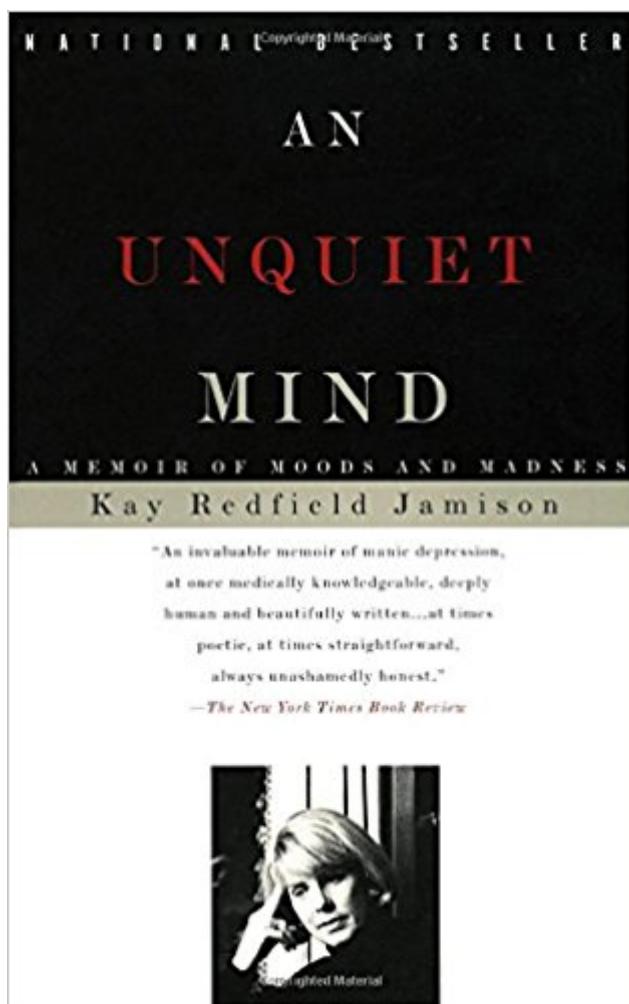


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An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir Of Moods And Madness



Synopsis

WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR In her bestselling classic, *An Unquiet Mind*, Kay Redfield Jamison changed the way we think about moods and madness. Dr. Jamison is one of the foremost authorities on manic-depressive (bipolar) illness; she has also experienced it firsthand. For even while she was pursuing her career in academic medicine, Jamison found herself succumbing to the same exhilarating highs and catastrophic depressions that afflicted many of her patients, as her disorder launched her into ruinous spending sprees, episodes of violence, and an attempted suicide. Here Jamison examines bipolar illness from the dual perspectives of the healer and the healed, revealing both its terrors and the cruel allure that at times prompted her to resist taking medication. *An Unquiet Mind* is a memoir of enormous candor, vividness, and wisdom—a deeply powerful book that has both transformed and saved lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Touched with Fire*, Kay Redfield Jamison, a psychiatrist, turned a mirror on the creativity so often associated with mental illness. In this book she turns that mirror on herself. With breathtaking honesty she tells of her own manic depression, the bitter costs of her illness, and its paradoxical benefits: "There is a particular kind of pain, elation, loneliness and terror involved in this kind of madness.... It will never end, for madness carves its own reality." This is one of the best scientific autobiographies ever written, a combination of clarity, truth, and insight into human character. "We are all, as Byron put it, differently organized," Jamison writes. "We each move within the restraints of

our temperament and live up only partially to its possibilities." Jamison's ability to live fully within her limitations is an inspiration to her fellow mortals, whatever our particular burdens may be. --Mary Ellen Curtin

Jamison's memoir springs from her dual perspective as both a psychiatric expert in manic depression and a sufferer of the disease. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I picked this book up months ago and finally finished reading it. It was definitely not a page turner, but it was pretty insightful on a personal and professional level. It should probably be left mostly for psychology students as the tone is very formal and her recollections are almost distant and impersonal. I did appreciate some of the very salient points she made: people with mental illness can live "normal" lives, mania has its benefits, etc. BUT I read Marya Hornbacher's book *Madness* first and felt like the tone of Ms. Hornbacher's writing and every word she said more accurately - and accessibly - captured what bipolar disorder is like.

An ideal memoir to inform about the manic depressive illness. My Shrink gave it to me and it help to make me realize my diagnosis. Recommend to anyone dealing with someone who is bipolar

Incredibly heartbreakingly but hope-filled memoir about manic depressive illness. I now feel as if I can face my illness head on and face it without fear, with knowledge stored in my mind from this book. Compassion and expertise combined with personal experience makes this one of the best books I have read about this illness I share with the author.

It is amazing to see how someone who has gone through a life of mental illness found a way to go through it giving the best of herself it is inspiring and makes us realize how lucky we are to be able to live what society considers a "normal life"

Very good book. I think that it would be good for all of us "normal people" to know more about and understand the enormous issues so many people have to deal with who are unfortunate enough to be born with these horrible illnesses.

Recommended by a therapist. I enjoyed the book, but it somehow left me "disappointed". Agree with others that she could have written more about actually living with the disorder, and how difficult it

can be. I would also like a layman's description of the mechanism of action of lithium, at least as believed at that time. I guess it made me feel more confident about people dx with bp exposing themselves, for the greater good of the community. It didn't make me confident to put that on any school applications though. Her environment was perfect. Perfect access to mental health care, competent psychiatrists, that are generally inadequately available to the general public. Her side effects of vomiting, etc.... that might be worse for people with BP type 2 than the actual disorder itself? She can't say though because she had very severe BP type 1. She went way overboard with the descriptiveness. I guess she was trying to make a metaphor of mania/depression though. I agree that this may be more useful to family members. I really liked this review: "I'm still not quite sure what I think of this book. It was recommended to me by a therapist thinking I would be interested as someone with bipolar disorder. Due to the source of the suggestion and the author of the book, an expert on and individual with bipolar disorder, I expected some practical insight into living with this disease. What I found was much different. This book is labeled a memoir, and the writing style and content certainly fit the label. Unfortunately, the author seemed to try too hard, and quite unsuccessfully, to become a writer of creative non-fiction. This frustrated me extremely and made it difficult to actually finish the book. Still, I tend to be unnecessarily harsh when it comes to writing skills. My inner lit snob simply won't shut up. What seriously complicates my opinion of this book, however, is whether the author intended to give hope to individuals with bipolar depression. As previously mentioned, I expected just that from this book based on its presentation to me. Instead, I found myself wanting the author to remember more clearly how difficult it sometimes is for a person with bipolar disorder to see a way out. I found myself highly skeptical of the author's management of the illness considering her unlimited access to psychiatric treatment and information from experts. I think this book may be more useful to friends and family of people with bipolar disorder than those trying to dig their way out from mania or depression. I guess I like what this book tries to do, but I'm not convinced it was well done."

I read this book through the lens of having someone close to me diagnosed with bipolar, so read this review with that in mind. I found the book incredibly enlightening. I think it helps one understand the disease and the thoughts that someone with bipolar might experience. I have read guides about bipolar and how to manage those types of relationships, which have been very useful, but this book helped me in a different way. I think reading the author's personal experience helped me understand the disease at an emotional level, and gave me more empathy rather than sympathy. This book is also beautifully written!

Even as an almost middle aged woman, reading 'An Unquiet Mind' gave me a clear perception of being (yes being) an introvert in a world where we are forced to be extroverted. My entire life I was always 'shy' or even called 'snobby' because of my personality. I was born 20 years earlier than I should have as now we come to understand people for who they are on the inside. I do have to explain when I was at the doctor's office quite a few months ago, I was reading 'An Unquiet Mind'. This young girl approaches me and asked me if I like the book. I must have given her an awkward look because she said that she had to read that book in school. I told her that it was a wonderful book so far as I was painfully shy when I was younger. I asked her if she liked the book and she smiled and said "yes, it was a good book, everyone should read it. I used to be painfully shy as well." This girl had a lot of strength to approach me and start talking to me as it seems a high school girl (who is an extreme introvert) would never approach an older person. Good for her school! This book is a must read for every type of personality, but especially for us, who are 'painfully shy'.

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