How to Trust Yourself When You Have Bipolar Disorder

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Trusting Yourself Despite Bipolar

When you have bipolar disorder it can be difficult to trust yourself, whether it is in making big decisions or small ones. Being able to evaluate why you want to do something can lead to better decision making and, as a result, better decisions.

Trusting Myself to Buy a New Car

When it comes to decision making, I distrust myself for the smallest decisions, like getting my hair cut, to the huge ones, like buying a car.

I've needed to get a new car for a while now and a friend who sells cars has been helping me find the perfect one. I finally found one I loved, it looked as if it was in my price range, and it was everything I wanted in a car, plus I loved the color.

When faced with this decision I knew I need to get a new car, but the idea of actually making this huge commitment was nothing short of daunting. After all, what do I know about buying cars — or cars in general?

Why Do People With Bipolar Disorder Have a Hard Time Trusting Themselves?

When you have bipolar disorder, your relationship with reality can sometimes be strained. Once you have been proven wrong one too many times, you stop trusting yourself — sometimes in everything you do.

Suddenly, getting through the day and making decisions as simple as whether or not to buy a new dress to wear out with friends becomes an internal battle over whether or not you're symptomatic.

Hypomania, mania, depression, and everything in between causes our brains to tell us things that aren't true. When this happens enough, you start to doubt you brain and whatever it tells you.

How Can I Trust Myself?

I really wish I knew a foolproof way to trust yourself when you know your brain is untrustworthy. If I did, I would use it immediately and never have this problem again.

I do have a few tips on how to stop, look around, and see if your decision is a good one or a bad one. Before making a decision that's causing you anxiety, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Why do I want to do this?** What is your primary motivation? What thoughts, emotions and ideas are driving you?
- **What are the possible outcomes of this decision?** Think of the best and the worst thing that could

happen. Can you live with either one of them?
- **What information do you have about this decision?** Do you have all of the information needed to make this decision? If you have to guess, are you making educated guesses?
- **Can you wait to make this decision?** Are you feeling impulsive or is this something you really want to do? Wait and see if it still seems like a good idea in the morning.

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How Can I Trust Myself?

- **Do you have any other indications of being in an episode?** There might be a possibility that your decision-making skills are impaired. Think back to how you've been thinking and feeling over the past few days and weeks.
- **Do you have someone you can talk to about this decision?** If you feel really overwhelmed and you can't tell if this is you or your bipolar talking, ask a trusted loved one for their opinion.

How I Overcame My Distrust to Make a Big Decision

When it came to buying a car, I had nothing but doubts. I knew I was in some kind of low-level hypomanic episode, which I hadn't been able to shake for months, and I knew that I didn't know anything about buying cars.

I test drove the car, I looked over it, and checked for the completely non-essential things I want in a car (nice color, ability to play music through my phone, spacious trunk). After I decided I really liked it, I got the history report and looked through it for anything suspicious.

I messaged a mechanic friend the information. The car was in good working condition and there was nothing for me to be concerned about.

Then I got the numbers for financing and went through the lengthy process of giving all of my information and waiting to get approval from the bank. I got a worksheet with a payment plan and a breakdown of just how much I would be spending and for how long.

I took this to a friend's partner who was knowledgeable about money and loans. He looked over it and informed me of how much interest was on this car and how much I would end up paying in the end — both were astronomically high.

With this information in hand, I made the decision to wait until I was in a better financial position to buy a different car.

Although I'm not thrilled with the weird and random problems my current car keeps putting me though, making the decision to buy this car now would only lead to far more problems in the future.

Trusting Yourself Is Difficult

Whenever you are faced with a decision, take a step back. Making decisions when your brain has been proven to be unreliable is difficult because you don't know if you can trust yourself.

Don't allow your mental illness to make you think you're too unreliable to be trusted. If you do make a bad decision, know that this is not unique to people with bipolar disorder and everyone, at some point in their lives, has made a bad decision.

All you can do is take a deep breath, evaluate where you are, and trust in yourself and your support system. You won't always be right, but life isn't perfect and no one should expect it to be.