



## Speaking from Experience Bipolar Disorder

### Transcript for chapter 2 of 9: How does it feel?

**Richard (18 years since diagnosis):** It's almost like the whole universe is collapsing and you're somehow part of all of that. All the joy goes out of life and there's just no pleasure at all. Just to get through any activity that involves contact with other people, especially people you haven't met before, becomes very difficult.

**Carole (21 years since diagnosis):** When I've been on a low I've felt very... well, I started off feeling very tired, weepy, lack of energy, lack of interest in things that you would normally find pleasure in doing.

**Richard:** When you're feeling at your worst, you think about a lot of things that you might regret from the past, or that you might've mucked up or stuffed up. You tend to forget a lot of the happy moments or the successes that you've had. So you sort of focus on the... you know that old saying about the doughnut - you tend to focus on the hole, rather than the doughnut. And you have this sort of sense of guilt.

**David and Donné (2 years since Donné's diagnosis):** The effect that the manic phase has on people around, particularly those closest, is utterly devastating. Whereas, the person who has got Bipolar, what they'll focus on themselves is the depression side of it - you know, the black despair, the suicidal thoughts, nothing is meaningful, nothing has joy, nothing has pleasure, black, black, black... and that's what people with manic depression tend to focus on because that's not a nice feeling. That's down, that's black, that's awful. When they're manic, they're in control.

**Carole:** When you're on a high, you're feeling great. You know, you feel confident, you're talkative, you look great, you have brilliant ideas... I mean, some people have ideas about how to solve world problems. I became very religious, which normally I'm not. And during that period when I was psychotic, I felt that I had to humble myself before God. So consequently, I threw out all of my possessions, basically.

**Richard:** Well, when you're on a high you want to achieve a whole lot of things in a hurry. There's a movie that came out, I think about ten years ago, with Richard Gere in it. He was someone who had depression of a sort. And he's at one stage going through a high and he walks into a theatre where there's a formal concert on with classical music. And everyone's sitting down in their formal attire and he just walks down the aisle and then walks onto the stage and stands next to the conductor and starts conducting the orchestra. Now that's the sort of thing you feel like doing when you're on a high.

**Eva (6 years since diagnosis):** To be able to say that it's a medical condition, it's a biochemical thing, something to do with what's happening inside my body. And I didn't feel as though I was crazy, really. I mean, less so that I had before perhaps, when I didn't have a name for it. It also meant that I could start finding medication that was actually meant for the condition, rather than just sedatives, and really try to attack it... or work with it, learn to live with it.