

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

To Those I've Hurt



By Ye
Formerly known as Kanye West

Twenty-five years ago, I was in a car accident that broke my jaw and caused injury to the right frontal lobe of my brain. At the time, the focus was on the visible damage – the fracture, the swelling, and the immediate physical trauma. The deeper injury, the one inside my skull, went unnoticed.

Comprehensive scans were not done, neurological exams were limited, and the possibility of a frontal-lobe injury was never raised. It wasn't properly diagnosed until 2023. That medical oversight caused serious damage to my mental health and led to my bipolar type-1 diagnosis.

Bipolar disorder comes with its own defense system. Denial. When you're manic, you don't think you're sick. You think everyone else is overreacting. You feel like you're seeing the world more clearly than ever, when in reality you're losing your grip entirely.

Once people label you as 'crazy', you feel as if you cannot contribute anything meaningful to the world. It's easy for people to joke and laugh it off when in fact this is a very serious debilitating disease you can die from. According to the World Health Organization and Cambridge University, people with bipolar disorder have a life expectancy that is shortened by ten to fifteen years on average, and a 2x-3x higher all-cause mortality rate than the general population. This is on par with severe heart disease, type-1 diabetes, HIV, and cancer – all lethal and fatal if left untreated.

The scariest thing about this disorder is how persuasive it is when it tells you: You don't need help. It makes you blind, but convinced you have insight. You feel powerful, certain, and unstoppable.

I lost touch with reality. Things got worse the longer I ignored the problem. I said and did things I deeply regret. Some of the people I love the most, I treated the worst. You endured fear, confusion, humiliation, and the exhaustion of trying to love someone who was, at times, unrecognizable. Looking back, I became detached from my true self.

In that fractured state, I gravitated toward the most destructive symbol I could find, the swastika, and even sold t-shirts bearing it. One of the difficult aspects of having bipolar type-1 are the disconnected moments – many of which I still cannot recall – that lead to poor judgment and reckless behavior that oftentimes feels like an out-of-body experience. I regret and am deeply mortified by my actions in that state, and am committed to accountability, treatment, and meaningful change. It does not excuse what I did, though. I am not a Nazi or an antisemite. I love Jewish people.

To the black community - which held me down through all of the highs and lows and the darkest of times. The black community is, unquestionably, the foundation of who I am. I am so sorry to have let you down. I love us.

In early 2025, I fell into a four-month long manic episode of psychotic, paranoid and impulsive behavior that destroyed my life. As the situation became increasingly unsustainable, there were times I didn't want to be here anymore.

Having bipolar disorder is not a state of constant mental illness. When you go into the manic episode, you are ill at that point. When you are not in an episode, you are completely 'normal'. And that's when the wreckage from the illness hits the hardest. Hitting rock bottom a few months ago, my wife encouraged me to finally get help.

I have found comfort in Reddit forums of all places. Different people speak of being in manic or depressive episodes of a similar nature. I read their stories and realized that I was not alone. It's not just me who ruins their entire life once a year despite taking meds every day and being told by the so-called best doctors in the world that I am not bipolar, but merely experiencing "symptoms of autism."

My words as a leader in my community have real global impact and influence. In my mania, I lost complete sight of that.

As I find my new baseline and new center through an effective regime of medication, therapy, exercise and clean living, I have newfound, much-needed clarity. I am pouring my energy into positive, meaningful art: music, clothing, design, and other new ideas to help the world.

I'm not asking for sympathy, or a free pass, though I aspire to earn your forgiveness. I write today simply to ask for your patience and understanding as I find my way home.

With love,