


**DBSA**

# In the Mood

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## Newsletter of the Tucson Chapter of the Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance

Improving the lives of people living with mood disorders.

Volume 1, Issue 2  
Summer, 2008

### I and You *By Jay*

For me, part of the learning process—regarding adequate and self-fulfilling communication, without placing judgmental discourse into the air—is the use of the "I" word. As president emeritus of the Desert Rats Chapter, Tucson DBSA, I have been facilitating our groups for 4 years.

One of the DBSA guidelines, speaking in the "I" person, is always a part of the introductory statements at support group meetings. The other facilitators and I

have found that consumers, and those in support of consumers, find this to be a most difficult task. The prescription of behavioral and therapeutic change is usually not based on self introspection. Instead, a



prescription for change is received as subtle input from an outside objective source, by using noninvasive, effective modalities.

For me, speaking in the "I" person has been carried over into my personal life, where communication is vital, as a professor, mentor and advocate. When I have verbal intercourse, I push my infamously coined "PAUSE" button, located somewhere in this chemical jungle of my brain. This has been an

(p.3)

**We're on the web  
at  
dbsatucson.com**

Additional copies of this newsletter can be downloaded from this site.

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### DBSA meeting times & locations

#### *Central Tucson*

*Sunday nights*

*6—8 pm.*

*Located in University Medical Center, on Campbell Avenue near Elm .*

*The meeting is held on the main floor next to the cafeteria.*

#### *Northwest Tucson*

*Wednesday nights*

*6:30—8 pm.*

*Located at the YMCA on Shannon Avenue close to the corner of Magee. It is north of Pima Community Northwest campus on Shannon. The meeting is held in a meeting room on the north side of the YMCA.*

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### Dealing With Morning Thoughts *By Heidi*

When I wake up in the morning my brain is very disorganized. It's like my mind is a 100-disc CD player and my thoughts are stuck on shuffle-play. The thoughts cascade and overlap—they can be whole or just snippets. They're made up of fears, worries, happy memories, awful memories, bits of conversations, and stuff my brain is just making up.

Usually, I become very upset and overwhelmed by them. I want to push the "stop" button, but there isn't one. I feel like my brain is malfunctioning. I try not to cry, because that's not how I want to start my day, but I feel so out-of-control I cry anyway. Eventually the thoughts subside, thank goodness, but doing this every day really wears me out.

Lately I've been facing mornings in a different way. I get up, do a couple things, then sit down in a chair, close my eyes, and meditate for 15 minutes or so. The thoughts continue to shuffle through my mind, but instead of resisting them, I let them flow through. I do my best to notice them without latching onto them. It helps if I label them, like: past, future, childhood, (p.2)

## Take a Closer Look at Lithium by Francisco Moreno M.D.

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Lithium remains, to date, one of the mood stabilizers with the most proof of efficacy for treatment of acute manic episodes and maintenance treatment of bipolar disorder. Rather than a drug per se, lithium is an actual natural chemical element. It is not broken down in our bodies as most drugs are, but rather eliminated through the kidneys handled in a way similar to salt. There is no deficiency of lithium in bipolar disorder, and the way in which lithium works to stabilize our moods is not clearly understood, we now know that it helps an important process called

"neurogenesis." This means that brain cells are growing. Lithium may cause side effects like changes in heart activity, and kidney function making it necessary to monitor our bodies before and during treatment. It is important to check your "EKG" or heart tracing, blood count, kidney function, and chemicals in your blood prior to starting treatment and also regularly while in treatment. Talk to your doctor about these tests if you do not remember having them done in the last year.

Of course keeping a healthy lithium level is basic for good mood stability

and to avoid toxic side effects. It is important to use lithium regularly, keep a stable diet, and drink enough fluids especially during the summer months to avoid having lithium levels rise during hot weather. Symptoms of lithium toxicity include: diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, changes in urination, muscle and coordination problems, confusion, and irritability, among others. Some people have side effects from lithium without having toxic levels, so it is important to talk to your treatment provider about your benefits and risks from lithium or any other medicine you use.

## DBSA Members Walk With NAMI by Katie

Tucson held its second annual 5K NAMIWALK on Saturday, March 29, 2008 at 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM. Walkers met at Kino Veteran's Memorial Sports Park, 2805 E. Ajo Way.

Being a volunteer for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), I arrived at 6:30 AM to help set up. Volunteers were working like busy bees, setting up tables of beverages, pastries, souvenirs, t-shirts, fruits, and the sign-up table for volunteers. It wasn't long before our walkers began to arrive.

Before starting the walk, our honorary chairpersons praised the effort of the fund raisers. These speakers included; Dr. Xavier Amador, Congresswomen Gabrielle Giffords, PCA Barbara LaWall and Sierra Vista Councilman Thomas Reardon. We couldn't have had a better day to walk with sunny sky and comfortable weather.

Teams came from throughout Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise counties. Many created colorful T-shirts representing their team's theme. The design to the right represented a team led by Scott with many DBSA members. (p.3)



### Many thanks for the generosity of

■ An anonymous member of the Tucson DBSA Chapter who provided funding for *In the Mood*.

■ The UPS Store, 6336 N. Oracle Rd., for numerous donations and discounts in the printing of the newsletter.

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## Morning Thoughts Cont'd

not real, worry, happy, etc. If tears come up, I let them out. They seem to lubricate the mechanism in my brain so it can return to "normal" functioning.

I haven't found a way to make the random-play thoughts stop altogether, but meditation gives me a framework to deal with them and is a much better way to start the day than freaking out while I'm brushing my teeth or buttering my toast.

## Ron's Ramblings

Hi, my name is Ron and I was elected president of the Desert Rats Tucson chapter of DBSA at the April board meeting. I am succeeding Justin who had faithfully served the previous two years.

With a doctoral degree in organizational transformation I had spent over two decades working with dysfunctional non-profit organizations attempting to turn them into functional organizations. I hit a brick wall in 2003. At age 45, I was diagnosed with Bipolar II with rapid cycling along with social anxiety disorder and ended up on Social Security disability.

I fought the diagnosis, fought hav-

ing to take meds, my 20-year marriage fell apart. I became seriously suicidal and all of this seemed to come, to me at least, out of nowhere. As I look back over my life, I can now see many indications that I was



Bipolar and didn't realize it.

I moved from the St. Louis, MO area to Tucson in December 2005 to be closer to my folks and brother. I attended the very first Wednesday DBSA meeting in January 2006 at the

YMCA after reading about it in the newspaper. I was elected to the board of directors in April 2006.

Over the years I have learned to better manage my illness instead of letting the illness get the best of me. I'm not always successful, but I believe I'm going in the right direction.

My hope is to utilize some of my past training and work experiences to look with "new" eyes at our chapter. To look at what we can, should provide to persons with mood disorders, and to those support persons, who are invaluable. Let me know of your ideas at: [ron@dbsatucson.com](mailto:ron@dbsatucson.com).

## NAMI WALK con't

After the walk, we were cheered by supporters and bystanders. A Mariachi band accompanied by dancers and a Japanese drumming group provided the post event entertainment. Food and drinks were there for everyone.

Our fundraising goal at NAMI this year was to raise \$125,000; we raised approximately \$132,740. About 2500 attended the event.

Congratulations and thank you to all who participated. I had a great time and the smiles from fellow walkers were contagious. I am so looking forward to next

year's walk and hoping to top my fundraising goal of \$250

To read more on the NAMI walk, you may go to the following website of NAMI of Southern AZ at:

<http://www.nami.org/walk>



## I and You con't

extremely important part of my success in recovery over the last 20 years.

I did not develop this "PAUSE" button until I decided that the skills I used to communicate would be dramatically improved. As a mood disorder consumer, with bipolar I disorder, I tend to communicate, at times, at the speed of sound. In the past, I have used reactive conversation, which was devoid of the "I" word, especially when I felt challenged or attacked.

Since acquiring this new technique, I find it does several wonderful things for me. It allows me to converse with others, and not use the judgmental verbiage so common to social intercourse. It allows me to slow down my thought processes, so that when I do converse, the language is so much more effective, not opinionated and dominating. Finally, it is an instructive means of communication, allowing the recipient to make choices, based upon my experience, knowl-

edge and wisdom, without being intimidated.

So, the "I" word, for me, is not only a DBSA guideline but has been a therapeutic choice, and has taught me a totally new way to communicate. I find it to be contagious.

One last thing!! Did the "YOU" word appear in this brief instructive? *This is the draft of an article that has been accepted for publication in bp Magazine ([www.bphope.com](http://www.bphope.com))*

## DBSA National Conference: An Eyewitness Report by Justin

.For the first time in the history of our chapter, we were able to send a representative to the 2007 DBSA National Conference in Orlando, FL.

Not only did I attend the 3-day conference, but I also attended a special session the day before which was open only to Chapter leaders from all around the world! I met a representative from a similar group in the Netherlands!

During that special session, specialists from a variety of organizations presented to us a whole host of helpful tips including how to raise money, how to start specialty groups, and how to effectively build our Chapters.

The conference itself started on Friday where we heard a moving personal account of Olympic athlete Greg Louganis's personal struggle with depression and how he manages his life. His fellow keynote speaker that weekend was Kathy Cronkite, daughter of renowned journalist Walter Cronkite. She also shared her personal journey through depression. She has written an outstanding book on it, "On the Edge of Darkness".

There is no way, in this article, to do justice to the wealth of information presented by some outstanding professionals, doctors, and most importantly, our peers. I learned a TON of helpful things and met hundreds of folks from all walks of life who share both a mood disorder and a great desire to help others improve their lives, any way they can.

I have already put to use many of the things I learned there, both in the facilitation of our meetings and the recruiting of some new board members. I hope to continue to improve our chapter by helping with additional fund raisers and social events. I also learned from leaders from neighboring states ways to start up specialty groups targeting special populations that may need a little extra something to help make their lives a little easier.

I consider it an honor and a blessing to have been part of this event and to have met such outstanding people!



## Members of the Board

Ron-president  
Morty-vice president  
Robin-secretary  
Doug-treasurer  
Lisa-advocacy director  
Roberta-at large  
Jay-president emeritus

## Next Board Meeting

June 15th, 4:00 pm at UMC cafeteria



## It's everybody's newsletter

Our *In the Mood* newsletter is dedicated to representing the stories of all of us, the participants of Tucson's Desert Rats Chapter of DBSA. We invite you to join in this effort by writing about yourself and your experiences. Find an article or a topic you'd like to share with others. If you have some ideas and want some support, consider finding a buddy or ask someone on the newsletter committee to help you write them up. Contact us at [newsletter@dbsatucson.com](mailto:newsletter@dbsatucson.com)

**September 7: next issue of newsletter will be distributed.**

**August 16: deadline for articles for fall issue.**



## Hotlines

SAMHC	622-6000
NAMISA	622-5582
Help on Call	323-9373
Peer Mentor Warm Line	770-9909
Information & Referral	881-1794

If you are in crisis and need to call the police at 911, request that a CIT (Crisis Intervention Trained) officer be provided.

DBSA office

531-2388