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## Bipolar Insights: The Power of Family

By Marcia Rose

As with most stories, this one began many years ago with a father and mother and their daughter. The parents did not know about mental illness nor did they understand the nature of their daughter's bizarre behavior.

At age 17 their troubled daughter left home and during the course of five years she had five children. When the youngest was under a year and the oldest was 6, social services was alerted about problems in their home. This resulted in all of the children being removed from their mother and separated from each other in foster care. Ultimately, one of the children was taken by the biological father's family and the other four were adopted by another family.

Perhaps this story is beginning to sound as if there is a happy ending. The children are adopted and safely in homes. This was not the case. This was the beginning of a long and painful journey for each of those young children.

The youngest child grew to become a responsible young woman. She met her best friend and then her husband almost simultaneously. However, it became apparent to others that she was struggling personally. This young woman was not aware of the severity of her difficulties nor was she willing to accept what others were saying about her behavior.

Later with two daughters of her own and her life spinning out of control, she raised the question about whether she might have bipolar disorder. After seeking out professional help, it was confirmed that indeed she had bipolar disorder and she began the rocky journey to balance and management of her illness.

Over the years, the brothers and sisters were not in communication with each other, but they heard bits and pieces of the tragic beginnings of their lives. Mostly they hid from those difficult memories, because they were too horrible to recall.

Then one day the phone rang. The voice said, “Hello, I am your uncle, your mother’s brother. I have been looking for all of you. I want to have the family come together and I want to know you and have you met your grandparents.”

These five lost children were now adults with children of their own. Husbands and wives and their families all got together. They laughed, told stories and collectively remembered the abuse and abandonment that visited their young lives.

The youngest has come to understand that their mother had bipolar disorder and of the five children, it is apparent that four of them also have bipolar disorder. Sadly, however, only the youngest of the siblings has accepted her own bipolar diagnosis and has achieved balance and is managing her life. The others have not. Their struggles continue.

Throughout this nightmare that upended the lives of five innocent children, it has been the power of the family that has helped soothe some of the wounds. The concerned uncle and the grandparents spent years seeking to repair what life had done to these children. The horrible circumstances of these children’s lives could not tear apart or destroy their bond.

This fractured family had roots and in the midst of all the sadness, there were people who reached out and said, “We are your family and we care about you.” Those bonds speak to the power of the family.

The founder and CEO of Bipolar Insights/Mental Health Educational Center, Marcia Rose, has completed her new book “Journey From Bondage to Freedom.” For information e-mail [trust@bipolarinsights.com](mailto:trust@bipolarinsights.com). Weekly classes start at 7 p.m. on Mondays at Green Valley Church, 3500 Missouri Flat Road in Placerville, Room 304. Check [bipolarinsights.com](http://bipolarinsights.com) for complete details. Become a fan of Bipolar Insights on [Facebook.com/bipolarinsights](https://www.facebook.com/bipolarinsights). Bipolar Disorder/Mental Health is what you have, not who you are. All are welcome.