

Following My Heart... For Josh's Sake

by Deborah Rose

Even our youth pastor told us to give up on our son, Josh, and to send him away at one time. We didn't do it. This is Josh's story.

After years of doctors, counselors, and visits to the school, the word “bipolar” should have been a relief. My 13-year-old son had always been different and unusual but the problems had escalated. Even if it was my fault as one doctor told me, our family, my son, needed help and we weren't getting it—until now. The words hung in the air and I swear I could touch them; they were so heavy and dense.

Josh sat with me and my husband as the doctor told us what Bipolar Disorder was, described the symptoms, and

outlined the line of treatment that was needed. And all I remember hearing were two words: bipolar disorder.

After our meeting, my son and husband were picking up some literature and filling out paperwork, so I offered to go warm up the car. There was snow on the ground. I remember that, and I remember that I felt like my whole life was in a frozen picture. I couldn't think; I couldn't breathe; I couldn't cry. I was numb.

At that very moment, my husband and son jumped into the car. I remember looking into the rear view mirror and seeing my son grinning from ear to ear. He jumped into the seat and said, "Mom, let's go celebrate."

At that very moment, I knew that my son was in the middle of what the doctor had described as a "manic episode." Why else would he say something so ludicrous?

As calmly as I could (though I certainly didn't feel calm), I turned to him and said, "Son, I'd love to go celebrate, but what, exactly, are we celebrating?"

And with the most sincere voice I have ever heard, he looked me in the eye and said, "Don't you get it, Mom? We're celebrating because I am sick; I'm not evil. Sick can be fixed."

It was at that moment, I realized it was time for me to start seeing things the way my son did. I thought we had been striving for normalcy, and all along he had been fighting for his soul.

What turned our life around and lead to this story was my attending Vision For Tomorrow Classes and getting a great doctor referral.

So, the *Smartest Thing* I ever did for my family was to listen to my heart and *not* to the professionals. Just so you know, Josh is now 22, a college graduate and a case manager with the Salvation Army. None of this would have happened for him if I had listened to the ‘professionals’.

About the Author

Ms. Rose is a lifetime entrepreneur. Her background consists of being an investigator, paralegal, mediator, and is a NLP Masters Practitioner. Currently, she is the Director of Educational Development for NAMI TX, www.namitexas.org. She is a contributing writer to *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Children With Special Needs*. Ms. Rose is currently writing children’s books that explain about different mental illnesses and how they affect the children and their families. Her first released publication, *Joshua Wears a Red Cape*, is available on lulu.com/celtwolfe. Ms. Rose lives in Texas with her husband, daughter, and four Chihuahuas.