



THE STORY OF EMPOWERPLUS

My name is Tony Stephan, and this is the story of how my family overcame mental illness, after devastating loss.

In 1994 I had been married to my beloved wife Debbie for 23 years. During that time, we lost her father to suicide. He had struggled with severe depression, and in 1978, fatally overdosed on medications to escape his suffering. Then, sixteen years later, my beloved wife Debbie succumbed to the same fate . . . suicide.

Debbie had been diagnosed with Bipolar Affective Disorder 1 with Rapid Cycling. One day she simply ended it. The pain was unbearable. It was like somebody took a chalkboard eraser and wiped out the most precious part of my life.

It got worse. My son Joseph, fifteen years old, and his older sister, Autumn, were diagnosed with the same illness. Joseph was getting more violent and dangerous. He was on 750 to 900 milligrams of Lithium or Carbolith per day, and he was just a lost soul.

There was one bright spot in this period, as I was blessed with a wonderful and supportive new wife, Barbara. Barbara sought assistance for Joseph from a noted psychiatrist. We went and met, praying for answers and hope. Instead the Doctor became upset with me and asked Barbara to take Joseph out in the waiting room. When the door closed it was like a shotgun going off in my face. This noted psychiatrist said, "Mr. Stephan you need a reality check. Don't you see it? What you see is what you've got. He's not going to get better."

My daughter, Autumn, was in and out of the psychiatric ward constantly. Drugs didn't work. Autumn was on five psychiatric med: Haldol, Rivotril, Epival, Ativan and Cogentin; and she was out of control: suicidal one minute, explosive the next - unable to care for herself... or her family.

WAS THERE REALLY AN ANSWER OUT THERE? **I started to pray. I started to fast.** I started to search. I started to ask everyone, "Do you know anything about bipolar?" **There just had to be an answer... somewhere!**

One day it came. I was talking to a friend I was working with, and telling him about how bad it was in our family with Joseph's and Autumn's illnesses. He said that he didn't understand mental conditions, but he explained to me that he had spent twenty years in the agricultural industry. He said, "You know, I looked after hundreds of thousands of animals, and we used to see this in the hog pens... these animals would have this disorder, sometimes, called Ear-and Tail-Biting Syndrome. These animals would often become aggressive and hyper-irritable." My thoughts turned to Joseph and his violent rages.

As my friend told me how the animals become extremely irritable and enraged, and about the explosive behavior, he said, "You know, we learned very quickly from the agricultural literature, the scientific literature, that you could **nutrate** away the disorder with good nutrition." In that instant I had an epiphany. A burden was lifted and a sense of peace and light enveloped by mind. I knew that God has just given me the answer: Nutrition!

On January 17, 1996, almost two years to the day that my wife had committed suicide, we moved forward and starting loading micronutrients into Joseph. Within thirty days, my son no longer exhibited any symptoms whatsoever of bipolar disorder. It was gone! I remember sitting on the couch with him after six weeks and him saying to me, "Dad! Dad! ... Where was I? What happened to me? Why was I so angry? Why was I so violent?" And I said, "Joe, it doesn't matter.

That was another day. It wasn't you. It was the disorder." There wasn't anything that we could do alone to correct the disorder; but the answer came, and I've never looked back -- and neither has Joseph.

My daughter Autumn was next. Her husband had to work a graveyard shift so he dropped Autumn off at our home for a week as she could not be left alone. It was then that I placed her on the same nutrient program as Joseph. Within a few days she became calm... with dramatically fewer mood swings. She was able to care for herself and her young son.

Within 45 days she was clear of all of her five medications. Both Autumn and Joseph have been well (as of 2013) for over eighteen years. Autumn has written a best seller titled, *A Promise of Hope*, published in 2007 by Harper Collins and available on Amazon.com.

When Autumn and Joseph were made well, many people in the community started to come for help with their loved ones. After they tried the program and experienced the same results as my children, we started working with university researchers like world-renowned behavioral research scientist from the University of Calgary, Dr. Bonnie J. Kaplan. Dr. Kaplan's research was published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* in 2001, which is the largest psychiatric journal in the world. Soon there were other research studies and publications. The University of Calgary, Harvard University, Ohio State University - Department of Psychiatry, The University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and many others. There are now researchers [from 4 countries], 16 Universities and 34 medical Journal publications who have studied its effects on disorders like:

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