

Recovery & Prosperity

By: Eric Buckner



My name is Eric Buckner and I live and prosper with multiple mental illnesses/disorders. I have been diagnosed over the years with ODD (oppositional defiance disorder), ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactive disorder), Chronic Depression, SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, and was thought to have a pervasive learning disorder at one point. First and foremost the prior does not represent my being or my personality. All that they represent are illnesses; essentially they are labels for such. I have endured and prospered from the stigmas associated with the diagnosis's given by mental health professionals. Some people believe that if you have a mental health issue, you are automatically barred from living a successful life. Well, I'm here to tell you otherwise. At the time of this writing, I am 20 years old, and have accomplished and experienced much in my own right. I am an avid youth representative for the Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, and through this organization I have made great strides to help alleviate mental health stigmas and raise awareness. I often times will go and give speeches to different groups and organizations about my experiences. I attend different conferences and committee meetings and provide youth input and feedback. I am a volunteer and I don't expect or want payment. My reward is being able to help others and the ability to make a difference for youth across the state of Idaho. In addition to my contribution to my community, I also have and maintain a fulltime job, I live in my own home, I pay my own bills, and all the other responsibilities attached with being an independent and responsible adult. I have grown many ambitions and nurtured many skills in healthy directions with the help and support of the Federation. I have a knack and an interest in public speaking. Some of my ambitions, I hope, will someday be fulfilled and everyday I will make choices to support them. One of my ambitions is that I want to write an autobiography for self reflection, and maybe to help others reflect and understand themselves. The best thing about it all is my life isn't over and I will continue to grow and experience new endeavors. But, one thing that has taken me years to grasp and act in accordance to is that we all have choices. It sounds simple in theory but in action is a much more difficult process for a lot of reasons. The best way I can explain it is that we all have choices in all things, but we often don't see or don't acknowledge all the choices available to us. For example, if the rudest person in the world came to you and ruined your life and this person took away people or things that made you happy, whoever or whatever those may be, what would you say or do? Depending on what you choose, you could have a variety of reactions. But, the neat thing is that you have choices as to what you do. And the only deciding factor to your choices is you and how you decide to act. I will make choices every moment of my life to grow in a direction to where my response to the prior situation is this: I look at the person who has taken so much from me, and I provide a warm smile. And I will ask this question with no meaning of condescendence or hatred, "How is life for you?"