



MIRANDA

writes



VOL 1

PROCEED MINDFULLY

Working in emergency veterinary medicine, I am trained and well equipped to handle crisis situations. It is different when this crisis happens to you. It becomes personal. Your emotions are involved and the dial is turned up to max. Your emotions about other people's emotions are also involved. It's a lot. It's painful. How do I make it stop. I can't. It hurts too much. I can't see I can't breathe I can't think.

* * * STOP * * *

A moment of rational clarity—take me to the hospital. I am not safe around myself.

The exact details leading up to this episode are not important to share in this newsletter. However, the way I felt is important. For anyone who needs to hear this: manipulation (whether intentional or not) is abuse. When somebody convinces you that you are the only person who can help them, it feels very real to you. Again, you are not responsible for that person—their decisions, their actions, and their reactions. You are responsible for setting your own boundaries and doing something when they are crossed.

I spent 4 days hospitalized for thoughts of self-harm and suicide. These are not new feelings or even new actions for me, but the intensity of which I was hurting was too much to bear and luckily I recognized it.

I made a lot of good decisions that Friday night and Saturday morning and choosing to go to the emergency room and then pursuing inpatient care were the best choices I've made for myself in a long time. It feels damn good to take care of myself. Damn good. Why don't I do this all the time?

I saw and I heard a lot of things I will never forget—people screaming bloody murder, people having to be forcibly restrained, and people whose arms look like mine. My time during hospitalization was good in many unexpected ways. One, I was not allowed to have my phone. Not having that constant access to information was so good. Two, I got to eat regular meals with fruits and veggies without the stress of planning, shopping, prepping, cooking, and cleaning. Third, I got to participate in group activities nearly all day. And lastly, I was surrounded by mental health professionals who listened to my words, validated my feelings and gave medical advice. It felt like I was slowly being lifted out of

a dark pit. In that pit I couldn't see or know myself. I was blindly believing the person I thought I loved. Even now I'm seeing things that were absolutely ridiculous and abusive. Because it doesn't start with insanity, it starts small and builds slowly as you adjust until the abuse seems normal. Of course I shouldn't think of a relationship as work and energy, because we "love" each other. Of course I'll loan you money, because you are going to sell your guitar and can pay me right back but you NEED the money RIGHT now and I'm the one being abusive because I'm not helping you when I can. Of course I'll let you have sex with me even though the idea of you touching me makes me sick because physical touch is so important to you and you won't stop bringing it up. This is abuse and I will no longer be convinced otherwise.

Practice saying no. My nurse told me to practice saying no. The thing about boundaries is you do not need to explain or justify them. Non-negotiable. Something I took away from this is to not be a people pleaser, but a people respecter. You always have the right to say no.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that asking for help is necessary sometimes. Being locked down with people as unstable as you working towards being a functioning human being is necessary sometimes. Isolating yourself away from the stresses of daily life to learn how to manage the big feelings is nothing to be ashamed of. I am so happy to be alive today; to feel the wind in my hair, watch the sun melt into the horizon, enjoy the company and love from a long time friend.

Life is messy, but worth it.

CLICK TO LISTEN

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RECIPE FOR DEPRESSION

HAMBURGER RICE

INGREDIENTS:



DIRECTIONS:

- ① brown ground meat in a large skillet
- ② cook mushroom rice side as directed on the packet
- ③ mix cream of mushroom soup in with browned meat
- ④ add rice to the mixture and serve with your favorite side, such as uncooked baby carrots for easy/no prep

YOU DID IT!

DBT SKILL OF THE MONTH - TIPP

Like many practical skills learned in Dialectical Behavior Therapy, this distress tolerance skill is an acronym. It is intended to be used in crisis or near crisis situations. All four of the elements are crucial and all should be used if needed. These skills are used to change your body chemistry by way of the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce extreme emotions quickly.

T = Temperature

I = Intense Exercise

P = Paced Breathing

P = Paired Muscle Relaxation

The first step: get cold. Whether it's dunking your face in cold water or holding onto some ice cubes, get cold. On those blistering Midwestern winter days, I've even just stood outside without a coat.

The second step: go crazy. Not literally. Please do not go crazy. Intense exercise aids with emotional extremes by releasing pent up energy. Put that energy towards exercising instead of fuming about how your roommate can't ever seem to keep the bathroom rug straight even though you've mentioned over 100 times that it bothers you. This skill is really hit or miss for me. Sometimes when I'm having extreme anxiety and I go for a jog it can actually make it worse. Instead try something shorter than a full workout at first maybe jump some rope, shoot some hoops, or pump some iron.

The third step: breathe mindfully. Slow it down and feel your belly rise and fall. Exhale slower than you inhale. One technique calls for a 4 second inhale, 7 second hold, and an 8 second inhale. Obviously you can adjust those numbers for yourself. Obviously you don't have to do any of this at all, I just work here.

Last step: clench and release. Yes your butt hole. Also the rest of your muscles. As you inhale, tense all the muscles you can in your body. Upon exhale, release all of the tension you previously held. Wow such relax.

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*DON'T FORGET TO
DRINK WATER TODAY*