

## Advantages of Living with Bipolar and Depression

### Excerpt from The Depression Advantage Book by Tom Wootton

“I struggled for many years with the incongruity in my belief that everything has both good and bad elements, even if we cannot find the good. War has brought about great societal change, natural disasters have sometimes resulted in new development, and movies have convinced us that killing the “bad guy” can be a good thing. But depression? I was convinced there was nothing good about depression: period. My struggle to find any good in depression seemed as hopeless as my despair while in it.

In my workshops, lectures, and communication with people who read **The Bipolar Advantage**, I was met with unanimous agreement that depression is truly all bad. My own depressions, getting deeper and more frequent as I grew older, were screaming at the idiocy of trying to find any good in the experiences. It seemed only a fool would look for any good in something so obviously devoid of even the smallest ray of light.

It took several years of deep introspection and contemplation to slowly come to grips with the possibility that I might find at least some ray of hope in depression. There had to be a lesson in it. At the least, my awareness and understanding of depression were increasing each time it happened, and with each new study I undertook.

So strong was my belief that I could find **The Depression Advantage**, that I became blind to the reality that at the time, the good was just not there. And then one day I found it! In an instant, my life changed drastically.”

### Instructions

During past in-person workshops of the Depression Advantage Course Tom guided participants to come up with a list of all the advantages found in mania and depression as a group. In this exercise we want to bring the benefits of considering this idea to the Bipolar Advantage online community.

**From the list below circle the advantages of mania you have experienced. Use empty spaces to write advantages you come up with on your own.**

More Energy	Ability To Solve Complex Tasks	
Incredibly Productive At Work	More Enthusiastic	
Increased Mental Function	Life Of The Party	
Greater Creativity	Go Getter Attitude	

**From the list below circle the advantages of depression you have experienced. Use empty spaces to write advantages you come up with on your own.**

Patience	Much Needed Rest	
Resilience	Ability To Understand Other's Pain	
Never Give Up Attitude	A More Realistic View of Life	
Strong Desire For Change	Better Listener	