

Mountain Democrat

Monday, October 23, 2017
PLACERVILLE, CALIFORNIA



Why Do I Show Up Each Week?

By Marcia Rose

The answer to that question is complex and has changed over the years. When I began facilitating the Bipolar Insights group in 1998, I felt an abundance of fear. If I failed to show up, I feared something may happen to one or all of our members. On the other hand, I feared showing up and saying something harmful out of lack of experience. Either way fear controlled me. After about five years with several more attendees, I showed up just to make sure there was harmony.

Truthfully, in the early days of our class, I always wanted to quit. I taught twice a week, yet every time I approached the class I felt inferior, unwanted, unloved and unqualified. My own dysfunction and pain controlled my ability to believe I was doing any good at all.

The years began to pass from five years to ten, eleven, twelve. Each year I noticed a change in our class, we grew in numbers. Conversations changed in content and tone. If I asked class members to name an area in life that is hardest to deal with, the answer was always family. The blame game began. They (family) always ask if I take my medications. If I laugh out loud, they say I am in mania. If I get serious they say I am depressed. I always see that critical expression on their face. My response to those comments? Invite your family to class! Well that didn't go over very well. Class members felt if the family was there they could not share their life, and to my surprise, the families felt the same.

I could see it was time for a change, and I invited all the families to come to class. My message to everyone was simple -- since you have to live together, you need to be able to talk to one another. A miracle happened and families attended.

Today nineteen years have passed, and there are still many weeks I groan and say to myself -- class tonight. Some Mondays I have a headache or my back hurts or I'm just tired -- yet I show up. So what is it that makes me press on? This past Monday it all made sense.

We have had individuals who have attended class from time to time but not on a regular basis. I was notified by the family of one such special young woman that she had committed suicide. My heart broke.

I stood in front of our class as I did each week, looked at the faces of some of the most courageous individuals I have ever known. Their eyes were fixed on mine as I shared the heartbreak of attending the Celebration of Life of Carly.

One individual responded, you were Carly's voice. Then I knew the answer to Why Do I Show Up Each Week, it is because I need them. They give me unconditional love and support. It is my promise I will always be their voice. I am truly grateful.

We focus on ALL Mental Illness.

The founder and CEO of Bipolar Insights/Mental Health Educational Center, Marcia Rose, has completed her new book "Journey From Bondage to Freedom": This story reveals Marcia's survival as well as her friendship with James, a man who has Bipolar Disorder.

For information, Marcia can be reached at: trust@bipolarinsights.com. Weekly classes start at 7 p.m., on Mondays, Green Valley Church, 3500 Missouri Flat Road in Room 304 in Placerville, \$5 per person. Check bipolarinsights.com for complete details.

2017 Journal is now available and can be purchased at bipolarinsights.com. Become a fan of Bipolar Insights on [Facebook.com/bipolarinsights](https://www.facebook.com/bipolarinsights).

Mental Illness is what you have, not who you are. All are welcome.