



# Riding the Waves –

TOOLS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BIPOLAR DISORDER

# Ride the Waves - What Does it Mean?



At the beach, have you noticed:

- ▶ ... waves come in different sizes?
- ▶ ... when the waves get higher, there are fewer surfers out there?
- ▶ ... when 8-foot waves are coming in, almost no surfer can handle them!
- ▶ ... some surfers can handle 50-foot waves, and even find them fun 😊 !



# Surfing the Waves of Bipolar

\*\*\*  
\*

- ▶ As someone with **bipolar**, I live in a metaphorical world, one in which I get **bigger 'waves'** than most people.
- ▶ I started to realize I needed to find **'tools' to lower the waves.**
- ▶ **Tools are important.**

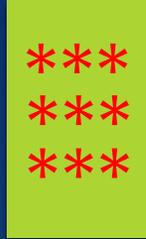


**In Crisis - about to be buried and drowned under a towering wave.**

# Searching for Bipolar Surfing Skills

- ▶ Tools in hand, I set out to see if I could actually learn how to surf my bipolar waves.
- ▶ I never met anyone who could surf the waves of bipolar, until I met **Tom Wootton**, and took his [Bipolar IN Order](#) course.
- ▶ Now I'm taking his 8-week online course, for the 6<sup>th</sup> time 😊!





# 'Reading' the Waves of Bipolar

A good surfer 'reads' the incoming wave, to know if it's one they can handle.

To read my *bipolar waves*, I had to learn to become aware of my state.

1. If a wave was **way outside my comfort zone**, I couldn't be my best self – I would lose control ...



2. If a 'wave' was **inside my comfort zone**, I could easily be my best self .....



3. There was a third kind of 'wave' '**just outside my comfort zone**' .....



# States ('Waves') vs. Comfort

- ▶ Red – .....   
*way outside* comfort zone
- ▶ Blue – .....   
*inside* comfort zone .....
- ▶ Yellow – .....   
*just outside* comfort zone

**Full-blown mania - way outside comfort zone**

**Hypomanic - just outside comfort zone**

**Inside the typical Mood Range of a typical person - Inside Comfort Zone**

**Moderately depressed - just outside comfort zone**

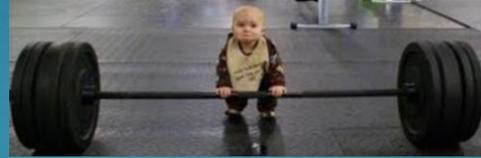
**Deepest, darkest depression - way outside comfort zone**

# 'Reading' Bipolar States, or 'Waves'

## – Signs to Watch

\*\*\*

▶ Physical .....



▶ Mental .....



▶ Emotional .....



▶ Social .....



▶ Spiritual .....



▶ Career / Financial ... \$\$\$

# Acquiring a Chest of Tools – For times a ‘wave’ is too high



▶ **Physical** .....



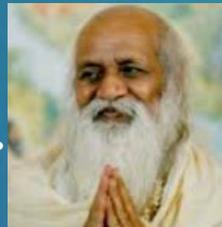
▶ **Ingestible** .....



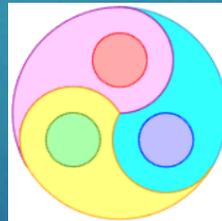
▶ **Social** .....



▶ **Spiritual** .....



▶ **Mental** .....



**Refine and get Really Skilled at Using my Tools**

# BP Disorder versus BP IN order

\*

- ▶ I may then behave in ways that aren't reflecting my **core values**.
- ▶ We can all be overwhelmed if a tsunami comes in.
- ▶ I had to start by seeing my behavior when I was only a little hypomaniac, because in full mania I was sure it was everyone else who was crazy.
- ▶ *They were wiping out, it was not me, hee-hee 😊.*



# Behavior versus 'How I Feel' in a State



- ▶ Here's where Tom Wootton helped me become aware it was my **behavior** that was getting me in trouble, not my **state**.
- ▶ 'Getting this' was the biggest key to freedom 😊 !
- ▶ What made it so hard was trying to see it while in my highest manias or my deepest depressions.
- ▶ For bipolar 'waves' **way outside my comfort zone**, I just had to turn those down. Otherwise, wipeouts really were inevitable.



# Waves 'Inside Comfort Zone'



- ▶ There was a second kind of bipolar 'wave' – one I was pretty comfortable in, where I was just a little hypomanic or depressed.
- ▶ These waves were really easy to handle.
- ▶ But as a surfer who always wants more of a challenge, I didn't want to spend my whole life surfing little 'kiddie' waves.



# Finding My Most Productive Zone - Waves Just Outside Comfort Zone

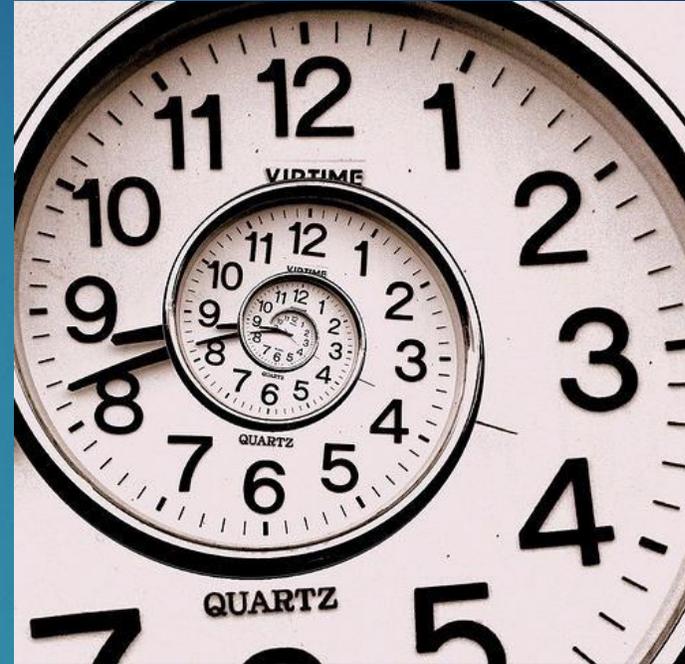
\*\*\*

- ▶ Luckily, there was this third kind of bipolar 'wave.'
- ▶ It was just **slightly bigger** than I was good at 'surfing.'
- ▶ I was surprised I could learn to ride bigger and bigger waves, growing my skills while experiencing this third kind.
- ▶ It took almost two years, but I was shocked to find myself confidently surfing the bipolar equivalent of 8-footers 😊 !



# Consider the Impact of Time

- ▶ Suppose your boss is giving you a hard time at work one day.
- ▶ You can 'take the hits' for a day, but what if it continues to go on and on?
- ▶ Eventually, one day you find you're worn out. Or even burned out.
- ▶ Similarly, I can now surf the equivalent of 8-foot waves, just outside my comfort zone, **for a while**.
- ▶ Then if my everyday tools aren't working, it's time to use stronger tools to **'turn down those waves.'**



# A Surfer has to Learn How to Surf. To Surf Bipolar, I had to:

\*\*\*  
\*\*\*

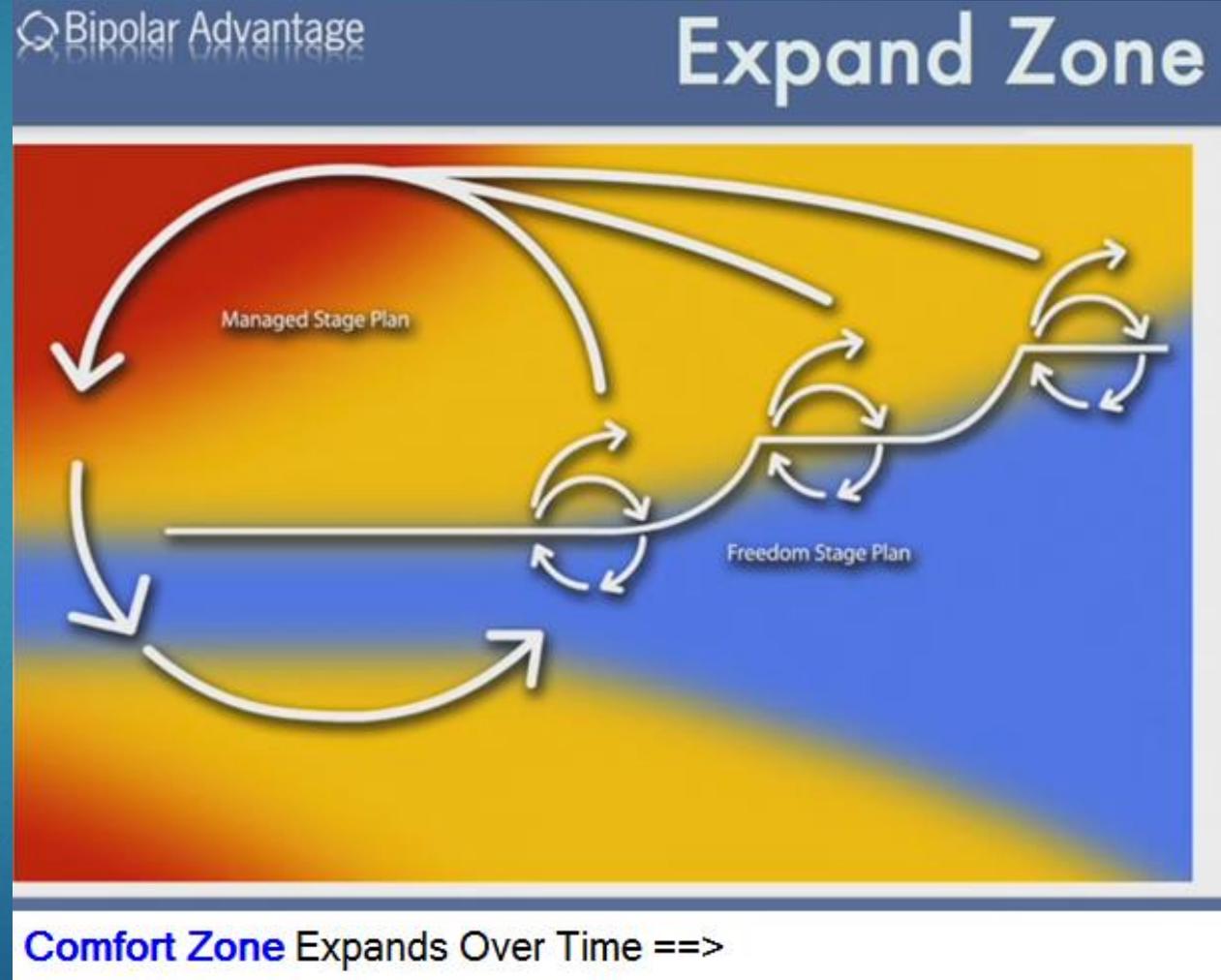
1. 'Read' the waves .....
2. Distinguish the states **just outside my comfort zone** .....
3. **Acquire a chest of tools** .....
4. **Separate my behavior from my state** .....
5. **Account for time** .....
6. **Expand my comfort zone** .....



# The Promise of Bipolar IN Order

- ▶ In the long run **my comfort zone expands.**

- ▶ I dream of staying IN Order **in any state.**



## Riding the Waves Part 2 - Links to Tools and Resources

- ▶ Browsing to the URL: [www.tinyurl.com/RidingTheWaves](http://www.tinyurl.com/RidingTheWaves) will display a web page with a menu:

### **Menu Name**

[DBSA Links to Tools and Downloadable Articles](#)

[MHAPBC Links to Tools and Resources](#)

[Bipolar IN Order© - Tom Wootton - Bipolar Advantage](#)

[TriUnity™ Emotion Coach™ - a Mental Tool to Coach IN Order Behavior](#)

- ▶ From this menu you can access electronic versions of all Depression and Bipolar Alliance (DBSA) handouts provided, as well as a PDF of the Part 2 PowerPoint slides – and much, much more 😊 !
- ▶ I welcome questions you may have. Email either:  
[michael@dbsasouthflorida.org](mailto:michael@dbsasouthflorida.org) or [mpeterson@mhapbc.org](mailto:mpeterson@mhapbc.org).
- ▶ If you would like more information about Tom Wootton's Bipolar IN Order© course, email:  
[support@bipolaradvantage.com](mailto:support@bipolaradvantage.com).

# Acknowledgements

Special thanks to –

- ▶ 1) **Dr. Jacintha Cauffield**, who graciously agreed to include a DBSA presenter in this workshop.
- ▶ 2) **Pam Gionfriddo** and **Brittany Barnes**, who invited DBSA South Florida to provide a presenter.
- ▶ 3) DBSA South Florida President **Lew Yagodnik** and VP **Barry F Spinner**, who made it possible for DBSA to be represented here today.
- ▶ 4) DBSA South Florida's **Harlan Friedman**, who volunteers his time to facilitate our Delray Beach Support Group each Wednesday from 7 – 9 PM at South County Mental Health Center.
- ▶ 5) **Tom Wootton**, who generously granted permission to share his Bipolar IN Order© concepts.