



## ***Finding love in a bipolar world***



I'm getting hitched in early June this year... to my lovely fiancé Dan, who we fondly call DD.

You could say we are a picture of a successful romance. One of the reasons I fell for DD was that he was somehow broken too and together we have grown putting back the pieces together and healing in our own very separate ways.

DD for the most part accepts me as who I am – neither of us are perfect but we work through our struggles. When we row or have little fallouts, it's all about clear communication and not giving up on each other - being relentless in our companionship and growing in our understanding of one another.

In the past, I kissed many frogs before I found my prince. When I say frogs, they were decent enough men but just not suited to me as a bipolar woman. They would say all the right things to begin with, but eventually and gradually it would become clear how different we were in many respects to emotional intelligence and acceptance of one another. I tried it all in the dating world, including the dark world of online dating. Although dark, I found light when I actually met DD through a popular online website. From the get go we were like kindred spirits...he stood out to me. DD asked me if he could phone me and we spent hours and hours on the phone talking about our lives, our interests and flirting.

Now, no relationship is perfect. In the beginning I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to be with him - after the honeymoon period we struck a few big bumps on the journey. It may be my age (29) and my maturity but I refused to give up on **us**.

The truth is dating as a bipolar woman in a very much bipolar world is a great difficulty.... I look back at my dating resume and I ask myself what was the common problem that went wrong - *why did my relationships end?*

Well, firstly I didn't do the most important and crucial part of all relationships which was to learn how to love myself first. How could I expect another person to love me fully and wholly without appreciating and caring for myself? Because I had little view of myself, I would fall for anyone. My standards were fairly low, not to say I didn't go out with some great guys, they just perhaps who I wouldn't choose if I had known what I know now.



I never had a checklist or a type, no preferences – I just had this desperate need to feel wanted and to belong to somebody. The truth is I didn't realise that when in a loving, romantic relationship you should belong to each other and also not - to keep who you are, your individual identity intact. Not to lose yourself in trying to fix things to please the other person. That's why I'm with my DD he doesn't put unachievable pressures on me that I cannot reach - he nearly always corrects his wrongs, and we communicate together and work together. There may be times where it feels like we are on separate teams and we are both hurting, most recently we had a little fallout, but we talked it through, we made-up the same day and reflected on the argument the next day.

I also know I can trust DD and he knows he can trust me. Without trust I believe the relationship is broken.

Of course, this is not the first time I've fallen in love... I've had my heart broken many times as I feel it's easy to find the good in others but I have always known to watch out for warning signs or see when a line has been crossed – a deal breaker.

Perhaps they didn't realise but I knew they struggled to see me other than 'normal' when I felt myself bubbling up inside.

The point I want to get across is its much better to be single than to be in a toxic relationship. What I know now is that there are some fundamental boxes that must be ticked for me. DD has shown me that.

My values that must be shared are: *truth, honesty, communication, resilience, attraction, romance, kindness, equality, thoughtfulness, compassion, trust, and friendship.*

So I would ask you what boxes do you need ticking? And what are your core values of a relationship?

**Rhea Winter-Moore**

