Living in Recovery with Hopes and Dreams

By Bobby Livingston, in honor of Mental Health Month 2015

I would not say that my illnesses defines me. I have not let it limit my life. How do I separate myself from something that is a part of me? Do I even need to? I suffer from Depression, PTSD and Paranoid Schizophrenia and various physical illnesses. No matter what you take from reading this you will see what the world is like through the eyes of someone living with a mental illness, someone who is still trying to find their way. As the seasons change and years go by, I realize that there is no moment as important as the one I am living. Bringing mental health awareness to the community, by letting others know that we have hopes and dreams, the right to live a successful life is my passion and mission.

I am one of the few that have been blessed with support from family and friends. The thing that bothers me the most is when I meet new friends or people (and when) they find out that I have a mental illness, they look and talk about me in a whole different way. The stigma and fear that people have is not fair to me and others that live with this illness. My diagnoses have empowered me to help change the way that people view mental illness. This has been accomplished through advocacy and education. These efforts have educated family members and the community about our rights to live and be respected as much as anyone else.

Today, I am not ashamed or afraid of being who I am. I have embraced my mental illness and dedicated myself to the cause of bringing mental illness awareness and support to the world by telling my story and supporting peers.

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