that freshman year of College. Oh, there's nothing physical about this crush, it's completely innocent... I think.

July 18, 2012

Deception...

"All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder and crush him." Sun Tzu

I disowned my father the other day. Just like that, years of longing and yearning for him to be a father to me were erased in what seemed like an instant. I feel as if a burden has been lifted from my shoulders as the responsibility for his actions are for once, his and not mine. He left us; he decided to fall into prison life like a warm bed after a night out in the rain. I did nothing wrong. So why then did I feel this need to rescue

him? Why then did I want to be there for him and take care of him as if he were my child, not the other way around? Sometimes I curse this curious heart and spirit of mine as it is capable of tremendous and unwavering love and devotion yet in the same space it is capable of unwavering and venomous wrath.

Wrath...Vengeance, Anger and Fury on a mission to kill

War can be triggered within me for several reasons and for each separate reason War demands a separate result. When I discovered the deception that my father had led me to believe, War was alerted by anonymous instant messenger. Anger ignited a bomb under Fury and Mercy tried to intervene on his behalf. I had succumbed to Pity for my father. Just as I had fantasies of rescuing my mother from alcoholism and depression, I had visions of rescuing my father from prison life. But what I discovered the other day was that he never really needed my troops after all. The mission was aborted, and War demanded total retreat.

At the end of the day, I felt deceived. How could I have not known that while I was living in the ghetto of Baltimore City with only a stove to warm our home in the winters that my father was living his best and most comfortable life in prison? How could I have not known that while we were homeless and as I bounced around from home to home that my father never had such a worry as he partook in the stability of prison walls as his permanent home? So, all the while and as I have just discovered my father has been quite spoiled. I find it sadly hilarious that I while I imagined him existing on rationed out prison meals only; he was spending hundreds of dollars on a "special diet". While I would often have toasted bread for dinner and a potato, he was relishing his prison life, and allowed to be a "picky eater". He has lived in comfort all of these years, and I had no idea that I was being deceived. It's really not his fault Mercy and Pity keep

whispering to me, he didn't actually deceive me on purpose. It's not really a lie if you don't say it, if you don't deny it; you can still plead innocence in activating deception by intent. I'm not a fan of smoke and mirrors, no matter how it's portrayed. So, I'm retreating away from him because I feel that having this type of person in my life is counter productive. Bitterness and Scorn take the last 31 years of missing him and hands him over to Grudge. And once Grudge has him, there is really nothing that I can do.

July 19, 2012

Wrath...

I'm currently at war with quite a few folks, well entities, people, whatever. Why does it seem as though my life in the military will never end? I didn't sign up for this shit; I was totally drafted, assigned, then reassigned and blown the hell up more than once. I often wonder what it would be like to just completely go AWOL. War is exhausting, well the way I do war, it is.

In my book of war I don't employ the tactics of deception. I don't utilize lies and I definitely do not cheat or steal. If I can't tackle you full on, guerilla style, face to face and directly, then it really isn't war for me, it's just an unpleasant skirmish.

A few years ago, when I was assaulted by the people that I am now suing in Federal court, Wrath was triggered. The fact that I was abused and traumatized was nothing new for me, but it was the appearance of Wrath on the scene that surprised me. In all of my skirmishes throughout life and even during the great war of losing custody of my daughter, War has never assigned me to Wrath before.

After I was assaulted and traumatized, Wrath lay dormant. Reason and Logic and even Responsibility blindsided me. They actually wanted a temporary leave from War. I suppose it was due, I had just returned from war the previous month during a skirmish on behalf of my late mother. And I was so so tired of fighting. When the assault occurred I saw Wrath for just an instant but I gave in to Surrender and Avoidance instead and danced with them for a while.

Sexual assault is a powerful and often permanent violation of the soul. As a young child and as a teenager I have been sexually assaulted multiple times. One adult, two boyfriends, and one complete stranger. I do not include the attempted sexual assaults in my history, those that I ran from and never looked back.

The aftermath of the assault is like a fire that you carry around with you. Sometimes just the smell of the smoke will reignite within you memories from the time that you were burned. You might see something on the television that is similar to the time that you were laying on the floor, watching everything crumble into ashes around you. The impact and the memories are forever burdened upon your soul. You cannot squelch it out with water, damp towels or stamp it out with suffocation. No matter where you go, it follows you, it's always there, simmering, just waiting to spark and take off into a rolling blaze of Fury.

After an assault I generally retreat back to base. Mercy tends to my wounds as Shame and Guilt riddle me with insults and questions. Fear and Panic do a pretty good job by immobilizing all of my troops and there is nothing left to do but choke on my own sobs as I slowly give in to smoke inhalation.

It took me about a year to gather up my troops again. The authorized leave was officially over. It was time to go to war again. I thought about going AWOL when the order came in from War. I thought, for once, for once, can't I just let this one go? I know that what happened to me was painful and wrong and I know that Scorn wants them to pay. But during the leave of absence from war I was just beginning to see Peace and Joy again. I thought that perhaps I had finally figured out how to put the fire to rest once and for all. I wanted to forget and sink my head into the sands of illusion.

Anger and Grudge zip tied Reason's hands behind her, Vengeance and Fury threatened Logic with extinction. And War rode in with a jug of gasoline and used Vindication as lighter fluid. The fire within me was reignited, but it didn't just spark and flicker, it spread. But this time, I wasn't afraid to burn. As I stepped back into time recalling the horrific sexual assaults that I've endured, I wasn't afraid. War held my hand and led the way as I met this new tool I'd learn to utilize.

Wrath taught me that I should not look to put out the fire but instead that I should allow it to consume me so that I might burn my enemy upon contact. War demanded total annihilation of this enemy, and there would be no more leaves of absence. Vindication, Fury and Wrath devised a plan of attack and surprisingly it included Mania. They would use her for a lot of their dirty work. She is crafty, atypically ingenious and if given the proper support, even I feel bad for the enemy. So now that the battle lines are drawn and everyone knows their position in this war, who is this new soldier showing up on the scene? Persecution

August 15, 2012

Serenity..

I'm officially on vacation. I know, I know, War said that there wouldn't be another leave of absence, but Rebellion, Avoidance and Reckless influenced Mercy and Pity to act on their behalf and now War has a date with Anarchy. I do not know how long this reprieve will last, but I got a glimpse of Serenity the other day.

It is extremely hard for me to sit still. And if I do find myself sitting still, often times I am doing at least two things at once. I noticed this anomaly a few years ago and deemed myself unable to relax. I am one of those people who cannot watch television without reading a book or folding laundry. I am one of those people who cannot cook dinner without listening to a book on tape. Most times while committing two tasks at once, I often allow a third task to occupy my time as well. And yes, when I am sleeping, I am not just sleeping. I also talk and grind my teeth in my sleep as well; and I have dream after dream after dream. In fact, I am so trained to multitask that even when I am asleep and dreaming, I am in such a light state of sleep that if someone enters the room quietly without saying a word, I violently awaken to their presence. If there were such a person who needed to relax, that would be me.

Persecution.... Scorn, Anger and Hate playing a game of eeni, meeni, miny, moe, tag you're it.

Why is it ok to discriminate? Why shouldn't those who wrongfully discriminate and mistreat others be persecuted whenever possible? I think that Scorn stays up late nights just practicing tying the noose that he wants to put around our enemies' necks. It would be a perfectly tied knot and it would serve only one purpose, to effectively and

efficiently, slowly suffocate the enemy. I think that Hate, Grudge and Anger roast marshmallows by the full moon and draft outlines on how to defeat our enemy until the wee hours of dawn. When I awake, fully refreshed and ready to contemplate my next move in this battle, they have all been dancing in the moonlight, staking hotdogs over a firepit and the plans of attack have already been drafted and delivered by War by 5am. Perhaps this is why Serenity has come, draped in good intentions, and sustained by pure necessity.

Only the good die young and only the truly lonely feel pain. I used to wonder why I felt so lonely in a room full of people and in my older ages the answer to that question became clearer to me. That lonely feeling, the feeling of being alone, unloved, and perhaps unwanted is wholly introspective. Once I stopped looking outside of myself for guidance, for support, for love and for meaning of self, the loneliness drifted away. I get to visit with Serenity now because I stopped seeking her. Serenity is Peace and Joy, having a slumber party with popcorn, romantic comedies and late-night giggles. I deserve this time with her because I've been miserable enough.

August 16, 2012

Misery...

My aunt died. And I haven't had such a reaction to a death since my grandmother passed away seven years ago. I reacted with anger and for the first time in my life, I engaged in fisticuffs with several inanimate objects around the house. After a while I calmed down, well it was actually after a few shots of Tequila, but whatever works. I was so exhausted from crying my eyes out and beating on the furniture and the walls that I passed out into a fitful slumber.

Grieving the death of my mother's baby sister was briefly endured and I was left

to wonder, why on earth did I behave like such a crazy person in the first place? She was my favorite aunt and seemingly all I had left in the world of my mother. But this is the silliest thought and why oh why do I feel this way? All I do know is that without her somewhere in the world, the remnants of mom appear to be slipping away.

Wisdom reason and logic working together in concert

Aunt Gloria was the youngest of three sisters and I always thought that she was the most beautiful woman that I had ever seen. Not only did she have the longest, thickest head of naturally curly hair I had ever seen on a black woman, but she was always sexy curvy thin, and she owned a killer smile. I wanted to be just like her when I grew up but not just because of her outer beauty, but she also had a magnetic personality. One of the first things that came to everyone's mind when we all learned that she was to undergo radiation treatments for breast cancer was Aunt Gloria's hair. Aunt Gloria was going to lose all of that gorgeous, gorgeous hair. It is sort of silly now that I think back to this.

Here the woman is with this devastating diagnosis and all we can talk about is, poor Aunt Gloria's hair. How oh how will she cope? Will she wear wigs? Will she get a scarf? Oh no, what a shame to have cancer AND lose all of that beautiful hair. When this issue came up during a conversation with her, she shrugged it off and actually laughed. Her hair was now the least of her concerns, she was going to beat Cancer. And kick its ass for a short season, she did. Sometimes it's not about winning the war, it's about what we learn about ourselves during the battle. And if we are to lose, it's enough to say that we didn't run and we stuck out the fight until the end.

Aunt Gloria was a character in her younger years. She was reckless, impulsive and always in trouble. Perhaps she suffered from bipolar disorder as well? She used to

babysit me when I was a baby and then 3 and then 5 and then 7. My mother officially ended her reign as babysitter when she discovered that Aunt Gloria used to take me shoplifting with her on occasion. I remember one Easter stuffing chocolate covered bunnies into my pants and then I remember sitting in the back of a police car, on the way to foster care. Yes, Aunt Gloria, she was always in trouble, and now, she is gone.

I think that finally I am getting used to loss. I actually almost expect it now. Wisdom grows slowly from a seedling. It's not something that you can gain overnight or from someone else's perspective. You must tend to it, nurture it and watch it grow within yourself. My mother tried to teach me many things. I look back on those lectures and I think, good God, why didn't I listen to her? I could have crafted such a better life than the one I have now. She knew everything, every mistake I would make, every bad marriage I would create, and every step I would take in the wrong direction. She knew. Every mistake, every misstep, every single action in our lives is food for Wisdom. Funny thing though, if we aren't careful, our Wisdom will ripen, but we may not have the necessary tools to harvest it. I've been hacking away at my Wisdom for about a year now and I've finally realized that what I really needed in order to penetrate it was a little bit of perspective and maturity.

The thing about wisdom is that having it doesn't guarantee that you won't make the big mistakes. I know exactly what I am supposed to do and why, I just choose to be a fuck up every now and then. I get caught up with Rebellion, Petulance and Impulsivity so much so that I don't care if I'm being a total and complete fool. Wisdom always reminds me the next day and I wish that I could shut out its advice, but I think I'm getting too old for this now. The best things in life are free. When I wake up each morning, I try to remember this. I hit the reset button on the prior's day mistakes. I don't beat myself up

anymore for the things I shouldn't have done or said. I take a deep breath and envision a day without being a complete idiot, and then it happens. I take a slow dance with Misery down memory lane filled with regrets and broken dreams. I wander down a path of missteps and dark corridors until I come upon Stagnation. It amazes me, the amount of effort it takes to remain exactly the same.

August 17, 2012

Stagnation...

Sometimes change is good, but too much change can be highly unproductive. After a decade of too much change, I find myself reluctant to change absolutely anything. I've heard someone describe this feeling as analysis paralysis. There are so many things that I'd like to change about my life, but I am fearful of the failure that change may bring. I'd like to think of myself as this boldly independent woman. I'm ready and willing to take on the world and Katy bar the doors because here I come. But in reality, I am just so so lost. I've written this about myself someplace before and it is just so damn right on. I'm usually driving 100 mph down a one- way street at midnight and I've lost the directions to where I'm supposed to be going. And did I mention that I suffer from night blindness... Oh yes, at some point, I am going to crash it is just a matter of time.

Duplicity...disingenuous, deceptive

Lately I have been in the presence of Duplicity. She is running the greatest con game on my mood swings and emotions. Duplicity is making me out to be a liar and, I never lie because I absolutely hate liars. I don't lie, I justify. I can always justify an inconsistency with a perfectly reasonable explanation. So, when I say that I do not need a better half to complete a whole vision of my future self and when I say that I do not

care if I ever hold the hand of some man I desperately adore, I need to justify these assertions to myself. I wanted to take the longing and the loneliness and stuff them someplace where I might never find them. I keep them locked away with Hope and Trust and I honestly sorta never care if I see them again. So, I remain tight with Duplicity and we dance a staccato tango as she convinces me to tell myself one thing even though I may feel another.

This type of duplicity will almost guarantee the stagnation I have grown to loathe because by nature I desire to shake things up, or mess them up royally just so I can watch the drama unfold. The constant desire to change is somewhat tiring. The plotting, the planning, the wanting, the needing all requires a dedicated amount of energy and focus. And at the end of the day when things are just as they were in the beginning of the day, nothing has changed and you've accomplished nothing.

I watched my mother go through this cycle day after day, year after year, until she ultimately died far worse off than we all could have ever imagined. She was afraid of change, but she wanted it so much. In the end Stagnation killed her, but Duplicity delivered the first blow. If she had just grabbed onto the truth and held it for one moment in time, enough time to make a change, things could have been different. Truth is often hard to face. I hide from it often because of the things that I do not want to hear. I've tried shutting it out many times with Avoidance, and Mania, but most often Anarchy. Why would I want to face Truth when I can lounge around in the arms of Duplicity and Delusion? They always tell me what I need to hear. I'm capable, I'm happy, I'm in control and here's my favorite one, I can handle anything, and I don't need anyone.

Sooner or later, I'll hit a fork in the road as I am speeding down that one -way street in the dark. I'll be forced to turn around and change direction and as I do, I will be

faced with two choices, one of which I must make in order to get home. I will need to either follow the road to Truth, retracing my steps and eventually I'll get to where I need to go or I could take the unmarked route to Reckless Abandon, I've been down this path before and it's just so much quicker.

August 24, 2012

Deliverance....

My teenager is crazy. I don't mean that my oldest son is moody or the typical desperately attention seeking teenager, I seriously mean that he is crazy. When he was two years old, I noticed that I may have slipped him the "crazy gene" and ever since then I have felt incredibly guilty for wanting to be a mother.

My mother took me to visit my grandmother once in the psychiatric institution where she lived. I just remember being so afraid. The residents were visually abnormal in appearance and even at ten years old, I could tell that I never wanted to be "crazy" like they were. My grandmother didn't speak in any language that I could understand. I just think that my mother wanted me to meet her, and I'm grateful for having that opportunity. I never saw her again after our first visit in the institution, she was later murdered when she escaped and that crime was never solved.

I know that my grandmother's murder deeply affected my mother; she loved her even though she had been unable to raise my mother because of her illness. Unfortunately for my mother her father was also deeply disturbed, and she was left to fend for herself and perpetuate this cycle that I hoped would later end with me.

Deliverance.. liberation, freedom, escape

I can only imagine how my grandmother must have felt when she was locked

away in an institution and she so much wanted to be free. My mother told me that my grandmother would often escape from the hospital grounds, and they would find her days later, wandering the streets of Baltimore City. The legal mind within me was all over this. I thought, why didn't you sue the hospital for negligence for allowing my grandmother to escape the hospital on multiple occasions, which eventually led to her death? But at the time that this happened, I was seeking my own deliverance from my own institution of misery. I was of no help to my mother, because I could offer no help or solace to myself.

I see Deliverance dancing alone in the moonlight when my vision of the impact of my illness on my life is clear and unclouded. I want to grab onto her so badly because I ache for freedom, but she dances on in solo ballerina form. I often describe myself as a hostage to my mental illness. Bipolar disorder is a tyrannical ruler of its victims. Its controlling nature is overwhelming and individual choice is not an option. I am the victim of my own mind. I crave Deliverance, but it never comes.

When I found myself as a patient in a hospital two years ago, I was being held hostage at that moment by bipolar disorder. What I really needed was a hostage negotiator, not a shoot first ask questions later medical staff. If I were on a rooftop, threatening to jump and splatter my brains all over the pavement, would not they have spent as much time as it took to change my mind? If I were being held hostage in a bank with an armed crazed man threatening to shoot me, would not they have spent as much time as it took to have me released without harm?

When bipolar disorder is triggered it decides everything that you say, the words that come out of your mouth and the reactions you may have to outside stressors. I wonder, if this hospital that I am suing had taken the hostage negotiator approach, would

I have been harmed at all?

Why did they shoot first instead of implementing a negotiation with bipolar disorder? I find that he can be quite rational if the trigger that initiated his response in the first place is assuaged. Instead, now I am left with this wound from the shooting.

Nothing seems to heal it. It just lies there, open and unattended. Mercy and Pity apply antibiotics and we're all afraid it may worsen. I am personally afraid to seek treatment for it, because just speaking of it causes more pain than the wound itself. I hope that it will just go away, Avoidance says not to think of it and maybe it won't really exist.

I was the victim of my own mind. I was frightened and alone and I didn't understand why no one wanted to help me reach Deliverance from the tyranny within. Anger triggered Fury and Fury triggered Bipolar Disorder and Mania asked questions that no one wanted to answer. What happened next signaled Panic, Shame and Fear, all of which resulted in the wound that which may never heal.

I often see Deliverance in full ballerina costume dancing until the sun comes up. And I think as I am being held captive by the restraints of Bipolar Disorder, oh my, oh my, what is must be like to be free.

August 26, 2012

Passion...

I recently logged on to an online dating site. I told myself that I would never do such a thing, I mean, after all, this is how I met my second husband. But I did it anyway and I called it my little social experiment. I was having one of those lonesome days and there it was, fifteen minutes of quiet time and a fully charged laptop computer sitting in front of me. I thought that perhaps it would give me a glimmer of hope, perhaps one day

I might actually step out of Stagnation and dare to dream again.

For the past eleven years I have been living under a self-imposed spell, allowing myself to sit with Shame, Fear, Illusion and Guilt. I've memorized the advice of Misery and poured my soul into Doubt. I've used Avoidance, Delusion and Mania to sidestep reality because it was actually more familiar to steep myself into sadness than to face the fact that I was a failure at marriage.

I want to lament and beat myself up with Blame reinforced by Truth, but I've come to realize lately, that I am so much more than the past eleven years of my life. My mistakes do not define me, but they have paved the road to Wisdom. I'd like to forgive myself for allowing Passion to lead me on this route that I've been lost on for quite some time, but Grudge is unwilling to let it go. I'm not sure I can ever forgive myself for not recognizing that I was involved in an abusive cycle spurred on by the wrong kind of Passion, yet I just sat there for years like a deer in the headlights.

Lust.. Desire chanting, gotta have it, must have it, want it!

When I first met my second husband a bit over a decade ago, Lust guided us straight into marriage discussions after only one date. For him marriage meant control and loyalty and for me it meant security and stability. I was under the impression that for once it might be safe to love him and perhaps for once my heart would not be broken into a zillion pieces. I was wrong. Passion felt strongly that an emotional connection had been formed and Lust continued to dominate our relationship for the first two years. How closely connected you can feel to someone who claims to love you, when you find that you have no one else in the world to rely upon and absolutely nowhere else to go. You end up buying into their vision of you, however skewed that vision may be. By the time you're ready to make a move toward any type of change at all you stall. You're frozen in

Stagnation because you now have interest; own stock, shares and a big chunk of equity in that person's credit line of bullshit about you. There is no possible way for growth to occur and no possible way for you to reap any sort of Wisdom about yourself and the direction of your life until you sell it back to them.

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle” Sun Tzu

For the first few years of our marriage, I knew neither my husband nor myself. I had gone straight from high school to college, from college to marriage and from marriage to marriage. Toward the end of the last decade, I believe that I resigned myself to thinking it's better the enemy you know than the one you don't. This way of thinking defeats the possibility of change. Duplicity is at work full time on this task day in and day out. I make plans, I desire change and I hate Stagnation and I am exhausted with this thought process. But yet, I remain stalled. I stand completely still surrounded with good intentions and broken promises. I keep waiting for the right moment and the right set of circumstances and before I know it, another year has gone by. I've been waiting for eight years now. I require a nudge, a gentle push in the right direction. Ah, who am I kidding, I need a swift kick in the ass. What am I waiting for?

Nowadays when I see Lust and Passion, I merely recognize them as illusory tools at my disposal. I do not allow them to cloud my judgment and at most, I keep them at arm's length. But what I have learned the most about myself during this eleven-year relationship is to never judge a book by its cover. My problem with reading anything has

always been a lack of patience. I never read the book from beginning to end and yes, I just want a summary or I'll just skim through it and read the ending. By applying this approach to my relationships this leaves me no time to appreciate the slow plot build up or the minute details in the character development. I no longer wish to jump first and think about the consequences of a bad landing later. I want to be the responsible adult that I know I can be, but there's just a bit of a slight problem that I see, and her name is Temptation.

September 6, 2012

Temptation...

When I was sixteen, Federal Agents stormed my home in the middle of the night, one year later I would run away from home, never looking back. As a little child I fantasized about running away. I often felt alone and unwanted. I thought that if I disappeared, no one would notice. The problem with finally making the decision to disappear is that I didn't expect to care as much. I didn't expect to put my own mother's feelings above my own. I wanted to be selfish, I wanted to say fuck you, I wanted to say so many things that temptation put into my mouth, but I swallowed those words instead.

When the Federal Agents ransacked my bedroom Petulance gave them a hard time and Rebellion refused to answer their questions. They had come there while we were sleeping, with a noisy helicopter and all, looking for my escaped convict father. They wanted to know if I had heard from him, they wanted to know so many things. But I was just discovering Scorn, so I refused to answer their questions. Perhaps I was still half asleep, it was after all like 2:30 in the morning. My biggest concern was that they were

emptying out my dresser drawers and my room was now the most gigantic mess I had ever seen. I thought, what was the purpose of this? If you are looking for my father, is it necessary to empty out my dressers? I'm pretty sure he cannot hide in there. I was irritated and I was just about ready to be taken down to the police station for further questioning.

My mother begged me, she pleaded. I don't even know why I was resistant. I had no idea what possessed me to behave that way and I was just about to be shoved into a police car when I decided to comply with their questioning. They said something like obstruction of justice or something and I knew they were serious. Heck, I didn't know anything anyway, and if I did, I was still keeping mum. I was just irritated into non-compliance and I was like; don't I get an attorney or something? Sometimes I say fuck you, as a knee jerk reaction when I'm irritated, but all it takes is one kind word and I'll give in to whatever you want. I hate that about me. I hate that I'm so trusting and so forgiving that I let you in even though you are only there to hurt me. My vulnerability is my weak spot, so I use Anger and Fury as protection. But they get me into so much trouble that I might as well just sit with vulnerability and deal with it.

My mother broke my heart again when I was eighteen. I forgave her the first time but the second time, I had to run. I was crying so hard that I could not breathe. I turned the corner and found a payphone.

I was a blubbering idiot in broad daylight, but I couldn't care about how I looked in that moment. I thought perhaps that I was dying. How could something hurt so much and not stop your heart? In that moment, I thought death was better than having to live with that kind of pain.

For years I thought my mother had come to understand what her boyfriend had done to me. For years I thought that we didn't need to talk about it because she knew, she was sorry, and he was gone. For years I was a complete and utter complete, fucking idiot. I was tempted to tell her. I wanted to tell her so many times. I even wanted to tell her before she died. But the words could never make it to my lips and damn them, damn those words that I'll never get to say. I loved her, why would I want to hurt her with words? So, I stopped those words dead in their tracks because I could never hurt her. And because I loved her more than I love myself.

When I was 18, my mother told me that if I had been molested, it was my fault. She had warned me not to be so friendly with men, she had done everything that she was supposed to do, but I was too friendly when I was 7 and 8 and 9 and 10 and 11 and 12 years old. She said that if I was molested it was all my fault. I had done something horribly wrong to draw that type of attention upon myself. Did I? God, I spent so many years wondering what I did wrong. I spent so many years thinking, what kind of idiot wants a step-father and asks for his attention? What did I do wrong again?

When I heard those words, I understood that she was drunk and angry. I understood that she was a woman who could not control the words that came out of her mouth. But what I never understood was the apology that never came. So, I ran away. I called my grandmother and my friends from high school and my friends from middle school, and I bounced around from home to home until I left for college to live at the dormitory at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. I never wanted to see her again. And I never wanted to speak to her again.

I had lived in fear of rape for the eight years he was her boyfriend. I didn't want the attention that I received. I didn't want to be molested for five years and then remain

living in fear the next three because he had been discovered and he might strike out in revenge. I didn't want to be afraid every night as I lay in bed in fear of some imagined eventual rape. I wanted it to stop. I wanted my mother to protect me. I wanted to be safe and nothing I did or could have done was the cause of that sort of sickness that befell my mother's boyfriend. It was him, it was all him. I just ached for someone to say they were sorry and to hold me and tell me that it wasn't my fault. But No one ever did. Instead, I didn't get apologies I got blame and that was the reason I never told her in the first place. For some reason I knew that I would get blamed and that I would never receive acceptance. I knew my mother inside and out, and that is why I didn't tell her for so long.

It was hard to face her knowing that she never believed in me. I started to wonder if my own mother loved me after all. Temptation wanted me to just tell her, tell her before she died how much she hurt me. I would get this off my chest. I would tell her that she was just some fucked up drunkard who allowed her daughter to be molested day after day, night after night and then when she found out about it, she blamed her own daughter. I wanted to blast her. I wanted to make her see how she obliterated my heart. She totally obliterated my heart. But in the end, all I could do was be silent. My feelings don't matter anyway. I don't really matter. I have always cared more for others than myself. I hate that about me. I want to be selfish, and I want to put my needs first. I just don't seem to know how. I think Abstinence has something to do with it.

September 8, 2012

Suicidal....

Every time I see this one commercial in particular advertising the drug Cymbalta I pause on the phrase, "Depression hurts." I think, "You aint kidding me." Before I ran away off to college I had never experienced depression for any length of time.

Somewhere between the ages of 6 and 18 I decided that I could just keep pushing my feelings and emotions into some imaginary box. No matter what happened to me I would take the hurt and the anger, the confusion and the pain and I would put those feelings on the sideline and I would run the ball with Façade.

Living in a home with an angry emotionally and physically abusive alcoholic who turns a blind eye to her child being molested is painful. You don't understand why your father abandoned you in the first place and you cannot understand why you feel abandoned by your mother when she is standing there in front of you. The loneliness that pervades you, the fear that swallows you and the shame that refuses to leave you, all take turns consuming your every thought process. Depression is a result of the pain, it's like a cancer caused by something deep within, quite unresolved and uncured.

Each day I went to school, and I put on this brilliant smile, this wonderful happy little girl was just playing dress up and making faces with Façade. I couldn't tell a soul what was really going on at home. I just wanted to forget. And for the short time during the days while I was in school, I did forget. And then in the afternoons I would have to return, return to that place where Façade could not enter.

Façade.... Pretense, fake, disguise

When I went to college something happened. That box that I had been carrying around suddenly opened. I was torpedoed by a wave of emotions, knocked down and pelted by sadness, grief, shame, all wrapped up in the embodiment of Depression. I was immobilized by the intense emotional pain that was somehow and most strikingly physical as well. My heart physically hurt and in the confusion of dealing with my newly found emotions, I would just weep for days.

So lately I am reminded that there is no escape when you suffer from an unpredictable and often crippling mood disorder. I try to escape through Anger and Fury.

I try to escape through wine and Tequila. I try to escape through Mania and Obsession. I try to escape but I just don't seem to be able to run fast enough toward Apathy. When I am exhausted from running, when I am done with the race of emotions and moods, Suicidal steps in and offers me water and massage and a place to lay my head. Suicidal is the ultimate escape path, the line at the end of the race, the promise of victory after the marathon. When I am being pelted by Depression I am just running in place. I am truly exhausted. So, when I see that commercial for Cymbalta and they say, "Depression hurts." I think, what an understatement because it doesn't just hurt, it's borderline torture.

September 13, 2012

Abstinence...

Have you ever played the game of keep away? My toddlers have taught me this game over the years. I try to take something away from them and they reach it out to me as if they are going to give it to me. I go, great, the baby is going to give it to me after I have chased the toddler all around the house first. I get excited and reach out my hand and then they snatch the item away from sight and giggle. The toddler then runs behind a table or around the corner. I find them, I say, "Now give it to me, come on, give it to me..." The toddler grins, holds the item out that he or she isn't supposed to have. I feel relieved. I think, finally, this game is over, and then as quickly as my hand goes out, the toddler's hand just as quickly recoils. I think, "oh.. not again. I am so tired of this game. Why does this baby think that this is funny?" I'm exhausted. The game of keep away just isn't fun anymore. Perhaps it's because I have had not one but five toddlers and they have all teased me to no end with the game of keep away; with coins they were going to swallow, with glass objects they were going to break, and with drinks they were going to

spill all over the carpet. For once I would just like for something in my life to come easy.

When I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 1999, I used to read things about myself in my medical records. They would say things like, "patient has poor impulse control". I hate it when medical professionals say that I have poor impulse control. To me this means that I burp and fart in public, I say curse words while giving public speeches, I compulsively steal muffins from the corner deli and I punch neighbors in the face when they offend me. I do not have poor impulse control; I simply have an occasional hiccup in controlling my behavior, which may seem like poor impulse control. Abstinence... denial, restraint, rejection

At some point during my childhood, I developed the art of Abstinence. One day I became extremely upset and I don't remember the reason. I ran into my room and I threw a seven year old tantrum. The police had come one day and taken my father away. My mother worked nonstop and already had a new boyfriend. I was overcome with a wave of emotions, so much that I broke everything that wasn't tied down in my bedroom. I smashed my favorite pink piggy bank into pieces onto the floor, I broke lamps, my cherished Thumbelina records and album player, I ripped the heads off of dolls and by the time I was done, my room was in shambles. I didn't care if my mother punished me. I didn't care about anything. I just rode the wave of anger and sadness until I was lost in it and drowning. Now, THAT was poor impulse control. It was the second time that I remember actually wanting to die. The year before I had thought of ways to suffocate myself, but I was only six so it didn't work out so well. Suicidal Ideation and me go way back, in fact, I think we're best friends. We have this love-hate relationship and I can't seem to get rid of him.

I was only seven years old when my father left and there was no way for me to

explain to my mother how losing him had affected me. The loneliness and the emptiness enveloped me like a tourniquet. I was a bleeding open wound, held together by this tourniquet and each day that went by without my father I felt this tourniquet squeeze and squeeze, until there was nothing left of me but gasps. Such that, whenever my mother would ask me why I was crying, all she would hear would be gasps. I had no words at seven and eight and nine and ten, eleven and twelve. I had no idea how to formulate my feelings into words back then. And by the time I was a teenager I had lost any interest in talking to her about anything. But how could she not know how totally and utterly devastated I was? One day my father was there, and one day, just like the game of keep away, he was gone. The problem with the way I loved back then is the reason I will never love again. When I love, I love with my whole heart. I decided a long time ago that Abstinence from Joy and Happiness was the only way to keep from going back to that feeling of being in that tourniquet. If I could abstain from Joy, if I could hold back just a little bit of myself from everyone, I would never have the life sucked out of my body ever again. I would never go back to just gasps and breathing in short short breaths. Funny thing though, after all of these years and through two failed loveless marriages; I still cannot manage to breathe. That tourniquet is still squeezing my heart; I haven't escaped anything by denying myself the life I deserve to live. I have only substituted one pain for another.

So, when Medical professionals say that I lack impulse control I want to scream until it isn't true anymore, because I know that controlling my emotions is a challenge for me. I never learned to control my impulses because I was too busy swallowing them and covering them up with smiles. I didn't want to worry my mother and I wanted to be a good daughter. The last thing that I wanted to do was complain. So that day in my

bedroom frightened me, I lost control for the very first time. I cleaned up everything before my mother came home. She never knew that I had lost it and destroyed everything. She never even noticed the items that I threw away. It wasn't that I was afraid that I would get into trouble; I just didn't want to add to her pain.

But after that day, I decided that I didn't want to feel anything anymore, so I stopped. I ignored the pain and the wispy gasps of air that came from my mouth when my mother asked me if I was ok. I ignored the flowing blood that poured from that tourniquet each year until I could no longer swim through it. Somewhere between suffering through a stillbirth and then losing my daughter in a custody battle I began to feel again. And now, the tourniquet has been lifted. There is nothing keeping me from destroying my bedroom and breaking everything in it. There is nothing from keeping me from punching my neighbor in the face if she pisses me off. I ride the waves of emotions until I fall off into Abstinence. I choose what I will keep away from myself now and sometimes, I choose nothing, absolutely nothing at all. I do have poor impulse control, I admit this, but it's only because this is the only language I know how to speak.

September 21, 2012

Malice...

When I was twelve years old, I tried to murder my brother. I actually placed my hands around his neck and squeezed and squeezed and squeezed. I was so enraged that I nearly killed him. Oh, never mind the fact that he was only seven years old, he deserved it. I remember being shocked about what I had done as I let go and he coughed and coughed and rolled around on the floor in shock and fear. What on earth was wrong with

me I thought? How could I become so upset that I would kill my own brother? I didn't understand this concept when I was twelve, but my actions were the result of misplaced anger. I didn't really want to kill my brother, I just needed to release the bottled up emotions I had been holding in for so long. He was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Malice...Rage, Anger, and Fury, on a joyride with Hate

I have never been a malicious person. I like to think of myself as kind, sweet and even naïve. I'm the girl in the grocery store who lets everyone get in front of her if they have fewer items than I have. I give \$20 to the homeless guy on the corner, and I yield to traffic even though I have the right away. I adopt every lost kitten that I find on the road. I still believe in four leaf clovers, the magic of rainbows and making wishes on falling stars. I'm honest to a fault, but I might tell a white lie if only it might spare someone's feelings. I have never been a malicious person, I repeat; I have never been a malicious person; that is until now.

Just like that twelve- year old girl suffering from the heartache of losing her father, I am still strangling my brother in a sense. I misplace my emotions, which often land on those around me. I have sucked the life out of living because of misdirected emotions. I have engaged in the game of tit for tat and have nothing to show for it, but a mountain of loss. When Malice is engaged, it's not just an eye for an eye. I don't want us to be evenly injured, what the hell is the point of that? I want to sit up late at night with War plotting your demise. I put sleep on hold as I entertain Mania and she draws up battle plans. No, I don't want us to be evenly injured, because Malice takes no prisoners.

At some point in my life I started being malicious because it made me feel like less of a victim. When someone wronged me, I became obsessed with getting that

person back. I changed. I stopped being so nice to everyone. I stopped looking for four leaf clovers and I shoot stray kittens with my bb-gun. I swear, the only reason I have remained in a bad marriage so long is so that Malice and War could take turns brow beating my husband on a daily basis. I stopped working on my marriage seven years ago because Grudge will not forgive, and Anger will not subside. I misplace my emotions and rearrange them quite frequently because frankly I have no idea what to do with them.

Of late I try not to live my life this way. My current mantra goes like this, "Bad things have happened for me not to me. I am not a victim." The opportunity to be broken was given to me so that I might slowly understand what it means to be whole. I was watching Iyanla Vanzant on the television the other night and she asked the question, "Who are you?" I thought, hmmm.. who am I? Who do I want to be? I later answered this question as I drifted off to sleep, I said, "I am Minny Frank, beloved child of God. I am here to serve others by sharing my past, my present and my faith. I want to heal myself so that I might help others heal as well. There is nothing preventing me from kicking Malice to the curb, just throw it under the bus and walk away; if only it weren't for Greed.

September 21, 2012

Greed...

"Give me what I want and I'll go away." I love Stephen King. He is ridiculously insane, in a good way. I love the television adaptations of his novels. I have probably watched them all. But my favorite of all time was Storm of the Century. I sat on the edge

of my seat as I watched the main character terrorize this New England town chanting all the while, "Give me what I want and I'll go away." He caused murder and mayhem and threatened to continue his spree of terror until they gave him what he wanted. What he wanted was impossible for the town to conceive, but the alternative was that they would all die. In the end they had to make a sacrifice for the good of them all.

I sometimes feel like Travis Porter in Storm of the Century. I have been throwing a tantrum for as long as I can remember. I like to blame this behavior on the fact that I did not have parents. I am somewhat stuck at two years old. I want what I want and I'm going to hold my breath until I get it. If you don't give it to me then I am going to throw myself on the ground and make a scene and I might even start head banging. Over the years when I stopped blaming my behavior on the fact that I didn't have parents I dug deeper. I thought perhaps I am behaving this way because for so long I was in a state of feeling deprived. When I was growing up I did not expect much. I was perfectly happy having little because I knew not what it meant to have much. I never threw tantrums because I was used to being homeless and without much food. I was used to having to wear several layers of clothing around the house because we couldn't afford heat in the winter. I never felt deprived in ways that I could have felt deprived, because I was too busy craving parental attention.

Over the years I have realized that I stopped waiting for others to love me, guide me and support me. I became self-indulgent in my pity for myself. I took the loneliness and the pain as a reason to be selfish and greedy. I closed the door to friendships and lovers. And after a while I didn't want to be loved, guided or supported, I wanted to be alone. I didn't care to share anything with anyone and that included sharing a life with a partner.

The best thing about growth, learning and Wisdom is acknowledging the undesirable facets of your character. When you stop looking at everyone else, their faults, their shortcomings, and just sit with yourself it becomes clearer. The focus should always be on the present, not the past. The goal of your life should always be not only purposeful, but also meaningful in a way that truly matters. I try to align my thoughts with such good intentions that someday I might lead my life this way. I now understand the undesirable facets of my character and I own it. Some days I still throw two- year old tantrums. I lash out in anger when I should have applied diplomacy. I threaten and make acts of war when I should have negotiated a treaty. I take more than I should because I'm Greedy at times. I chant, "Give me what I want, and I'll go away," when I don't even know what it is I want. Yes, I acknowledge the undesirable facets of my character but at the end of the day, I'm still a good person.

September 26, 2012

Pride....

"The wheel that squeaks the loudest gets the oil."

My children were holding an impromptu screaming contest the other day and I thought to myself, "How annoying, these children are screaming to the top of their lungs, attempting to find out which one of them can scream the longest and the loudest." And then I remembered. I used to be like that. I once won ten cents for being the loudest and longest screamer among a group of kids between the ages of 5 and 10. I had never been so proud. I remember taking that ten cents and thinking, "Wow, I won. I was the loudest, I was the loudest one." Years later I wasn't so sure that I had actually won. I don't recall why, but I think my dad rigged the contest. That would be something that he would do,

anything to make his princess happy. I discovered a long time ago that I disliked cheaters and just like my allergy to lying, I have a similar allergy to cheating to get ahead.

For three years in middle school I was teased relentlessly. Going to school was both a source of great anxiety and relief. I was ecstatic to leave home every morning, but I dreaded facing the class bully Andre Wise who hated me. Well at least, I think he hated me, no, I'm pretty sure he hated me. He would make fun of me and call me names, but what made things worse was that most of the other classmates would follow his lead. Pretty soon, they were all poking fun at me for the next three years. I remember once having the opportunity to stop the bullying. I was an exceptional student but Andre was failing the sixth grade. One day he asked if he could copy down my answers during an exam and I wasn't able to say no. I think that I was frightened of him. If I said no, he might end up strengthening his bullying efforts against me. I was already the last one to be picked for team during sports in gym class. No one wanted me on their team, even my friends were afraid to support me lest they become bullied as well.

When the day finally came to take the test, I was nervous. I felt like I was the one cheating on the test instead of just allowing Andre to peek at my answers from the desk next to mine. There was something inside of me that said this is wrong. It was just like the week before when I had discovered a purse inside the school bathroom stall. I was curious so I examined the contents and discovered a wallet full of dollar bills. And as much as I wanted to use those dollar bills for candy and soft pretzels at lunch, I turned the purse in to the teacher, dollar bills and all. I discovered that I had a conscience. I was twelve years old, and I had this incredible conscience. So, when I saw Andre glancing over, giving me this desperate look to show him my answers I kept my back turned to him. I wasn't a cheater and I wasn't going to help him cheat either, even if it meant being

bullied for the next three years.

There are so many things that I do over the course of a day that is just plain wrong. I drink wine at noon if I'm in a bad mood, just because I can and even though it never makes me feel any better. I won't allow anyone in the house to use the remote control because it's "my" T.V. I flip out and go nuts if someone eats or drinks the last of anything, but it's perfectly ok if I do it. If I had a swear jar it would be full of whatever it was I was supposed to be filled with when I said a bad word. If someone calls at what I believe is an obscene hour I rush to the telephone even if I am half asleep just so I can tell him or her how annoyed I am. I can be rude, obnoxious and vengeful. I justify all of my bad behavior by convincing myself that such behavior is warranted for whatever reason I see fit. I have a zillion bad habits that won't go away any time soon because I've adopted them as quirks and something with a name like quirky can't be all bad. Yep, I admit I engage in bad behavior, but what I hold onto the most is the knowledge that my twelve-year-old conscience still remains. If I won the lottery tomorrow, my first thoughts would be, how can I spend this money on someone that I love just to make them happy, because I get the greatest joy out of giving, not receiving. This is a trait I know that I get from my mother. She would have never rigged the screaming contest just so that her daughter could win ten cents. But who knows, perhaps I did win it fair and square, after all, I am pretty damn loud and if I really wanted to win that ten cents, not much would have kept me from getting it.

October 14, 2012

Ferocity...

I remember reading in the news that one of the entertainers in Siegfried and Roy was attacked by one of their show tigers at the Mirage hotel in Las Vegas. News reports

stated that the tiger had picked him up by his neck and that Roy had suffered severe injuries as a result thereof. I remember thinking, well it was just a matter of time, what kind of idiots play with wild animals and don't expect to be bitten or eaten by the darn things. Still, from an early age I have always wanted a pet Tiger myself, so who was I to blame poor Roy for trying?

That next year after the story ran about Roy I was living in Oakland Maryland at the time. As I have been a cat lover since I can remember, I had developed a relationship with a stray cat in the neighborhood. I took pity on the animal and began feeding it in the mornings. Eventually I believed that I could pet the cat during my morning jogs and it would often follow me around the block. One morning I squatted down to extend my hand and it violently attacked it. As I recoiled my hand in pain, bleeding from a bite and several scratches, I was befuddled. A cat had never attacked me before but what kind of sense did it make that this cat would attack me when I have been feeding it canned tuna for a week? Just as Roy blamed himself for the Tiger's attack at the Mirage, I wondered, did I do something wrong?

Ferocity...the result of mixing Fury, Anger, War and Wrath

When I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder several years ago I began a journey into an attempt at understanding myself. In my thirteenth year of living with the mood disorder I have come to recognize the truth about why I may often unleash Ferocity upon those I call enemy and upon those I claim to love. I have come to realize that just as Roy's Tiger was triggered by something, which caused it to attack its beloved owner I too have been triggered to attack loved ones in most often vicious ways.

What I have failed to comprehend is that although I understand the complexity of this mood disorder, I continue to fail to comprehend just how overall encompassing it

can be in certain areas of my life. Generally, I love you or I hate you, there is no in-between.

The only time that I recall during my illness when that line was a tad blurred was during the time that I suffered from Postpartum Psychosis in 2007. I loved the baby, but I also hated the baby, well my mood disorder hated the baby. I had never seen Ferocity touch anyone that I claimed to love, until then. I struggled to understand it, because I abhor the person I become when Ferocity is in charge. It's as though I disconnect from everything I know to be true or believe to be true. All I can do is react and keep reacting to the stimuli, that which triggered the ferocious response in the first place. There are words springing out of my mouth without a gatekeeper to maintain their content. I always regret the result of my actions later but it's always too late. Just like Roy's tiger, when I attack with Ferocity, the harm that I inflict upon someone may be great, but because I am human and not a wild animal, I feel the impact that I inflict as well, in Remorse.

News reports state that although Roy's Tiger grabbed him by the neck, the Tiger's trigger began with a woman's hairdo in the audience and he didn't mean to harm Roy. The tiger actually attempted to carry Roy to safety when he realized Roy was hurt. It was a physical reaction on behalf of Roy that confused the Tiger and prompted the attack. Until recently I couldn't fathom why Roy felt such compassion for this Tiger as he was being wheeled away to the hospital, he said to make sure no harm came to the Tiger. I thought, wow. How can you love this beast that has just caused you such physical pain and harm? Now I know why, it's because Roy had accepted the fact that being attacked was always a possibility. After all, the attack wasn't about harming Roy, it was merely an instinctive reaction.

So, the lesson I learned from feeding stray animals wasn't just the fear that I might

develop rabies and that I really need to keep up to date on my Tetanus shots; I learned that when you open yourself up to something that you may not fully understand, there is always the chance that you might get wounded, somehow.

October 15, 2012

Victorious...

“Don’t cut your nose off to spite your face?” Well, why the hell not if it means that you are the victor and your enemy is crushed beyond recognition? I have cut my nose off just to spite my face many many times. When I am sitting in the torture chambers of my illness, my temper, my mood swings, it isn’t often that I am convinced not to do just that. It comes back to “patient has poor impulse control.” Not that again, say it aint so, say it aint so.

The funny thing about being at war with someone who feels they have absolutely nothing to lose is the fact that we all have something to lose, the difference is whether or not we really care if we lose it or not.

When I was in highschool I remember learning about Spain’s insane tradition of running with the bulls. I was like, what on earth? I didn’t get it, the matador waves a red blanket and taunts the bull until it charges him? Hmm... Does that guy have a death wish? Back in 2004 I felt as though I was engaged in a war with my ex-husband over the custody of my daughter. He just kept waving that red blanket in front of my face each day, waiting for me to charge him, and I nearly did. I would have done anything to win that war, even if it meant cutting off my nose to spite my face. I was so engaged, so enraged with that fight that even though I moved through life for the next six years, all I

could see was red. I thought that I had nothing to lose and that getting my daughter back was the only thing that mattered. If I didn't have her, I had nothing, but I was wrong.

Remorse...Guilt, Grief, Pity, and Shame attempting to purge Regret

Losing the war with my ex-husband was the best learning experience of my life. I am still learning lessons from that decade of loss and pain. In refusing to back down from that fight and in refusing to care about what I was losing in the process of fighting that war, I lost myself, but most of all, I lost ten years of living. When I realized the impact of what I had lost besides the loss of my daughter, I poured myself into Remorse. The regrets piled so high that I couldn't see the forest for the trees. I didn't understand that by placing all of my focus on those regrets that I was actually going backwards in life, not forward, once again.

So now when I cut my nose off to spite my face because I see red and I have poor impulse control, I don't allow Remorse to get a word in edgewise. I forgive myself immediately and I move on. Beating myself up with regret is pointless, true victory lies in recognizing when you've lost and appreciating the battle regardless. What I learned during that ten-year black hole of my life is that I have much to lose besides the loss of one child. Instead of desperately holding on to that which I fear to lose, I expect to lose, because everything is temporary anyway. So, when engaged in war with me, I always advise it is best to tread lightly, because it's not that I don't have anything to lose, it's that I ultimately expect to lose it anyway.

November 15, 2012

Fragile....

Child Protective Services visited my home today. I almost cursed him out and told him to just keep my kid. Seriously, I asked him about foster homes in my area. I had my chance and I didn't do such a good job raising him. Right now that is the meltdown talking. I was amazed that I didn't kick him out today, probably because Fear reminded me that I do have three other children that they could snatch if I behave badly. So, I invited Reason to sit with him and I gave Panic a day off. I immersed myself into Responsibility and I succumbed to Judgment.

Judgment... A jury of no peers of mine

Don't judge me. What is that saying about walking a mile in someone's moccasins? No saying has ever resonated as much with me as that one. I am a bad mother. I AM a bad mother. I don't mind judging myself, I just don't need to hear it from anyone else. When I'm wrong, I beat myself up until I'm a bloody mess. There is no wrath like the wrath of Minny and when it's turned inward, all hell breaks loose upon her. I can't eat and I can't sleep and if I think that I deserve better, I remind myself that I do not. A jury of my peers surrounds me, and they have voted to hang me until dead. Mercy, Grudge, Hate, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Responsibility, Vengeance, and Pity voted 8 to 1 and I accept this verdict. I am losing my child tomorrow to a mental hospital while he recuperates and there is nothing worse than losing a child. I am walking around in a fog. I keep forgetting what day it is and every time that I remember what brought me to this place, I feel myself about to crumble into a million pieces. I wish that I had the glue to keep the pieces together. I wish that I had not failed in motherhood, but most of all, I

wish that for just one minute I could live in a space where I did not judge myself more harshly than I deserve.

November 16, 2012

Conviction...

I woke up this morning and wanted an instant appeal, but then I remembered that I confessed. I threw myself upon the mercy of the court and I confessed. I should have looked the jury members in the eye and pled guilty by reason of Insanity, his not mine. It is not that I am a bad mother, but I have done the best that I could under the circumstances.

When I was a little girl, I thought that my mother did not love me. She would constantly push me away when I craved attention the most. She would call me horrible names that wrecked my self-esteem and I could never understand why she didn't hug or kiss me and why she rarely said the words 'I love you'. When I came to rear children of my own, I finally understood my mother. It wasn't that she didn't love me, I just never grasped the depths of her disabilities.

My oldest child suffers from several disabilities, but he has mastered the art of disguise. The one thing that I realized over the last several weeks is that sadly I do not know my own child. When I think about the years that I spent seeking psychiatric help for him and when I think about the years that I spent being a bad example for him, I really cannot say that either contributed to his ultimate demise in mental health. I come from a long line of crazies, and we all have our own disabilities to contend with. The blind leading the blind would not be so far off a depiction.

When I found out that I was pregnant during my Junior year in College I rushed to the bookstore. I had no clue how to be a mother and I had no clue the responsibility that I was accepting. I didn't drink alcohol, and I didn't even take Tylenol. I married a man that I didn't love because I knew that the baby needed a stable environment. I got my driver's license at the age of 20 because I needed to get the baby to doctor's appointments on my own. I read every book from cover to cover on what not to do and what not to eat. I breastfed my baby until exactly one year and he was fully potty trained by the age of 2. I took him out of daycare and quit my job because I chose motherhood over a career. I made every decision in my life in consideration of my children. I did the best that I could, given my own set of disabilities, those of which I did not grasp the depths of their gravity.

So, when I woke up this morning, I wanted to appeal my conviction for being a bad mother. I wanted to rescind every word of my confession. I wanted a new trial and I decline my right to a Jury. Because, I am a good mother, I AM a good mother. The funny thing about accepting responsibility is in knowing when to relinquish it. I want to mother my child right now. I want to cradle him in my arms and kiss away his pain. I want, I want, I want, but this is not about me, and this is not about what I want, anymore. Because being a good mother isn't just about being the one who saves your child, it is about being the one who lets go when your child needs it the most.

November 27, 2012

Memory....

I had another meltdown yesterday over one suspicious breast lump and one painful memory. And while I was sobbing into a batter of Dungeness crab, my 20-month-old emptied an entire bottle of cooking oil onto the carpet. I had to laugh, ok, well I wanted to laugh, but it was just such a damn mess! Not only was he stomping on the cooking oil as if he were making grapes into wine, but he was rubbing his hands throughout the oil and enjoying the fact that he had just ruined at least 5 feet of carpet.

Dissociate... forget, ignore, disconnect

A few years ago, I watched a movie once about a woman with multiple personality disorder. I thought how fascinating that the mind can cover up a traumatic experience by creating a new personality within the individual as a protective mechanism. I just hadn't realized that this very thing had been happening to me over the years. Of course I don't think that I have multiple personality disorder.. seriously, I have enough disorders! But I do believe that on occasion I have a tendency to forget certain events, until I can handle them at a later time. I don't function very well when I'm overwhelmed and right now, I'm headed into a storm of no return. I forgot an entire year once, yes, an entire year. It was the year that I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder. I have asked doctors for years about this missing year and I have been frustrated to no end when it cannot be thoroughly explained to me. In the end I don't think they understand, I lost an entire year, not just a few weeks, not just a few months, but seriously, 200 or more days. I have come to the conclusion that I have an undiagnosed brain disorder, but again, I have enough disorders already.

Perhaps forgetting is a good thing. I can forget about certain events that occurred during my unsettling childhood. I can forget that I had five babies in an attempt to fix one terribly broken inner child and I can forget that she is still just as broken. I can forget that I feel alone every minute of every single day. I can forget the long list of major life decisions I am supposed to make and put them off until tomorrow after tomorrow after tomorrow. I can forget that I am afraid, and I can forget that I am terrified of living. I can dissociate from all uncomfortable emotions and cover them up with Apathy. I can forget until one day I cannot stop remembering. I can lose myself in memories until I find something new to forget.

December 29, 2012

Melancholy...

Today is my mother's birthday, she would have been 56 years old. I listen to the song, "One More Day" by Diamond Rio and remember her each year. I remind myself that I did not get as much time as I wanted with her, I did not get to have the perfect last conversation with her and even if I thought I did, I would still have wanted just one more day. Sometimes we are not satisfied even if we should be. My oldest child was recently kidnapped by his sperm donor and when I think about the outrage, the disgust, the total and utter betrayal, I am not satisfied with knowing that Karma is a Bitch. I can tell myself that I am moving on, that it is what it is, that I have so many other things to focus on in my life. But, I gotta do some major damage to the assholes on Minny's shitlist. I want to totally tear this guy's life apart. I want to drive 1000 miles, stalk him, find out what he values most in life and totally rip it to shreds. Ok, but that's just Revenge

talking, that's just totally that side of myself that I have come to love and appreciate. If you fuck with me, I'm going to fuck with you and I'm going to take oh so much longer to make sure that you never forget what you did to me. In the end, I'm the crazy bitch you should have never pissed the fuck off in the first place. But I digress.. I'm fantasizing. I'm more likely to cause you financial ruin by suing your dumb ass than to sneak through your window and suffocate you in your sleep, but, lets be honest.. I'm totally capable of that too, depends on how royally you fuck me over. If you break into my house and give me cause, I'm going to shoot you at point blank range, not from a distance.. just saying.. I'm from B-more, not Iowa. I will fuck a nigga up with my bare hands, gangstasyle, because Rage is just that Ghetto.

Melancholy.. sadness that seems to stick around way past the time it should

I am way past the days of having month long periods of Melancholy. I steep my teabag in it about once a week, but it lasts for hours, not days and then I realize that I am responsible for my own happiness. I allow myself to be hurt and depressed. I am in charge of how often I feel unworthy, depressed and rejected. I am the President of my own country of fears, happiness and depression, I am the Mayor of my emotions. I am only as happy and as miserable as I choose to be. My enemies are just poking the tiger, how often and how much I growl is up to me. But one thing is for sure, if they keep poking me, there will be blood.

January 5, 2013

Resilience...

I am awake at all ends of the night, I cannot sleep, Reason tells me to let it go but War says that I cannot let it go. Vengeance sends me murderous ideas that consume me. I think I just might hire someone to snuff the motherfucker and then I go back to bed. Hell, my dad would do this for free I think, he's get out in about a year. Can I wait till then? I drift off with visions of running him down with my car. Gosh, this sounds so 2006. I wake up at 3am, I am trying to wean my two year old and we just get up for the day. I look down on his sweet face and I think, when did mommy become such a vigilante Mania answers, "Oh, Always."

Resilience... having your teeth kicked out a dozen times yet growing new ones each time

I realized that I had the balls to protect those I loved without thought or care of my own bodily injury when I was fifteen years old. Lets just preface this with, my mother had the worst choice in boyfriends, God bless her soul. We were finally rid of the jerk who had molested me for five years and now we were living with yet another boyfriend, but this time he was physically abusing her. I awoke one night at around 2am to hear my mother screaming. She was arguing with her boyfriend, yet when I snuck downstairs to investigate, he was beating her with his fists. I instinctively jumped on the 250 plus pound 6-foot 4 man and started beating him on his back with my fists. He swung me off with one shove across the room, all 90 pounds of me. I was about to go in for round two and my mother called me off. I was ready to defend her and get the living shit beat out of me. I screamed at him, "No one touches my mother, No one, touches my

mother!" It wasn't until we were kicked out onto the street that very night that I felt guilty. Because I intervened, the argument intensified and my brother, mother and I were homeless once again. I don't regret jumping in. I wasn't afraid and I didn't care what the consequences were. When I love, I love so deeply and anyone who endangers that relationship should be worried. Of course, it was stupid, this guy was built like a brickhouse, one punch from him would have landed me in the hospital.

As I have grown older, I have done a better job at managing my emotions. I left the country in 2006 just so this type of thing wouldn't happen again. I know myself. I don't care about the consequences, I will ruin you at any cost available to me if you stand between me and someone I love. Only an act of God's Congress will pardon you from Minny's Wrath when engaged. A pardon was handed down in 2006 to my ex-husband and I am grateful that I am now not serving time in an institution for running him down with my truck.. yes.. that was sooo going to happen. So every night I toss, I turn, I cry, I throw up I am so upset and I think. Should he be granted a pardon or should I just run with it? I have been kicked so much that being kicked now is just a tickle. I don't have any teeth left to knock out. I have lost everything and started all over again a million times. There is not much that frightens me, except not being me. If I'm going to be me, and I intend to be as much, you will pay and pay dearly, you will. God's Congress has taken an extended leave of absence and Vengeance votes for your total destruction and if not yours, every descendent of yours to come.

May 26, 2013

Madness...

I woke up this morning wondering what had happened the night before. No, seriously.. For several months I have been wonderfully responsible in regard to my “bad habits” as I call them. But now looking back even my responsible is irresponsible, usually in regard to my treatment of self. I have avoided scales and measuring tapes just to stay focused on living a healthy lifestyle. I have a strict no drinking alcohol rule until after 6pm because any earlier tends to go over my 3 glasses of wine/ 3 shot limit. I know and acknowledge that I have certain issues that I am covering up with band-aids and that nothing will be resolved on any type of emotional level in regard to those issues unless I treat the underlying conditions. I'd like to think that I had taken a proactive role in managing my moods, but this has become completely and utterly impossible to do of late. I'm not drunk by noon or passed out by 5pm. I'm actually a pretty responsible parent when they are awake and cognizant for the day. They have actually no idea that mommy forgot to eat breakfast and lunch and had only booze for dinner and that has been occurring for days at a time. They have no clue because mommy lives in the kitchen, and mommy cooks constantly. This is actually my first clue that something is wrong. So, this morning when I woke up wondering what the heck happened the answer was simple. While I was busy avoiding the daily use of red wine, vodka and tequila, Bulimia and Madness slipped in under the radar.

Madness... Fury, Vengeance, Anger, Hate and Grudge attacking me from the inside out

I gathered up the family and told them that we were going to Disneyland a few weeks ago. My teenager's 18th birthday was especially hard for me and in my proactive mode in managing my bad habits and "issues" I knew that a distraction was the only way to snap out of the rut that I could see coming a mile away. No sense in sitting around and allowing Anger and Blame, Remorse and Fear to continue beating me up over not being there for him. No sense in sitting around and allowing Malice and War, Persecution and Vengeance to continue feeding me murderous plots in my sleep. I knew where this was headed, and I wasn't about to go there if I could help it. So, we left. Funny thing happened though, just when I thought that I had everything figured out, just as I'm patting myself on the back for listening to Reason and for being Responsible, it hit me. I cannot say that it came out of nowhere, even though it felt that way. The signs were all there, I was just too busy being Confident to notice them. But as slowly as his birthday crept up on the calendar so too did the Madness that followed it.

When I wrote "Goodnight Life" I wasn't depressed, scratch that, I didn't think that I was depressed. I had been in the kitchen baking happily, bagels or something impressive like that. My toddler loves "Goodnight Moon" and while reading it to him one night, I was suddenly hit with a burst of creativity. This is actually my second clue that something is wrong. I was just too confident, I thought that I'm doing a spectacular job not flying out there and strangling these people, way to go.. pat on the back. I'm attempting to communicate with them, they ignore me, it's ok.. still not flying out there and strangling people. I try to contact my teenager, no response, I'm depressed, but not clinically depressed, pat on the back. I leave my cozy home to a fun place just to see the smiles on their faces, pat on the back, responsible parent thinking of their happiness by

fulfilling their wish to see Mickey Mouse, and yes, still not strangling people.. big pat on the back! Things were good, until, the last day.

I longed to return home so that I could sleep in a real bed, my back ached, my neck ached and my sleep patterns were majorly worse than the previous few months. As a result of the lack of sleep I had been constantly irritable and cranky times 10. This is usually my third clue that something is wrong. So, miles and miles away from home and in the middle of nowhere I had a meltdown. Perhaps having your child kidnapped right after he shot himself IS too much to bear. I don't care if he was 17, if you have children, you know that their age doesn't matter. Wasn't he just learning how to walk, like yesterday? Not knowing if he is safe at night, not knowing his medical condition, not knowing if the people I want to strangle are even less sane than I am, not knowing...not knowing, anything, is horrible. I actually might stop wanting to strangle them if they would just fill in the blanks for me instead of allowing my imagination to run wild with Fear. In case you hadn't noticed.. my imagination is quite illustrative as it rules my pen.

So, Ignorance of his condition drove me to start drinking red wine before my strong rule of no sooner than 6pm and then I switched to Tequila by 8pm. This is usually my fourth clue that something is wrong. I locked myself away from the children in a bathroom with Bulimia, Shame and Remorse. I couldn't even keep my proverbial last meal down. Who plans to end it all, has a yummy calorie filled last meal and then upchucks it on purpose? Now that's Insane. Insane because I was serious, I was so so serious this time. Suicidal Ideation said Goodbye to a few people as I sat with Fear for a long time yet for the first time Fear was accompanied by someone, Determination. Determination was there as security, a failsafe that I followed through with my best

buddy Suicidal Ideation's plan. This was terribly frightening and completely new for me. I struggled to find a reason to escape his hold on me, his death grip was slowly tightening around my will to live until I was left with the sheer terror that it had faded permanently.

I was so desperate to listen to Reason and Logic but they had been chased away with shots of Tequila on an empty stomach. Mania slipped in and there was really no way back to Sanity once she showed up. I turned myself over to the babysitter and attempted to sleep away the pain.

It was a few days later that I decided that in order to really work on my bad habits, my issues, my whatever.. I need to remove all band-aids. I need to remove Confidence from my dance card. I cannot do this on my own anymore; it's time to ask for help. As much as I hate it I am going to have to call the dreaded Therapist, the dreaded people who write messed up things about you in your medical record. I will once again read, "patient has poor impulse control", I will once again be labeled with this and that diagnosis. I will actually have to talk about this stuff that I write down in my mood journal instead of allowing it to flow effortlessly through my fingertips. I might even have to check myself in on an extended vacation to adjust my meds, succumb to being poked and prodded, analyzed and scrutinized, that is.. unless Madness gets to me first.

May 29, 2013

Rejection...

I have never been dumped. Even my one-night stands during my college days attempted to hit me up a second and often a third time. I don't count the silly crushes on boys and later men that never amounted to anything save for harmless flirting. I am only

counting those who have happened to find themselves with me in a romantic sort of tryst with Lust. My first romantic relationship was with a much older man from Australia. I adored his accent and fell victim to his charms. I had absolutely no idea that such a thing as date rape had occurred to me because it was too painful to accept the fact that once again, I had been sexually assaulted. Yet as I sat in a bath of my own blood, watching the visual remnants of my virginity wash down the drain, I knew. My screams had been muffled and I had fought back. I had even told him no and pleaded with him to stop. So how then was I later able to forgive him, tell myself that I had misunderstood his intentions and continue to live in the complete and total darkness of Denial.

Denial...trading truth for excuses

After the loss of my virginity, I traveled through the exploration of Lust. I had convinced myself that what had happened was a mere misunderstanding until the day came when he was truthful about the barriers of our relationship. All along I had convinced myself that what had happened didn't matter if and only if I married this guy. There could be no rape if we ended up living in marital bliss. But on the day that I discovered that he was dumping me for his wife, suddenly Denial drifted away as quickly as it had set in for the long haul. He pleaded with me to stay with him but not as his girlfriend, not as his wife, but as his mistress. I spent the next several months writing dark and dreadfully sad poetry. I shut myself out from the world in my dorm room for hours at a time. I discovered that I could numb the pain with alcohol. I had one-night stands during a weeklong drunken haze. I nearly died from alcohol poisoning trying to drown out the pain, and then, I found out that I was pregnant. Suddenly the fog lifted. I had to

snap out of that which was going to kill me, because nothing was ever more important in my life than loving, protecting, and nurturing that baby. I married someone that I could trust, not love, because nothing was ever more important than providing the baby with a family. No matter what mistakes I made in raising him, no matter what he turns out to be, I will always yearn to mother him even if he continues to indulge and smother himself with Apathy.

So lately I realize that I have been devastated by Rejection. Just when I think that I have found the path to Peace and Joy, I tumble, roll down a long grassy knoll straight into Madness. I dance with Anger, Grudge and Shame and we Square dance with Vengeance and Persecution. I lay down at night with Mania and she invites War into my slumber. I wake up exhausted and still just as devastated as the day before because I had never really been dumped, that is, until now.

June 3, 2013

Sanity....

I invited Mania in for the long haul just to get rid of Madness and Insanity. I know, that was a new one for me. But I was being irrational and reckless, playing games with food, taking bets with my life and it was just what Madness wanted. I had to figure something out, I had to find, Sanity. So, sanity for me was Mania, but it was either that or I truly wouldn't have a beating heart here on earth right now. It was the lesser of two evils.

Mania is often chosen, the result of little sleep, she slowly creeps up on ya, when you least expect it. She is the most unpredictable creature and I have to say, I'm starting to like her.

Mania loathes sleep, she feeds on creativity and ingenuity. She is the voice in the back of your mind that says, "Dude, you are wasting your life, you should be sailing, you should be riding your Harley at 100mph right now, you should totally fuck that hot stranger in the back of the bar giving you the eye. Why are you wearing that tie? God, what a drag, get a life, Can we talk? Can we have fun right now, let me out, I wanna play."

Well, I let Mania out to play between a half a bottle of Vodka and a completely broken heart. I wanted to die because I loved a baby so much that he grew up to be man who wanted nothing more to do with me. I didn't want to feel, and I wanted to erase all feelings with emptiness and then nothingness. I wanted to crawl down in a hole and die and be nevermore. The pain was all encompassing that I could not sleep, that I could not eat, that I could think of nothing but holding him in my arms. And missing him is too much and I have never loved as much as I have loved him. And then I lived, and I was so disappointed that I lived because I so much wanted to die. So, I invited Mania out to play and she said, "What a drag, haven't you grown tired of this gig? They always let you down, leave you, promise to love you and yet you remain forlorn. Take my hand and I promise you won't feel a thing." And I did. Since then, I haven't shed a single tear.

June 4, 2013

Distraction...

I woke up this morning annoyed with myself for having too many drinks the night before, going off of my diet, eating a yummy homemade bagel and emailing this guy who is so obviously not interested in talking to me. Ok, so he's married, that could be a good reason he's gun shy, but I wondered, why do I even care? Oh, it's probably the idea of him that hooked me in the first place, and I do have a habit of getting attached to my ideas. But when I really sat with my thoughts on this matter, I realized that it's not really him I seek, it's Distraction.

All in all, I was a good student. I made A's and B's in high school without even trying, except for that year that I was homeless and forced to live in a crack house, yes, that was a B and C year, but still, I was a good student. When I made the honor roll it made my mother happy and after all, it was expected that I should maintain good grades because often instead of buying food, we paid private school tuition. And instead of paying our heating bill, we bought Catholic school uniforms. The bad year that I speak of nearly ruined my college dreams back then if not for some kind nuns who paid for my tuition that year. What can I say, I was just likeable back then.

Obstinance... Grit, Resilence, Perseverance

I asked my ex-husband what it was about me that he admired the most and he said, there are so many things but mainly it's that you have "True Grit." I was thinking, wasn't that a John Wayne movie? What on earth does that mean? He then went on to explain how it's my dedication to triumph even when it's clear that I'm being pummeled.

into losing submission. I was like.. no.. I don't call that grit, I just called that plain stubbornness, probably one of the reasons why we're currently separated right now. Obstinance reigns within me on a somewhat daily basis, she will often argue with you about anything if the accompanying moods are Petulance and Avoidance. I sometimes think that I'm stuck at twelve years old. I never got to voice my opinions when I was growing up, I never got to discuss those things that really mattered to me. My mother was unavailable, and I was often locked away in my room, composing my emotions and feelings onto paper. So now that I am an adult I believe that I have become stuck in the mode of listen to me. I want to be heard because in my mind, I'm still that twelve-year-old girl, locked away in her room, alone, scared and without a voice.

So, when my ex-husband says that I have true grit, I think he has it confused with Obstinance. Obstinance wouldn't let me fail in school, even though my home life was chaotic and unsettling. I was too stubborn to break the appearance that I had created for myself on the outside world. I used Distraction as my daily weapon against the realities of my home life. I always had an afterschool job, and I was constantly in afterschool activities and programs at school. I used Distraction by writing poetry to escape, I smiled instead of crying, and no one really knew all the things I had to say, all of the feelings I didn't want to feel. I had no one as I have had no one all of these years and I've learned to deal with that. Except lately I'm having a struggle with Obstinance because Mania is having a tete a tete with Surrender and I have been locked out of all of those meetings to date.

In reading over my medical records from the hospital that I am currently suing, the social worker wrote that I was apparently manic, obvious by my rude and vulgar

language. I laugh, Bitch that wasn't Mania, you've never met her, and you clearly need to go back to school and retake Psychology courses. I wasn't Manic that day I was Twelve and that was the year that my mother killed me.

June 5, 2013

Solace....

I now believe that the perfect guy for me is married. I came to this conclusion while having the most tantalizing sexual fantasy in the wee early hours of the morning. It was highly unusual for me to fantasize, surprising given my imaginative and creative nature, but I have never really fantasized about having a sexual encounter, until now. It truly surprised me because not only did I have a purely physical response to this fantasy, but I found that I could just close my eyes and do it again, and again, and again. His hands touching my breasts, his lips pressed against mine, his body, well, you just had to be there.

Unbridled.. uncontrollable, without restraint

When I was in college I wrote a soap opera sent via email to students attending my college called "Unbridled." I had no idea that this soap opera would become such a huge hit, but before I knew it, I was getting pressured on the way to classes each morning and students would ask, "When is the next installment of Unbridled coming out?" I didn't know how the story would end and I had to juggle writing and publishing episodes in between classes, afterschool waitressing and exams. I thought, this is hilarious. Here I am a mere virgin and I'm writing a porno, and everyone just loves reading it. It was just

scandalous. It was about a girl having an affair with her stepfather and it was just one of those naughty stories that students fell in love with. Before I knew it, my soap opera had travelled to other schools, students were sending it to their friends and so on. When I finally finished the soap opera there were clamors for a second series. I reluctantly complied with my fans, but the second part was in no way as good as the first. Isn't that always how it works? And just like then, I sometimes wonder what I could accomplish if it weren't for Distractions.

When I was younger, I would often wonder why my mother rarely hugged me. There were so many times that I needed to be held yet no one ever did. Over the years when men invaded my personal space by touching me without my permission, I stopped wanting to be held. At social gatherings or church when a stranger would hug me hello, I would freeze like a deer in the headlights. It feels as though I am being smothered and the air in my body is slowly slipping away, and it's the worst feeling in the world. To this day I cannot hug anyone over the age of three without being totally detached from the emotion it's meant to convey.

I know that I am not ready to give my whole heart to someone. Heck, I've gone from college to marriage to marriage and now I'm nearly 40 and I have loved not. I don't want a relationship. I don't want promises. I don't want commitment. I don't want expectations and arguments over silly little things. I don't want to co-parent. I don't want to be disappointed anymore. I just want to live. I like my married guy idea. I know, you're thinking, homewrecker. But I'm not really wrecking the home if he stays with her.

I want unexpected romance. I want unbridled fantasies that come to me in the wee hours of the morning. I want a shoulder to cry on, someone to listen to my wild ideas. I want passion and acceptance. I want appreciation for those things I learned by watching Traci Lords in action, and yes, use your imagination. I want a hand to hold, and I want to trust someone enough just long enough to learn to enjoy being held again without feeling as if I am going to die. I want to be touched, I want to be caressed, but most of all, I want Solace.

June 15, 2013

Twelve....

Let's preface this by noting that I have always been a prolific writer. So last week I finally dug out the pages and pages of material that I had written over the years. I think there are at least four autobiographies of my life as a teenager, if not more. Not only did I keep diaries when I was younger, but I started writing fiction at the age of 10. I wrote plays, I wrote mysteries, I wrote non-fiction and then I discovered poetry. My thesaurus was my best friend as I fell madly in love with words. As I did not have a computer back in 1984 through 1995 all of my most prolific writing was done by hand. I find it funny, but to this day I cannot compose a single poem on the computer and yes, I have tried. It has to be done by hand, I have to feel the words flowing through my fingertips for it to make any sense, any sense at all.

So, in going through my diaries, the autobiographies, 500 plus poems and all of the memories that came with this, I was struck by a painful truth. I am soo not over my childhood. Sure, I like to tell myself that I don't give a flying fuck. I don't care about anything, about anyone, except my kiddos, but deep down inside, I never made it

past the age of twelve.

Truth.. Shame, Regret, Guilt, Denial, all covered up in red lipstick and makeup concealer

I spend most of my life hiding from myself and hiding from Truth. She is the one constant reminder that I continue to fail in every single thing that I do. Truth is the one thing that I dodge, play continually hide and seek with, roam down long dark corridors just to escape her. I am sick of Truth, because Truth will be the death of me.

Every time that I seek out a new therapist I have to go through my history. I fast track it and tell them that yes, I have had this past, but I am totally over it. I assure them that we do not need to revisit past issues from my past because I have completely worked through these issues through therapy. It is the one lie that I have successfully been able to tell. Because after all, I am a horrible liar, I am thirty-nine and I think that I have told about 3 lies in my entire life and if they really cared to know, they would have known that I was totally fibbing my ass off.

There is something ungodly about telling a lie. But I do it, each and every time that I say that I am completely and utterly over my bad and yet horrible childhood. For me it's more a case of Denial than an actual lie and so I do it again and again. Truth is hard to face. She is the one who steps out with Doubt each time my father says he loves me. She is in the back of my mind preventing me from loving any man as my husband. She says just remember, it's lies before Truth and then so Truth it never twas. Truth is the anomaly that can never be, the idiosyncrasy that never was.

I learned a painful truth when I was twelve. My mother never really loved me. She couldn't face Truth and decided to ignore her to my demise. Denial enveloped her like a flick of sand in the wind and she was no more. I was left, alone, bruised and battered by her words, for Truth whispered in my ears that day, if my own mother does not love me, who then ever will.

June 16, 2013

Drunk

So, it's not enough that I drunk tweet, but occasionally I drunk journal entry write as well. I need to keep reminding myself, do not drink red raspberry vodka on an empty stomach, do not drink red raspberry vodka on an empty stomach. Lately I haven't had much of an appetite, scratch that, I rarely eat at all these days. Oddly enough I come to my senses around 8pm after two or three shots of red raspberry vodka and force myself into eating something so that I do not completely wither away and die. I then go into introspective mode and feel compelled to drunk journal entry write or drunk tweet. I know, I'm a complete and utter mess, but I'm working on it. I wake up the next day, and go.. oh no.. did I drunk tweet again last night? Who did I threaten to off this time? I quickly delete the tweets and hope that no one really reads them anyway. I open my laptop and read my drunk journal entries and I go.. hmm.. why do I make the most sense when I should be passed out drunk already?

Tolerance... Resilience, Obstinace on a merry go round with Mania

I learned in 1999 that I had a high tolerance for medications after I tried to off myself several times with various highly potent sedatives topped off with booze. I'd wake up the next morning and go.. WTF? I wasn't supposed to wake up. I thought, I must be doing something wrong. In 2004 I tried again, despondent over the loss of my daughter. This time I thought, I'll get this right, who could survive over 10,000 miligrams of Seroquel mixed with Early Times whiskey and 50 or more miligrams of Klonopin? I became so sick that I thought I was near death, but still, nada. I thought, WTF God doesn't even want me. Over the years as different medications didn't affect my brain the same way as others, I finally came to the conclusion that Mania was killing my buzz and not only causing me to tango with Suicidal Ideation but also preventing me from being successful in offing myself as well.

So when an attorney that I am kinda sorta suing said to me.. "How can you be sure you remember anything you were on several shots of booze and pills." I'm like lady, you have no idea, I have a PHD in booze and pills and even highly intoxicated I am still never really drunk. I make the worst decisions in my life when I am completely sober. If I am intoxicated it's usually because I am trying to numb the pain, that pain that never actually stops throbbing from within. I know that pouring red raspberry vodka on it isn't working. I can tell from those drunk tweets that I read the next morning and quickly delete. I can tell from my drunk journal entries that while although I am gaining insight, that I am losing ground, and that the only true escape will come in Redemption.

June 18, 2013

Redemption

I will never forget the sound of the gunshot resonating from my teenager's bedroom. As soon as I heard the sound, I knew instantly that he had shot himself. In the seconds that followed I thought, did he shoot himself in the head? Is he dead? Did he shoot himself in the foot for attention? And then I prayed, "God please let me find that he shot himself in the foot for attention. I don't think that I can handle much more." When I was finally able to face the fact that what I heard was indeed a gunshot, I could not personally investigate the scene. I was a coward. I knew instantly that that the sight of my firstborn wounded or dead was not something that I could handle. I wanted to run to him, but Mercy and Pity stopped me from running down the hallway. Until that moment I had no idea that I was able to employ self-preservation. Instantly, I knew that there was no way that I could see him, aid him, or assist him, without totally and completely breaking down. And break down into a million and one pieces, I did as I called 9-1-1 and sent his father to tell me if he were alive or dead.

Sorrow.... My heart stopped and broken

Sorrow is indescribable. I indulge in it over morning coffee with my sort of ex-spouse. I find it in my sleep when I dream about my son who decided to shoot himself because I was apparently a bad mother. I wallow in Sorrow when I drink too much Tequila and I relive the sound of the gun going off each and every time. I hear the gun shot in my sleep. I hear my son screaming in pain and I know instantly that I failed him. I will never forget the sound of the gunshot penetrating through the chest of my son. I

will never forget that everyone including him blames me for his plight. All I have ever wanted in my life was to have a family and to be a good mother. I seek Redemption but she never comes. I am taunted by past failures and by Truth and nothing I do is ever right. I blame myself for everything even for those things not under my control, but what everyone and no one ever cares to remember is that I was there. I carried him from the moment that he was conceived. I felt him growing within me. I gave birth to him. I raised him. I tried, so very hard, to do the very best job that I could as a mother and then one day, he shot himself. He shot himself and then he was gone. I may never see him again. And so, I grieve. I cry. I am destroyed and I wonder if I will ever come back from this. I blame myself for things that I could barely control. I sit up late at night thinking of scenarios and what could have beens. I rewrite his entire life in my mind, and then the day came when I heard the gunshot and my heart stopped. I immediately thought that he was dead, and even though he was not, not being able to help him, soothe his wounds or simply be there for him has placed me smack dab in the middle of Mourning and the incredible weight of Grief is crushing me.

In reminiscing about him I remember the day after he was born, and we left the hospital as mother and son. I remember thinking, "They are just going to let me take this baby home with me and I have absolutely no clue what I am doing." It was the most frightening time of my life but it was also the best time of my life as well. I'm not sure what stage of Grief I'm in right now, no scratch that, I'm slow dancing with Depression and I know it. I don't eat for days at a time. I cry for hours every single night. I want to blame someone, sue everyone and strangle people, but what I want most of all is something only he can provide; total and complete, Absolution.

June 22, 2013

Intervention...

God please don't let me pass out while driving, God please don't let me pass out while driving. I prayed as I listened to the all 80's station on my satellite radio. I looked around the car for a bottle of water, but the one time I needed one, it wasn't there. Just a week before I had received the news that my blood pressure was off the charts high because of dehydration and malnutrition. I'm pretty dizzy and lightheaded several hours a day, driving is probably something that I should avoid. I am currently moderately anemic; have mild liver disease and I am oozing out way too many ketones in my urine. When I ask my physician what the big deal is she starts in on like an hour long lecture.. no seriously.. 60 minutes of what not eating is doing to my body, mainly my kidneys which apparently are in danger of shutting down. I was sort of taken aback that not eating affects my liver but because my lab work says that I am actually malnourished, it too is feeling the impact. Great... just what I needed to hear, I'm already surrounded by people dead or dying from liver disease. I safely arrived at the doctor's office for my yearly pap test praying ahead of time, please don't come back with cervical dysplasia again...please don't come back with cervical dysplasia again.. I'm sick of cervical cancer scares, colposcopies, that painful chopping procedures on my cervix.. no more. I have enough on my medical plate right now. I listen to her lecture about my caloric intake, as I do, I am so dizzy that I begin drinking from her water faucet right there in the office. OMG I think, I hope this woman doesn't like totally check me into the mental hospital here. Wait.. is there a mental hospital here where I live? I don't even know.

Despair....Depression alone with me in a tiny dark dark room

After my fourth baby was born two months premature, I was done. I could not imagine having another child, because it's downright torture for me. I thought, I should just schedule a tubal ligation to end this possibility of having another kiddo, and so I did. Funny thing though, just as I was about to go in, get undressed, and have the procedure; I changed my mind. I walked out right before the procedure. Who does that? I always say that the spirit of my fifth child chose me as his mother before he was born. He has been here before. He is the epitome of the saying, "old soul". He saves me in so many ways each and every day. I love each and every one of my kiddos to death, but when Depression pulls his dance card, he tells me that all of my kiddos are so much better off without me and I believe him, every single word.

Today when I woke up and my first thoughts were to cry my eyes out before 7am over my lost and kidnapped teenager, I finally realized that Mania left weeks ago. Her exit was as seamless as the river flowing before me each morning as I look out of my kitchen window. I had been so used to my mixed states that I didn't notice the all-encompassing Despair that she had left behind. Now just for the record, Mania is the Bulimic, Despair is the Anorexic.

During my first visit to my new Physician, I assured her that no way was I going back in time to 2003, no way was I going to do that to myself ever again. I went into how I never wanted to have those dreaded chest pains again from low potassium levels, seizures due to electrolyte imbalances and energy so low that I could barely lift my head up without passing out. But I lied, ok.. well I thought I was telling the truth so it really wasn't a lie. I am not doing this on purpose. Just as in 2003 Despair came to visit, he

visits now and I pray to God each day and night that he would just leave, but he hasn't yet.

It starts out with the slightest amount of stress. I invite Mania out to lunch and then dinner. She thinks it's absolutely hilarious to be Reckless. We then purge our stress through the purging of yummy foods. We don't care about the blood we see in the toilet, the damage we're doing to our teeth, our body. We feel better in the end and then we repeat the cycle at least 8 more times during the day. This dance with Mania can last for weeks, months, and even years in between pregnancies. So now that Despair has come to dance and alone, he is I am clueless as to how to avoid the painful slow dance of death. For once I am in his clutches as now, I am, going through the motions of Sorrow and Grief, our steps together are as seamless as the river flowing before me each morning as I look out my kitchen window. We are one, moving in the same direction, toward the common goal of merging with Mania once again in our effort in seeking total Abandon and complete self- Annihilation.

June 23, 2013

Recovery....

I used to love the show Intervention on the A&E network. The person is usually engaging in some addictive and destructive behavior that which if not discontinued will result in their unfortunate and possibly expedited death. On occasion I submit myself to the intervention process when I find that my coping skills are lacking in Reason. I sit up late at night with Reason and Responsibility, and we devise a plan of attack in how to subdue Depression and Despair's death grip on my body. Mercy and Pity throw out suggestions and urge me to call someone. Surrender and Fear then make their case and I

am left plagued by Guilt and Shame for not just immediately snapping out of the pits of Despair and Sorrow. I spend day after day waiting for just a brief encounter with Mania, but she is engaged to dance by too little sleep and lately all I seem to do is sleep. So now that I'm sitting here in yet another intervention meeting with myself, I am surrounded by Truth and Twelve. Those two have surfaced ever so frequently lately as now I am faced with a myriad of life altering decisions to make, the kind of decisions that you cannot possibly make at the age of Twelve.

I want to head toward Recovery, but she seems so so very far away dancing solo in the soft moonlight standing in plié form alongside Deliverance. It isn't enough that I'm intelligent enough to know what my issues are, and it isn't enough that I know what I need to do to set myself on the path toward Recovery. So, when I hear my father and my sorta ex spouse say, "just eat." "snap out of it", it dawns on me. I am surrounded by idiots and worse, people who have absolutely no idea who I am. Granted, I make it difficult, but the truth of the matter is that until I heal the losses and Pain suffered by Twelve, I will never really be able to "snap out of it." All that I can do until that time is sit through intervention once again and allow Mercy and Self Pity to apply band-aids to the wounds. Twelve wants to head back east because I have close friends and not so close family members there and I have absolutely no one here on the west coast.. a recipe for disaster. And I'm inclined to listen to this East Coast idea, but again, there are just certain decisions that you cannot possibly make at the age of Twelve. So, I wait, I wait until Anger, Grudge and Hate return to bring back the Passion in my life. I wonder where the heck they went and if they know where Mania is hiding. I know that I should eat, that I

should seek counseling for Grief, but at this point, I feel like Rhett Butler in Gone With the Wind, because frankly, I just don't give a damn.

June 25, 2013

Trust....

I found Mania when I was forced to draft a legal document yesterday. I knew that she had returned because not only does she type nearly 98 words a minute, but I was struck with all of her ideas whereas prior to sitting down at the table I had absolutely no clue what I was about to write. I then finished my last-minute legal project and promptly went to the kitchen and began cooking something for my ill body to ingest. Mania requires calories to function, whereas Despair and Depression do not. So, it's back to the mixed state again and I have never needed to find my Halfway point and stay there as I do now. When people start threatening to check you in, lock you up and take away your freedom, it's a downright frightening and scary place to be.

Trust... expectation, belief, reliance..

My dad is out of prison after like a gazillion years. Well it seemed like a gazillion years to me. He left when I was 7 and briefly returned for about a year when I was fifteen. Since then, we have kept in touch but now that he's out again, he wants to develop a father daughter relationship. I'm experiencing some sort of distress about this scenario. For a long time, all I have ever wanted were parents and when my mom died, my dreams of taking care of them died with her. I no longer want to be the one responsible for my father and I'm just not so sure that I want him in my life after all.

Twelve is giving me the most grief about this distress I am experiencing, why oh why can't I have a father now, I've wanted one for so so long, can't I, can't I? Grudge says that Twelve is a complete and total pushover, someone who abandoned me and was never there for me can never really have my Trust. And if I can't Trust you well then there really is no possible way to have any relationship that would be meaningful enough for me to care. Wisdom is in play, and I overthink every single decision when Grudge and Bitterness won't let me be. It's noon and I remind myself that I still haven't eaten a single thing today. I am honestly not trying to off myself; I just can't really remember to eat. I'm eating a rice cake now, feeling less dizzy. I'm a wreck at this moment in time so no, Twelve, I have enough children to raise, including myself. I doubt that I will be working on building any type of relationship with my father anytime soon. But that's just Grudge, Bitterness and Anger speaking because at times I am so overwhelmed by Twelve's needs and desires, it's hard to remember that I am really approaching my 40's and Wisdom should be the one in charge. Wisdom says learn from the mistakes of your past, and do not conform to the needs of others at your expense. Just because I am related to someone by blood does not a family member make, and I cannot allow Guilt to reel me in this time. I resolve this issue by reminding Twelve that I am way too old now and wise to need a father. What I need most of all is to surround myself with those who can offer me something more than just similar DNA. Lately what I really need are not threats to lock me up, threats to do this and that if I do not eat. But what I have always needed yet can never seem to find is true Compassion and just a bit of educated Empathy.

June 28, 2013

Praise...

I had my first crush on an older white man when I was in middle school. It was Mr. Sayborn and I thought that he was just the bees knees. I would spend the entire hour of class just staring at his military style blonde hair cut and losing myself in his baby blue eyes. One day he gave me a compliment and I had no idea what to say or how to respond and to this day I find it hard to accept any sort of accolades for anything that I have done which might garner any such favorable attention from any person. Scratch that... I have learned to accept Praise for my oldest skill. I can write most people under the table without effort, granted, I'm a natural born creative writer. But it took me about twenty years to be able to admit that with confidence.

Praise....Merit, Admiration, Approval

When I was younger I thought that I was a complete idiot. My common sense skills were lacking in all situations. I felt inadequate and quite plainly speaking, stupid. I tried to overcompensate for my intellectual inadequacies by pretending for the most part. If I didn't know something I would remain quiet and let others take the lead in the conversation. I became pretty good at just smiling and shaking my head and this seemed to work for the most part for many years. In my older years I have grown used to my common sense inadequacies and for the most part, I just laugh at myself.. "Yep.. I put that on backwards, crap, it's upside down, help, now what?" Simple solutions evade me every time, but I can stay up late at night working on complex issues that require intense focus and concentration... go figure.. must be different sides of the brain.. not sure. Yes, I

cannot do math in my head, I must write it down, and no, I cannot follow even simple directions. In high school I would take notes, and not learn a single thing and then I would go home and teach myself. I have no idea how I ended up in Honors Chemistry and Honors Calculus, didn't they understand that I was a complete idiot? Ah well.. I find that I have grown adept at teaching myself and perhaps this is my learning style, or at the very least my coping style for an inability to pay attention in school.

My first experience with Praise was in Middle School as I began to share my poetry and fiction with my favorite teacher and nun, Sr. Kathy. She told me that my poems were great and that I did indeed have talent. But for some reason I never believed her. I could never accept a compliment without feeling uneasy and odd. I had no idea that I had this problem with Praise until it continued clear into adulthood. The only words I could seem to hear when anyone would compliment me on any attribute or talent were those of my mother. "You can't do anything right. You are so stupid that you were even born backwards." It is amazing how deeply the words of our parents can live within us, fester and grow, and continue to harm us much more than any one physical blow ever could.

Praise is hard to accept when you are trained to feel Defeat. I have been living in a cage in which I am doomed to second-guess myself on every level. I feel incompetent, paranoid and stupid. I don't trust myself mainly because I am labeled with a diagnosis that which makes every person see me differently. I am afraid to be alone even if that means that I should surround myself with my enemies. I am no longer accepted for what attributes I can contribute to the world, but I am a stereotype and something much less than human because I am something that which everyone else has defined me to be. Yes,

I already had a problem accepting Praise, realizing the depths of my potential, and grasping the freedom of self-esteem, I just had no idea, how long it would last.

July 14, 2013

Pinnochio...

I have always been a terrible liar. Perhaps it's not that I am a terrible liar, but perhaps I have not had much experience with purposely deceiving another person. If I go back in time, I think that I can narrow down why I refuse to tell a lie in the first place. It is not that I fear that my already large nose will grow larger, but my biggest heartbreaks in life have been caused by lies.

I used to watch House, MD on Fox and my favorite quote from that show was that 'Everybody lies.' I love Gregory House. I love the disbelief in humanity, the paranoia, the reality in believing that everyone's bottom line is oh so, self-ingratiating. My favorite movie "Sommersby" is a love story based on a lie. He pretends to be her husband returned home from war. She suspects that he is not the same man she once knew and loved, but she continues to live the lie. In reality he is someone who knew her husband, came to know of her by her husband's words, fantasized of her in his dreams at night. He fell in love with her before he ever met her and when they finally came face to face he could not tell her the truth, for in that truth meant the loss of her. They grew to love each other, all the while knowing the truth, that he was an imposter and that she was the only woman that he had ever really loved.

I always cry at the end because if he would just tell the truth, the tragedy that will certainly befall him could be prevented. I hope for a different ending each time, but it's always the same. I yell at the television, but no one is listening, "Just tell the truth

and you will not die!" But if he does, the love story is just not quite the same. He sacrifices himself and my heart sinks. Does such love even exist? I want to be loved to the point of self-sacrifice. I want to be so important to someone that nothing else quite matters. I want to feel something much deeper than the despair that has become my familiar haunt. I want a Sommersby kind of love. I have watched this movie at least a dozen times and each time, I go to bed thinking that perhaps Truth is not always so comforting or compelling, perhaps it seeps in like twilight in the night. Perhaps, Truth is often obscure, and it hides in everything, most often unseen. Yes, I want a Sommersby kind of love, but until I can get past, "Everybody Lies," alone in my doubt I shall be.

July 17, 2013

Dissociation...

My doctor hurt my feelings today, she overstepped bounds that should be clearly drawn in the lines of the sands of medicine. I left her office wanting to crawl into a hole somewhere and die. Granted, it's easy to do that is, offend me, come off as perhaps too harsh, too critical. I respond by connecting those hurt feelings with so many hurts of the past and then before I know it, I'm knee deep in Depression. Ten minutes later I was walking down the grocery aisle repeating to myself, please do not cry in the grocery store, please do not cry in the grocery store. Oh my God, I am going to be so committed if I cry in the grocery store and if they call this doctor who just single handedly provoked a near meltdown, she'll check me in for sure. On the way home I needed to drive, not get lost, not forget which street to turn on, not nearly run over the poor pedestrian who without being run down by me is having a good day. I needed to focus and drive and not lament over the words that she said to me and over the words that I wished I could have

said to her. I hate being labeled with a mental illness, appearing to others as if I am naïve and twenty-five while all the while inside being stuck at twelve.

Assertive.. forceful, self-confident, insistent

I don't often practice being assertive as much as I should. I allow people to speak to me with disrespect. I suck it up when they hurt my feelings with words that are inappropriate. I am professional with others when they overstep their bounds of decency. So today when this doctor who was obviously off her MD A game or quite frankly, on her period started in on me, I just let her go. I hate it when I do that. I hate when I want to tell someone to go fuck him or herself, but I can't because the words are stuck in between Pain and Fear and drowned to silence by Shame. It's confusing to me because when I want to be assertive I cannot, it's only when I need to do so that I can.

Lately, I have been reading old poetry that I haven't seen in over twenty years. So, I'm reading this poetry and it is as though nothing has changed. I am still the same Lynette, but I am so so very different. My writing style is as poetic as the day I discovered that I could hide from Truth in fiction. I switched between moods and emotions with apparent ease, weaving the intricacies of my thoughts into prose that perhaps only I could understand. I'm reading the old poetry and my heart hurts for her. I so much wish that her childhood could have been different. I wish that she wasn't afraid to go home each day from school. I wish that she didn't have to hide her fear from those closest to her. I wish that someone would have held her and told her that everything was going to be alright. I wish that she didn't have to pretend that she was happy, every second, every hour of every day. And finally, I wish that she didn't have to bury the hurt,

the sadness, the pain, that which is the Grief, Anger, Mourning, Bitterness, Fear, and Shame inside of herself so that she could Dissociate from them all and evolve into this person, that which she now calls Me.

No, unfortunately I didn't get to tell this doctor to go fuck herself because I was too busy being a little girl again and as most little girls do when they feel pain, all I could do was cry. And then I was driving home, and I had to focus on some important task such as trying to stay alive by not crashing. I had to snap out of it and I needed to get over it. So, I did. All of a sudden, the fiery flames of hurt and pain that this doctor had ignited disappeared as if a magic trick had been performed inside my brain. I thought.. so this is what I have been doing all of these years? I am constantly amazed at the complexities of my wacky brain, geesh now I AM starting to sound like I do need medication.. LOL...

So yes, I can be assertive, but only when I need to be. I can tell people to go fuck themselves if I need to do so and if it serves a purpose only I could know. I can tell myself to snap out of it because I need to be responsible. I can be professional and bite my tongue if I need to preserve a relationship or more importantly maintain the appearance of Sanity. But at the same time there lies within an uncontrollable Madness just below the surface begging to be set free by Fury on any given day. I do my best to stay afloat, but it's hard to judge the change in the tides of the ocean, that which I named Minny.

July 19, 2013

Arrogance....

I have to preface this with I hate arrogant people, I hate people who think they know everything or that they know more than you because, well because they say so. If I

have learned anything it is this, you can never know everything and if you think that you do, you're an ass. I make my way through life believing that I have a clue, but most often I am willing to learn, take a different approach and I am never arrogant on purpose.

My family doctor attempted to diagnose me with Borderline Personality Disorder the other day. I'm like not only are you a family doctor, a neurologist, a dietician, but NOW you're a freakin Psychiatrist too? Ok, I was thinking this in my head, but I really really really wanted to tell her off. Damn it, I wish she could google this and read how much I wanted to tell her to fuck off. Ah well, I should be over this by now, but now I have to find a new doctor and the worst thing is that I really liked her. She fooled me, I mistook her Arrogance for actual knowledge when in reality, she's just a pompous ignorant ass. Ok.. I feel better now. Well no. I don't. I wish I could just tell her to her face. At any rate, Twelve took off so that I could go to court today and I haven't seen Mania in weeks. I'm not really sure what's going on because I haven't been this close to normal in a long time, it's actually pretty unsettling. I'm going to guess that because I seem ensconced in my old poetry to the point of isolation and seclusion that I'm just plain ole me for now. My first clue that I am going through a normal phase is the pointless craving for needless romance, it's the poet in me who views the world this way and in no way is it ever going to materialize into any sort of reality. As I continue to discover on a daily basis, the world is full of liars, cheats, assholes and opportunistic defeatists. Today was especially hard for me because I wanted to be professional and I wanted to get my point across, but the overwhelming exudation of Arrogance flustered me. I finally, had to walk away, the hard part was not falling on my face in like 4 ½ inch. high heel shoes.. LOL.. that could so happen one day.. hope no one puts it on YouTube.. Ignorance.. lack of facts, knowledge, or information

So, I'm suing a few people and they don't seem to understand why they are even being sued, which is frustrating. I want you to get why you're fucked. I want to see the look on your face when you're like, is THIS our defense? We are soooo screwed. But if you're feeding me, and the Court bullshit, I'm going to have to go through all of these mechanisms to make you look like the lying piece of shit that you are. Now, I can do that, But the simplest thing to do would be to talk to me, but Arrogance is preventing this communication from ever occurring. Ignorance is most often accompanied by Arrogance, and it is ignorance that will always lead you astray. Today I was able to bite my tongue when I really wanted to just scream, "liar, liar, pants on fire." But at the end of the day, I walked away thinking, could they really NOT get it? Perhaps they didn't read my statement, perhaps they were so busy with other clients, that they don't get how really, and I mean how really lame their defense is. Ah well, as they say, Ignorance is bliss.

July 20, 2013

Smart....

Someone that I respect called me smart yesterday and I winced. I told them that I don't feel very smart and I feel like an idiot pretty much all of the time. Then I took a pause and I thought, yet another issue that arises from my eventful childhood. When I was growing up my mother always told me that I could do anything that I set my mind to do, while all the while reminding me that I have absolutely no common sense. I was going to college whether I liked it or not and getting bad grades was not an option in her house. I was expected to make the honor roll in high school, and the public school system in Baltimore was just not going to get me to where I needed to be in life. After a while she was pretty much like a broken record, especially when she was intoxicated. I would just say, I get it mom knowledge is power. Unfortunately, my experience in living

with her day to day and her occasional jabs at my lack of common sense left me confused. I thought, how could I be stupid AND smart? I don't get it.

Even though I made the honor roll and managed to maintain my grades under enormous ongoing and daily stress I still could not help but feel more stupid than smart. I can blame it on my low self-esteem but more than likely it was my learning style. Sitting for too long and listening to one person speak about a topic that I found boring was excruciating. I never learned by listening to lectures, my learning style is engaged by the act of doing and or participating in a subject. In highschool we had the best teachers, and they were great at engaging and maintaining my interest after I realized that I had a love affair with words. Occasionally I would become frustrated, I thought, why do we have to read all of these boring 19th century literature novels from beginning to end, and then we have to actually talk about it, sit around, just us girls, and decipher the hidden meanings in the prose. Great Gatsby, Jane Eyre, Of Mice and Men and at least ten others I can't recall. It was this time spent when I was forced to pay attention and sit still that I began to develop my poetic writing style.

My sophomore year in highschool was my most prolific writing year of all. I would write poetry in history class, write fiction during science, pay attention in English literature, write plays in Religion, pay attention in Honors Spanish and write poetry during breaks at my afterschool job. What I loved about Sophomore year is that unlike the plays, fiction, nonfiction and poetry that I wrote during ages 10 through 15, what I loved most about the prose I created was that I challenged myself to dig deeper and go further with words. The result of which I discovered is that my mother was right. While I may have suffered from a lack of common sense and still do, what I learned was that I can challenge myself, push myself and thrive in the drive to succeed if only I set my

mind to do so.

Refuge...Solace, Safe-haven, retreat, shelter

When I was a little girl I sought Refuge from severe childhood trauma, and she came; she came through Creativity, Religion, Catholic schoolteachers, friendships, the parents of my best friends and through self-preserving Dissociation. I was so lucky to have every single one of them and I don't know where I would be had it not been for them. When I tell my friends now two decades later about the things that I had been going through back then with my mother, her live in boyfriend, and those chaotic last high school years, they always say the same thing, but "You were always smiling, and you were always so happy." Seriously, my nickname in high-school was "sunshine and smiley." To this day, I have no idea nor could I ever appreciate how much energy it must have taken for a little girl to hide so much, from everyone even from herself.

I have talked about this in therapy many years ago and then I stopped talking about it because to remember was just too painful when I all seek is Refuge in Dissociation, in Forgetting. Saying that you were molested as a child is just that, it's a sentence, a statement of fact, a sad event in history that sounds horrible but does not really elaborate on the implications of the deed or multiple deeds. I have gotten so used to remembering this statement of fact over the years that it has become easy to forget how traumatic of an experience it really was for me on a day-to-day basis. So, I had a sit down with Twelve because I had to remember exactly what it was like living in my mother's house at that time. I didn't particularly want to remember, but I had to because the past was affecting the present in regard to displaced Grudge and Anger toward my father now released from prison last month.

I have always loved my father and looked forward to the day when we could have

an adult father daughter relationship, but, at the same time, he left. He left me crying for his return every night not only because I missed him so very much, but I needed him to rescue me. It wasn't just that I was molested as a child, a statement of fact, but more descriptively; for 4 1/2 years between the ages of 7 and 12, my body was touched, fondled, massaged, invaded upon and used for someone else's agenda whatever that might have been. For all of those years I did not know if and when he would ultimately force me to go all the way. I had no idea nor could I ever appreciate the gravity of the Fear that I lived with every single day just existing in my own home. At some point I had to forget because Fear became Terror and Refuge had to step in. I had to choose which years to remember so that I could pretend to be Happy from ages 12-17. But in regard to my father, and the reason that I find myself wanting to give in to Anger, Grudge and Bitterness is that when Twelve sought Refuge I received it from God, from strangers who became adopted family members, I received it in so many ways, just not from my own parents which is where I needed it the most.

One thing that I have discovered about myself is that I now seek Refuge in knowledge. I usually don't make a purchase without checking the product reviews, and that includes services that I can read about on yelp. I don't answer weird emails from people that I don't know unless I google them first. I'm a quick study and I only need fail once or twice in a certain area to figure out how to avoid making the same mistakes twice. So, when I think back to January 2010 I finally get it, because I didn't get anything about that night at first and why what happened happened and why I reacted the way I reacted. I was completely clueless, and the only thing that I knew at the time was that restraint triggered Twelve, which then triggered Fury and all the while Twelve sought Refuge through knowledge that no one wanted to give. I had expectations of what to

expect from previous experiences and because of those expectations, I had questions that no one cared to answer. All of a sudden, I was met with resistance and threats instead of knowledge and understanding. In the end it was just like when I cried myself to sleep every night praying for my father to come home and rescue me from Terror; he never came.

I sought Refuge at a hospital, which was supposed to be Solace and Sanctuary for the night, but instead they were too busy looking for Mania who by the way never said a word to them. They couldn't see past my diagnosis to treat me with any modicum of dignity, and it all goes back to the statement of fact, which says nothing to the gravity of the implications of the deed. The simple statement of fact being that I was hesitant to remove my clothing and I was held down by opposite gender police officers and hospital staff members while my clothing was forcibly removed, and I was dressed in hospital scrubs. It wasn't just that a woman was held down, forcibly strip searched and redressed into hospital scrubs by opposite gender police officers and staff members, but more descriptively stated; Twelve endured this process as I could not be found and afterwards Fury and Rage erupted with words of Hate and Anger at them for what they had done to Twelve, and only because Vengeance was outnumbered and outgunned did Fury not beat the living crap out of someone with my bare fists.

Mania showed up the next morning, filed a written complaint and had questions that never got answered until now. So yes, I seek Refuge in knowledge because sometimes I need to know certain things in order to feel safe in making an informed decision, and that night all I needed to know was the answer to one simple question. Instead of being my rescuer from Terror, all you did was time travel me right back to 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986 because I had questions back then too and all I

received as answers were threats about what would happen to me if I ever told. I feared Retaliation when I was forced by a relative to tell and that was an entirely different kind of hell from ages 12-15. During those painful years and the events that followed, I continued to seek Refuge in my writing, and it was there that I got a chance to dance with everyone intermittently. Whenever I would write something it was as though I were remembering it instead of composing it for the first time, it sounded silly to say out loud, but it was as though someone else had written what I had just put onto paper. This out of the ordinary feeling to say the least has plagued me for years especially if a word comes to mind when I am writing that I have to look up in the dictionary and then I discover that it is perfect for what I am trying to say in the first place. I remember having that odd feeling a lot during those teenage years and I do not want to label it. Yes, I have many facets of my personality and they all have different names, those of which I describe as moods, but it was only during those years of prolific poetry writing that I got to meet some of them, I just had absolutely no idea and no proof that is until last Wednesday that they were indeed, real.

July 28, 2013

Relapse...

My sorta ex-husband has been diagnosed with Cirrhosis of the Liver. All of a sudden, I have flashbacks to August 2008 when the whites of my mother's eyes had turned yellow, and she had less than one week to live. I think that the universe is sending me a message, God, his Angels, and whatever powers that be are sending me the message to stop drinking. I just refuse to listen to them.

In August 2008 I returned to Maryland back from living in the country of Panama

and unbeknownst to me, my mother was dying. My grief was compounded by the fact that I thought that there was something that I could have done to save her. What on earth was I doing living my own life when I could have done something to prevent my own mother from dying? This was one of the most difficult periods of my life, not being able to save my mother from herself.

I spent my entire childhood dreaming of different realities in which I was her savior. I wanted to protect her from the harsh realities of the life she had led. She was my mother, yet I felt that my role was that of protecting her instead of the other way around. I don't know how this notion of who should protect who became mixed up or misplaced. All I know is that when my mother died, the overwhelming consensus of the universe screamed at me, that it was all my fault.

Nurture...care for, tend to, rear, cultivate..

When I became pregnant for the first time at the age of 20 I immediately stopped thinking about myself. I quit drinking alcohol, I ate as many calories as I needed to, I didn't even take as much as a Tylenol pill for the migraines that plagued me for weeks at a time.

When I was pregnant, my needs were non-existent because the health of the baby growing inside of me took priority over any needs that I might have had. I continued this process of caring for babies and nursing them for the next two decades. Now that I am nearing the fourth decade of my life I wonder, do I even know what it's like to only think about myself?

Back in 2004 when I entered therapy for the disorder of Anorexia, I realized that I had not learned how to nurture or care for myself. It was especially hard for me to find a reason to eat because I wasn't pregnant, and I wasn't nursing. Over the years I have

discovered that it is much too easy to abuse myself because I never learned to care about my own needs, my wants, or my desires. It was easy to want to kill myself because I had never experienced the desire to live.

So today I am unbelievably saddened. I am realizing that since birth all I have wanted to do is to please others. I have wanted to care for my parents and rescue them. I have wanted to care for my children and nurture them. I have wanted to please my spouses and have them love me. I have wanted to make everyone else happy but I have never stopped just for one moment in time to consider what on earth it was that I needed or wanted. I have indulged in self-abuse and self-hatred. I have pitied strangers far more than my own self. I have the total inability to feel any compassion whatsoever for myself. I push others away just so that I can live in total isolation and loneliness and yet I complain of this fate. But the truth of the matter is that deep down inside it is Grudge and Bitterness turned inward toward myself that sends me to Relapse every time. I hear the universe screaming at me with messages that I need to heed but at the very same time it is hard to escape the chains of that prison for which you feel you so richly deserve.

July 31, 2013

Grace...

I had an Internet stalker once back in 2001 and it was cute at first, even charming, but after a while it started to become a tad bit scary. I tried to communicate with this person multiple times telling him that he was in love with a fantasy, and that things were never going to evolve between us. I tried everything, but nothing would shake this guy. Finally, he talked me into meeting him in a public place and I agreed to tell him where I would be one night out with the girls. I told him that he could watch, but not approach

me and not say one word. Well, this only added fuel to his desires, he continued declaring his undying love for me and even told his wife that he was leaving her for me. It was a mess. But it came with the territory I suppose. I was after all, an Internet Webcam Stripper back then.

Irrepressible...Restraint and Reason on an extended vacation

Now that I look back on the stalker experience, I can relate a little bit to Roger. Back then I thought that he was desperately in need of psychiatric meds, and don't get me wrong, those could have helped him then too. But I can understand the need that someone might have to recreate themselves or their current experience by indulging in a fantasy. It took a new relationship to get rid of Roger, but it wasn't the idea of my new boyfriend and impending marriage that ultimately killed his fantasy, it was the idea of suffering great bodily harm which would befall him should he continue stalking me.

When I think back to those years the thing that I remember most about myself was that I wanted, needed someone to protect me from myself, the world, everything. I found this total badass, incorrigible, unmanageable, unruly, and obnoxious man and I chose him for this task. But what I didn't know was that I was doing the exact same thing that Roger was doing. I had created my own fantasy with this new man, the new marriage, the life together with him and it was just a distraction and yet another failed attempt at recreating myself and rescuing myself from the experience that I had been attempting to flee.

Lately I have been having irrepressible fantasies roaming through my mind and this tells me that I need to rein them in and recognize them for what they are, just fantasies. I have enough reality to go around to keep myself from being bored so why indulge my mind this way I wonder. I suppose it goes back to 2002 when dancing with

Impulsivity and Reckless was just too much fun and Mania was on the sidelines watching everything unfold. It was the quiet before the storm, the dark clouds of Depression filling with Anger, Hate and Pain until they could fill no more resulting in Scorn and Vengeance sending for War. I nearly became permanently swept up by the multitude of tornadoes that came with this storm. I plotted, I planned, I devised and indulged in fantasies, which nearly became a reality. I was months away from a Mexican prison when there was a break in the storm. I didn't recognize her at first but there she was fast on the heels of Faith, Hope and Deliverance, it was Grace.

August 1, 2013

Contribution...

When I was twelve I just wanted someone to wrap their arms around me and say a million I'm sorrys. I wanted to feel remorse, the pain, the guilt, the contrition and the sorrow. I wanted someone to just step forward and say, you know what this was fucked up, and no matter what, nothing bad like this will ever happen to you again. I would have given anything for some sort of apology, or kind word, instead all I received were denials of Truth.

The worst thing about being molested over and over again when I was a young child was that my abuser relished in the fact that he could molest me when others were nearby. He would violate me in a room full of people, when their heads were turned, under water at a water park, or under pillows during a pillow fight. The mere fact that he could grope me in a public place where people were able to watch but didn't see him was all the more terrifying for me. He didn't seem to be afraid of anyone. It was as if he was bragging, that look, I can do this when I want and where I want, and you and they can't

stop me. I can still remember what it felt like to recoil back in fear, look around at the faces of others and know that they had no idea what had just transpired. No one had seen a thing, yet I was full of terror, crying and hysterically running away. My God, I am still, running away, waiting for someone at the very least to show me a little bit of Contrition.

Today I am knee deep in Sorrow. Only I feel sorry for Twelve, only I can tell her how fucked up that was for her to live through that abuse day after day, year after year. Her father doesn't get it, he never will. He was supposed to protect her and even now he can't offer her what she needs. Today I realized that I never had parents and unfortunately, I never will.

August 8, 2013

Borderline....

I was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder in 1999 after a somewhat explosive anger outburst during an inpatient psychiatric hospital stay. Admittedly it was my first time in the psych ward so I had absolutely no idea what to expect, but apparently this diagnosis sat in a file for a number of years without my knowledge and apparently without my future Psychiatric doctors' knowledge as well.

Funny thing, I later read several books explaining this disorder and for years I thought, I think they have it wrong. I am not Bipolar, I have Borderline Personality Disorder, yeah.. they are wrong, but what's the point? I hate labels anyway. Let them label me with Bipolar Disorder, I'm too exhausted, depressed and suicidal to fight about it. If only I had known about those 1999 records that I had never received I would have remembered that timid and frightened Psychiatrist from India that had seen and diagnosed, the supposed real me. She

saw someone that I have seldom seen, I look for her every now and then, but she too frightens me, so I have long since stopped seeking her. Today I came to the conclusion that I am not Bipolar at all nor do I have Borderline Personality Disorder. No, seriously I think that perhaps I am just a drunk dysfunctional woman with a fucked up childhood who happens to have Gluten intolerance and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I know that every Physician that I have ever seen warns me against diagnosing myself through Google or otherwise, but really, fuck them and their medical school bullshit training. I have known myself for 39 years, and you just met me last month bitch. What the fuck do you know about my complicated life and totally fucked up childhood? If I can educate myself, surround myself with people on the internet in a forum with similar issues, download self-help audible books and get a clue about what I'm struggling with, well more power to me. Who are you to tell me that you just met me last month and you have every single answer to every single problem that I have tackled since the age of 7? And again, kindly fuck you. Medicine is not an exact science, but your average Physician will not tell you this, they want you to blindly fall for every line of bullshit that they feed you. Well unfortunately I am not the average patient and for this reason I find myself without a regular Physician quite often. I am actually in between family Physicians right now. I guess I am what Physicians might coin, "a difficult patient". What the fuck ever, who needs you anyway doc. You're an idiot and by the way, Google does know more than you. Ok, well the medical journals know more than you.

Starvation.. Apathy dances through denial of sustenance

I find that lately well for the past several months, I have to verbally and outwardly discuss with myself if I have eaten any food at any given time. I say, ok.. breakfast, did you eat breakfast today? I answer myself, um no, crap, didn't eat breakfast today, not

even one potato tot. Then I move on to lunch, I say, ok, what about lunch, hmm, did I eat lunch today? Usually in making lunch for the kiddos I actually will get in a bite of this and a bite of that, so today, yes, I had one slice of bread with peanut butter, ok now it's dinner time, are you eating? Are you going to eat dinner? So today, I answer myself, well I'm drinking wine, doesn't that count, you know, carbs or something? Oh, this is horrible, I'm going to estimate that I am only eating about 500 calories a day in food and that's a good day. I am reminded of why my family Physician keeps writing horrible things about me in my medical record. This is quite nuts. It doesn't matter that I am not doing it on purpose, but because of my history of an eating disorder, I am just crazy I suppose.

BUT, what if there is a perfectly good medical and logical reason for my lack of appetite. I mean I COULD have like a huge brain tumor or something.. right? Yes, I could have cancer and I'm not crazy after all, I'm just dying anyway, so starving myself actually doesn't matter. I am going to die anyway because my Physicians are too obsessed with my psychiatric ailments and refuse to look for a medical cause for my alleged irrational and "crazy" behaviors, not eating is just one of them.

Apathy is my best friend now. I searched long and hard for him and he arrived a few months ago. He said, fuck food, who needs it, he said, you wanted not to care and now you don't. Isn't this great? I am positioned smack dab in the middle of Responsibility and Reason who beg for Logic to step in and I am frozen and unable to do anything that doesn't end up right back in the arms of Apathy. It's a death grip till the end. I just don't care. But each day I am reminded that I am not doing this on purpose. I force feed myself with Anger, Hate, Bitterness and Vengeance and it is only because of them that I consume the small amount of calories that I do. Because I don't want to die

and wither away, I need to live, because my fuel resides in Persecution and Grudge and I will do whatever it takes to see Victory.

August 10, 2013

Victory....

I seem to have an uncanny knack for getting attorneys fired or well kicked off of cases where I am involved. Seriously I don't go around looking for lawsuits, I don't purposely put myself in positions where the government abuses their power and then I have a rightful suit against them. I don't ask government officials to go off script and totally and most royally fuck me over by breaking the law. No, I didn't ask for this lawsuit, I was just minding my own business as usual, being my normal obnoxious self and they stepped over the lines of Justice. For me Victory isn't about how much money you pay me because you broke the law, it's about your acknowledgement that you were wrong in the first place. If you keep saying that you did nothing wrong as your attorney tells you to say I am just going to dig in deeper because you're a liar and I will fight you with everything that I have. Unfortunately for you, I am unpredictable and you never know just how and when you're going to take it up the ass, but for sure, you're going to at the very least have many a sleepless nights and potentially you could lose the fight.

Conciliation.. Bitterness and Grudge took a long hike and I forgave your sorry ass

I don't think of myself as a forgiving person. I mean if you cross me, you're dead to me or worse, you think you're still a friend, but like I said you're dead to me, you just don't know it. I am never ever going to forget that you lied to me, let me down, failed me

or all in all was a complete and utter waste of my emotional investment in you in the first place. At this point I would say that 90% of my friends and family meet this definition. Except for my kiddos, they have a lifetime pass for unconditional love and if you hurt one of them, Lord, have mercy on your soul. There is nothing I will not do illegal or otherwise just to bury you. Period.. yeah I said it, and yes I published it. So try me.

It's not that I don't want to be a forgiving person and that I want to be a Bitch, it's that I can't. I honestly cannot wrap it around my brain that you hurt me in the most unimaginable way, and I need to suck it up and let it go.

Lately I wish that this civil case that I have been battling for a while would just settle out of court. It isn't that I don't believe that I will eventually prevail in the end; it's just that I need to move on with my life. Ok, I'm not being truthful. I don't want to move on with my life, I want to stop dividing my focus on the enemy so that I may totally immerse myself with War, Malice and Persecution. I want to eat, drink, sleep, live and breathe Vengeance for some cause quite more deserving of my attention. I want to indulge Anger, Hate and Fury in late night escapades that continue into the next morning. I want to engage Wrath in a contract with Rage. I want to annihilate the enemy and I don't care about the cost.

Back in 2003 when I was experiencing the depths of Sorrow, refusing to eat because I was losing my daughter to her father in a ridiculous custody battle, I didn't get it. I wanted to die because it was inconceivable that I should be able to cope, to be able to live with the avalanche of emotions that were colliding within my soul and body at that time. I wanted to wither away. I wanted to die from hunger because I was starving and only if I could feed myself with Victory would I survive. Victory for me wasn't physical; it wasn't tangible as now it isn't monetary. Victory for me is conciliation. I

want my son, plain and simple and I want the ability to see a hospital as a sanctuary instead of the nightmare it became to me. These things are lost to me and so neither civil case settles for now. We remain at a standstill because neither side is willing to admit guilt or wrongdoing.

The old familiar dizziness returned today and I was like, wait.. I need to eat something because I have to drive tomorrow. Crap, I need to like eat an entire meal, oh no, this is going to be impossible. I am just not hungry, and there is no possible way that I am going to eat an entire meal right now. I am subliminally and not so subliminally depressed about my son. For months I have been eating bits and pieces of that, a half of a half of sandwich and perhaps maybe one scarce meal a day. I am slowly withering away, and I notice that my clothes are falling off just a little bit more each and every day. I tell myself that I'm doing much better and that I haven't seen Depression for quite some time, but I forget that Despair has taken up a permanent residency around here. I scarcely remember 2003. Why do I react to the loss of a child by refusing to eat? Perhaps this is normal? Perhaps sometimes it is just too painful to appear strong. Perhaps it has just been nine months of hell and I am in pain. I miss my son. He was ripped away from me after his near-death experience and perhaps as a mother it is only normal that I refuse to eat. Perhaps I am not crazy after all, but perhaps I loved someone so much that losing them was just enough to destroy me.

August 16, 2013

Dual Diagnosis...

I checked myself into the hospital a few years ago because Twelve had become so out of control that I needed to put myself on lock down. It was a nightmare of Bulimia,

Alcoholism, Rage, Anger and Mania all rolled into one. When my mother died, I found myself in this pit of Grief and Mourning and if I had not been surrounded by Guilt and Bitterness, I might have been able to gently pull myself out. But I couldn't. I was reckless, breaking laws, performing random acts of unkindness on myself and I knew that if I did not do something drastic, any chance at Redemption from Madness would forever be lost.

Grace...Mercy, Pity and Reprieve cutting in on the dance with Madness

When I arrived at the facility in Florida it was simply to reign in my eating disorder, but upon arrival I quickly learned that not only would the staff focus on Bulimia but they would attempt to heal my other issues as well, those that they label Dual Diagnosis. I think that when I left that place, I had a list about two pages long with my alleged dual diagnoses. I eventually left against medical advice believing that I could learn more from self-help books than I ever could learn from that place. And I was right. I am currently reading a book written by Rachel Reiland and would you believe that she has a Twelve as well?

I like to say that I'm not crazy I am just wounded albeit severely wounded, Grace is my best chance and healing those wounds for good. Grace comes in all forms and often in places where I was least likely to expect it. I started an Internet group forum a few years ago and it has grown to over 300 women. We commiserate by discussing our dual diagnoses, but most specifically Borderline Personality Disorder, which I still doubt I truly have, but ok, it's just a label. We all have a Twelve, which is most accurately defined as that inner child from within constantly acting out in ways that we later regret. We post questions, we post our frustrations, but most of all, we have discovered that we are not alone, and that one Truth is sometimes all we need to get through the Madness

that which we don't need to label but that which we do need to heal.

Before picking up Reiland's memoir, which was a book suggested to me by one of the women in my group, I was once again contemplating therapy, however, the more that I read, the more that I have discovered just how accurate I have been in my self-assessments through journaling. I envision myself one day completing this journal book of mine, walking into my shrink's office and saying, "Well here ya go, I did most of the heavy lifting on this one, can't you just read this journal, it will save us both a lot of time and talking." I laugh because, yes, this is something that I would do, like can't we just skip to the end already? I don't want to read my life story to you from the beginning and have to talk to you for several hours just to figure out things that I already know. I want an instant answer to curing my issues but no I don't want a prescription or pills. I just want a summary, an outline, and Cliff notes on how we're going to fix me. Because I already know that I am broken, that I am wounded, that I need a ridiculous amount of mending before I can stop acting out, stop giving in to Twelve and all of her dual diagnoses. I know all of this, but what I don't know is just how long and arduous a road it is to Reconciliation.

August 20, 2013

Autonomy....

I have said before in other writings that I believe that marriage is stupid. If I can recall this correctly, I was in a two hour-long argument with my then husband just because I put that statement out there on the Internet. He is a stickler for appearances, and I am a stickler for being myself. I find it painful to pretend on any spectrum and in any matter. I spent so much time pretending when I was a little girl that I find that in my

young adulthood and into my now late thirties, I have a fuck it, take me as I am or leave attitude. I don't particular respect this attitude, but I understand it and I'm working on it. The worst part for me about having been married for the past 19 years is the possibility of losing the autonomy that I promised myself I would always maintain. I believe this is what made me rebel the most in both of my marriages, my fear of dependence, and the overwhelming fear that I might all of a sudden need someone. I ended up not being able to connect or love either one of them because I was constantly struggling to erase the appearance of the marital union, the loss and destruction of total and complete autonomy.

Reconciliation.... Twelve turns 40, Mania, Anger, Grudge, and Depression seek therapy

I am quietly and not so quietly having a major freak out attack about turning 40. It's not that I am getting wrinkles or much more gray hair, although I have noticed a few new laugh lines under my eyes, of course that could also be major dehydration of my skin, you now, not eating and nightly gin. I am oh so freaking out because although I have gained a new friend in Wisdom, she doesn't really show up often enough. I am still giving in to that inner child of mine, the wounded one who wants to ignore Responsibility and write poetry in the rain, give in to reckless habits by playing games with food when she's depressed and daydream about another life that she could live if only for Reconciliation.

Today I thought, screw it, perhaps I need grief therapy because I am currently listening to Reiland's book and she is in this chapter undergoing play therapy. At first, I thought, ridiculous, this woman is like 30 and she is engaging in play therapy with dolls and just as quickly as this thought entered my mind did it seem oddly intriguing. So, I am

open to therapy because right now I am stuck in my Grief. It isn't so much a dance that I am used to because instead of the tango or slow dance, it is more like a circle dance with just Grief, Pain, Pity, Mourning and I. We go round and round and round and round and after a while I am so dizzy and so so very tired that I just collapse among them. And in that moment, in that instant, I remember why it is that I have fought so hard for my autonomy all of these years of my life. I remember why for me marriage is stupid and Emotional Dissociation from a romantic partner is second nature to me. I remember that giving your whole heart to anyone is inevitably costly and against everything that Wisdom has ever taught me. But at the same time as I am so dizzy and tired, most likely from lack of calories and nightly gin, I can only blame myself. Because when I was drafting the contract of how my heart would choose to love and how autonomy would overcome me succumbing to blissful marital union, I surely never expected nor planned to be quite overtaken by the remarkable pull and innate force that which I call Maternal.

August 24, 2013

Kamikaze...

“When you eliminate all thoughts about life and death, you will be able to totally disregard your earthly life. This will also enable you to concentrate your attention on eradicating the enemy with unwavering determination, meanwhile reinforcing your excellence in flight skills.”—An excerpt from a kamikaze pilots' manual.

I'm sure everyone can remember where they were during the tragedy that struck New York City that which we now refer to as 9-11. It was the first time that it dawned on me that there were crazy people out there in the world willing to die, blow themselves up to smithereens just to complete their intended mission. It isn't that I hadn't heard of

Kamikaze warfare before. I vaguely remember listening to half of a lecture in high-school history class on this topic and then it was back to creating poetry for the rest of the lecture. So it wasn't that the concept was new to me, but it was the fact that it begged to ask the question, are you mentally unstable if you choose a kamikaze mission, or are you just really fucking motivated to win?

Venomous.... Ferocity as is Wrath as to Fury as is Malice

A few years ago someone recorded me without my knowledge and played the recording to someone to show just how biting my tongue can be when Fury is triggered by Rage. Come to think of it, this keeps happening to me, apparently, I say shit, they catch shit on tape, make me look horrible in front of others, but I digress. So when this person played the recording of me to multiple individuals the word that came back to describe my tone, and my words was Venomous. I remember thinking how can my words be venomous, what the heck does that even mean and after all, if you're in an argument with someone isn't it always venomous? I began to defend myself as this recording began to haunt me and I wanted to say, well look she took this out of context and the entire conversation wasn't even recorded, only my apparent and alleged venomous words after she had already ticked me off beyond reprieve. But nothing that I could say mattered, the opinion had already been rendered that I was this somehow evil and venomous person or in the very least my arguing style was malicious and wrought with venomous hurtful words. It no longer mattered what the argument was even about, this person was able to garner the desired sympathy by the mere fact that I had apparently lost control and allowed Wrath to wrongfully pelt her repeatedly with rabid curse filled bomb scathing words.

In the end I stopped defending myself and whenever it came up again, I decided to own it. It was somehow cleansing for my soul to just admit to myself and to those who often kept throwing this recording in my face that yes, I can be an evil Venomous Bitch. It felt good to just acknowledge the Truth in myself and to just sit with it, that yes, I will cut my nose off just to spite my face if and only if it somehow mutilates you too. I admit that I have adapted a Kamikaze sort of fighting style, screw Venomous, suicide mission is how I roll. I am not proud of this fact; I just refuse to deny it any longer.

The funny thing about living in a somewhat constant state of Depression for over three decades is that you may ultimately lose the desire to live and if you have absolutely no desire to live, any mission worth fighting for then becomes that much more greater than life itself. So again, I recall the person that I was in 2001 during the 9-11 attacks and I reflect upon the person that I have become to be and I answer that question for myself. No, I do not currently believe that you necessarily have to be mentally unstable to go forward with a Kamikaze mission. I believed this in 2001, but this was before I danced the Fox Trot with Wrath, before I had seen Truth in Fury, this was before I was a victim of War and Anarchy and this was before I had stayed up late at night snuggling close in bed with Malice and Vengeance. They had always been there of course; I just finally stopped running from them and hiding from them. And just as I decided many years ago to own the sad truth about my sometimes Venomous, Wicked and often Kamikaze war style during arguments with others, I own it now. No, I don't want to just fly your plane into the ground blowing us both up into tiny little instant bits of smithereens. I want the venom of Wrath, Fury, Persecution, War and Vengeance to take turns slow dancing the very life out of you until you can no longer see the forest beneath you for the trees. I don't want you to see the end coming as you peer out the window; I

want you to feel it coming as you gasp for the air, a slow death from Hypoxia. I want to send Shame, Fear, Mercy and Pity away, sailing to safety through the air with fully armored parachutes and only then when left alone will it be too late for you to pilot your own plane; that plane of life that you so desperately once clung to, as nothing for you will ever quite be the same once we have finally reached our destination. So, no, I don't believe that the 9-11 terrorists or other Kamikaze warfare has anything to do with mental instability, no more than it did back when Japan implemented this type of warfare during WWII. And I don't think that it 100% has to do with being really fucking motivated to win either. I don't think I'll ever be able to completely explain it, I just know that for me I have never actually had an exact purpose, a Kamikaze mission or dedicated direction to give Venomous to prepare the runway for takeoff that is, until now.

September 14, 2013

Shattered...

One of my favorite movies is a 1991 flick entitled, "Shattered." A man awakens from a coma with amnesia; his face is completely unrecognizable, allowing the villainess of the story to recreate his entire life, right down to the reconstruction of his face. I think that I have watched this movie at least five times in the past ten years. I love how the victim doesn't see it coming. I love how the mystery of who done it pervades the entire plot. But most of all I love the idea of forgetting.

A few weeks ago my father reminded me of the reason why it is that I live by the motto, Trust No one and everybody lies. He reminded me that he is just one of the reasons that I will never love or trust with this funny heart of mine. When it finally dawned on me that this man was never the man that I thought he was, I was hurt, and I

was truly devastated; however, yet I was also, curiously relieved.

My favorite scene from the 90's movie "Shattered" is when the villainesses' secret is finally exposed. As viewers, we are taken back to what really happened and we discover that the main character of the movie has been unknowingly masquerading as someone else, that the new face that he has doesn't really belong to him. His memory returns in full force and the pieces that were once missing and misplaced are no longer shattered but taped backed together into one shocking reality. Each time that I watch that scene, his amazement, his horror, I wonder, would it have been better if he had never really remembered anything in the first place? What if he had just gone on with his life as usual, pretending to be someone else, never really knowing the truth about his identity? Is it really easier to forget?

When I was a little girl these types of movies intrigued me mainly because I could relate to the amnesia plots. There are so many things that I chose to forget about my childhood out of pure self-preservation, and although it is unsettling to have physical scars and burn scars received during childhood that that I cannot explain, and unsettling to have childhood friends share memories of which I have no recollection of, it is somehow easier to continue to forget.

When my father went psycho on me, and cursed me out a few weeks ago after leaving prison after over two decades this was a side of him that I had never known or seen. I was horrified and I was devastated because there was no reason for his behavior, no real reason behind his psychotic rampage. Perhaps this was my fault, after all for the past thirty-three years I had continued to only see him through the eyes of a six-year-old and subsequently a doe eyed 15 year old girl. I didn't know that he was just pretending to love me; I had no idea that he was just pretending to care about his daughter. And in the

end it wasn't amnesia that snowed me, it wasn't amnesia that knocked me on my ass, it was actually just the opposite. I remembered everything about him, the him that I had loved with my whole little girl heart, and the him that I had known from birth until the age of nearly seven and then I realized that his memory had been an imposter. It was just as it was in the 90's movie "Shattered" I had to face the truth; I was suddenly taken aback with images from then and now. Everything had been a lie except that the villainess in this scenario was actually a little-known thing I've come to call Desperation.

December 31, 2013

Psych Ward..

I nearly spent Christmas Day in the psych ward. By the time someone discovered that I was in an altered state of consciousness, an altered state of reality as it was, it was nearly too late, and exactly 5 days later from the original onset of psychosis. I just recall having a seizure and landing on the floor of my kitchen and after that, it's a struggle to know what was real and what never really happened at all. Of course, I didn't know that I was going about my day-to-day activities in a somewhat delusional state. I recall getting up off of my kitchen floor and thinking, well that was weird and then all heaven and hell broke loose and wreaked havoc in my brain. Days later I was in the emergency room, getting poked and prodded, drug tested, brain scanned and then transferred to the psych ward for lack of a better place to house me. Apparently, I wasn't in any condition to give a report of my previous medical history, as I couldn't even remember the ages of my three youngest children when asked by hospital staff. For a while I was lost in space and time, and for a little while I was even disconnected from my body, because for just a few days I actually thought that I was dead.

Awakening... Realization, Awareness, Insight

Over the course of eight days, my brain was essentially Swiss cheese and I could only peek through the holes of my false reality to see a partial view of the world that I struggled so desperately to return to and only for the sake of my children. I didn't know where I was and how I had gotten there. I was dressed in what looked like a prison outfit as it said, "Property of" and the name of the facility. I was confused and out of sorts and for half a day I thought I had been kidnapped or worse, the next day I thought I had murdered someone, and I was in prison awaiting transfer. I didn't know what the hell had happened or what the hell was going on. I avoided interviews by staff, and I frequently thought the other obviously mentally deranged patients were plotting against me. Seriously, I think they were kinda, sorta, well maybe, it is at best debatable.

Leading up to my physical and mental collapse, I had apparently forgotten to eat, drink or sleep for five or seven straight days. So, I knew that the only way to get out of the Psych ward by Christmas was to eat, drink and sleep, well and to somewhat appear grounded back in reality. On the fourth day in the hospital, I met with the Physician who promptly instructed me to see a Neurologist as a part of my outpatient process. He wasn't really pushing psych meds and I thought well this is a switch, I have been telling physicians for years that there was a neurological malfunction in my brain causing the ultra-random focal seizures I've had in the past.

When asked by the Physician what led to me being brought into the hospital I stated plainly that it was just severe stress. But what I didn't know until I started writing down my memories of those days is that I had unintentionally embarked upon a traditional Native American experience called Vision Quest.

So, in the end, I did sort of spiritually die, and I could have actually really croaked

if allowed to go on any longer in that medical and mental state, but I survived. During this process I found Peace, Joy and Grace surrounding me all at once. I was healed from the inside out and a lot of lifelong questions were answered. So even though I was described medically as in a state of pure psychosis, it wasn't Psychosis, as I normally know him, it was actually an Awakening. I know that it sounds odd, but not sleeping, not eating and stressing my physical nervous system out to the max carried my consciousness over to an inexplicable state of an alternate reality that which I call, Heaven.