

A watercolor illustration featuring large, vibrant red and orange flowers with soft, blended petals. Green leaves of various shapes are scattered around the flowers. Small clusters of red and orange berries are also present. The background is white, and the overall style is soft and artistic.

Introduction



Hey friend,

I'm sorry to tell you that there is no magic wand or magic cure for mental illness. Instead, it may take a lot of little steps and some significant steps to manage and treat it. All too often, we receive messages of shame around mental illness, and this prevents us from being kind to ourselves, advocating loudly, reaching for support, or seeking real answers. I've tried many strategies and found that life can be better. Life can be filled with light and you can achieve some degree of control. However, when those darker times come, you will also have a plan for treating yourself with grace. I created this planner based on years of experience with personal treatment, the use of many strategies, quite a few failed approaches, lots of shame and hiding, and also working with children with emotional disorders. There is no one easy answer or even just one effective strategy that will work 100% of the time. Instead, it will require many steps along the journey's winding path. That will bring you to solutions right for you. My goal is that this planner will help you find what works for you, what to do when the usuals don't work, and to determine when you are ready for greater challenges. Are you ready to take small steps to manage your health so you can attain the life you want? Let's go!

-Becky

Darkness, Light, New Heights, Grace:



I have split this planner into specific parts that I have given a lot of thought. It is probably different than any other planner and may not align with what you have read from other motivational speakers or empowerment leaders. I have read the books, listened to the podcasts, followed the Instagrams, and signed up for the programs. I have done all the things for many years within the realm of self-help, healthy living, and personal development. Some may have worked a bit but never for long. My mental health was not stable enough to sustain long term efforts with any of these strategies.

What sets this planner apart from others is it was developed for individuals with mental illness, trauma, and chronic illness by someone with those same experiences. Our needs are unique and not be an after thought.

Most empowerment books or speakers are, understandably, targeting 95% of the population. Many of these authors would probably acknowledge the need for accommodations based on health. However, they may believe adding that explicitly might give leeway to those who will take it as an excuse. I get it; we are a small percentage of the population. This is why I am designing supports and strategies for those with depression, anxiety, PMDD, chronic illness, for the spoonies, or those who struggle to function on some days, those who are in pain, those whose conditions are rarely understood, often disbelieved, and frequently dismissed. You are who I created this planner for and why I have designed it as I have.

In my own experience and from talking to other warriors, I know that some personal development messages that intend to motivate or ignite our passions can also feel like persecution, blame, or shame. I am not here for that.

Nor am I here to give you or me a pass on pursuing something better.

I know that all those inspirational quotes online, that I too, am guilty of posting can feel minimizing when you are in a dark place.

'Sure, just think positively, and my _____ (insert mental illness here) will magically go away.'

I get it, BUT here is my big message...

We may not control the challenges we face, whether through the trauma we experience or illnesses that impact us, but we can control our response to them. We can make decisions that will help us to heal, recover, and care for ourselves.



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Imperfection

Why do I ask you to do everything imperfectly? You will see throughout this journal that I will ask you to share imperfectly, dream imperfectly, and plan imperfectly because *perfection is a myth*. Your lack of perfection meeting goals is not a result of your illness, your struggles, or your past. Despite or maybe even because of those factors, you can do amazing things. However, all too often, we beat ourselves up over not being perfect or not succeeding on our first attempt. There is no one right way, no one right answer to living your best life.



Aim for peace, not perfection.



*Aim for peace,
not perfection.*

Beyond the introduction, there are four distinct sections that each serve a purpose in planning your days, weeks, and month. I want you to understand what they are, how to use them, and when to turn to them.

Darkness

Before we can move out of the darkness we need to acknowledge it and the shape it takes in our lives. What are the anxieties, the negative self-talk, the dark thoughts that make us feel hopeless.

Light

Next up is an examination of what will bring us light. What are those practices that will ward off the darkness? The habits that will slowly but surely bring greater wellness and mental health to you.

New Heights

This is the section to dream, to plan, to think beyond the limits of your illness, to challenge the old limiting beliefs that cruel voices made you think were true. We will be setting our sights on new goals and new heights to reach.

Grace

It is not going to all go perfectly, your illness will flare up, your anxiety will come creeping in, or depression will drag you down. This is not a time for darkness, but grace. This section will help us craft a strategy to treat ourselves well and respectfully.

I have told you why I'm here. Now tell me and yourself why you are here. What do you hope to accomplish? Why did you choose this planner? Why make the effort? What led you here and what do you hope to accomplish?

Dear me,