

# What Bipolar Mania Really Feels Like: A First-Hand Account

By [Brenda Richardson](#)



After just a few weeks in Tom Wootton's Bipolar IN Order course over at [Bipolar Advantage](#), I have already learned so much. One important lesson I've realized is the difference between bipolar behaviors, which is what you see, and bipolar symptoms, which is what we experience and feel. Let's take a look at some of the symptoms of mania as I experience them. You may be surprised at how complex they really are.

## Symptoms of Mania

- **Physical.**

Our bodies are affected by mania just as much as our minds. While we are manic, we are also experiencing marked physical symptoms. Here's how it goes for me: My whole body feels like it could take flight. Every cell is on fire, alert and ready to move into action. I tingle all over. I feel light, tall and elegant. I feel agile — like I could contort into any position.

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My senses become more in tune. Colors are brighter and more vivid. Music is more interesting and seems to have more depth. I need to touch everything. Textures feel exciting and stimulating.

In mania I am never tired. I'm racing and pacing, never feeling the strain. I have an endless supply of energy and a sexual appetite that would make a teenage boy look like an amateur.

- **Mental.**

The mental symptoms are better known, but it's worth taking a closer look at them. You may have heard of racing thoughts. Experiencing them is different than you might imagine. Racing thoughts aren't just thoughts that are fast. They are fast, but they can often be experienced simultaneously. We can think of more than one thing at the same time.

In my experience, I always have a primary train of thought, but another one will overlap the first. This can become very overwhelming when it is experienced in a severe form. I yearn for a break from my thoughts when in this state. Just five minutes of silence would be great.

I also experience time differently. "Time flies when you're having fun," as the saying goes. One hour can seem like five minutes when you're manic. And that's why I'm often late to pick the kids up from school.

I consistently develop an intense obsession over some project or another. I feel exhilarated by my new pastime. The drive to complete it takes over to the detriment of everything else in my environment. It is so intense that the kids and the housework get pushed to one side regardless of how aware I am.

- **Emotional.**

When I'm manic, I feel in love with everything and everyone. I feel absolutely elated and full of joy. I can relate to my children in an enriching way, one that would be of great benefit to us all if it could be replicated in the long term. But of course mania doesn't last forever, and this pleasant period is short-lived.

Sometimes, if the mania is joined by a depression (dysphoria), the opposite is true and I become agitated. I might develop psychosis and become frightened. It's not always a pleasant trip, but that's a story for another day.

- **Spiritual.**

I feel as if I am at one with everyone and at one with nature. This is similar to what users of the drug Ecstasy feel. I experimented with ecstasy in college, and can attest that the experiences are similar. It's a wonderful feeling. I would describe the feeling of oneness as rewarding and exhilarating, comfortable and safe.

- **Social.**

I long to interact — to connect with other people. I want to share my excitement with others and I expect them to reciprocate. But of course I'm on a completely different wavelength than other people, so these encounters rarely turn out as planned.

- **Financial.**

The urge to buy something new is more than I can resist. I feel flippant, like I just don't care about the consequences. I feel excited and can't help dreaming about the details of my next buy. I only see the positive in everything, including my spending habits.

These are solely my experiences with the manic state. Others may not feel or act this way. Becoming aware of the symptoms is half the battle to adjusting your behavior.

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