



# University

INTERVIEW SERIES

Did This Man' Bipolar Disorder  
Really Help Him Start A \$60  
Million Business?

The Gifts And Challenges of Bipolar Disorder And How To Manage Them



Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com).

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

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Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

*Michael Senoff*

Founder & CEO: [www.hardtofindseminars.com](http://www.hardtofindseminars.com)

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## **Did This Man's Bipolar Disorder Really Help Him Start A \$60 Million Business?**

### The Gifts And Challenges of Bipolar Disorder And How To Manage Them

During a manic episode, Steve Millard says he decided to start his own business and, because of his bipolar disorder, didn't worry about a thing – quitting his job, how he would get clients, how his bills would get paid. None of the concerns that would normally have stopped someone from such a bold move concerned Steve. And he made money. A lot of it.

But like most disorders, bipolar has its gifts and it also has its difficulties. Steve's lows included everything from contemplating suicide to a scary psychotic episode where he thought he could communicate with Abraham Lincoln.

If that sounds like you (or someone you love), this audio is for you. It will show you that it is possible to manage bipolar disorder without taking away the amazing gifts it can give – straight from someone who has lived it, Steve Millard, author of *A Bipolar Life*.

#### **You'll Also Hear...**

- The only therapy combination that really works – but why it's so important to tailor it to your own needs
- The fastest known ways to get out of a depression funk – come to find out, the small stuff really does help
- All about the little-known free "AA" for people with bipolar disorder that Steve says saved his life
- Exactly what Steve thinks triggered his psychotic episode – and how to avoid a moment like that with tips for managing stress
- The one book Steve urges every bipolar to read
- Why Steve says "action comes before motive" and how to use that in everyday life to keep yourself going at even the toughest times
- 3 famous people you may not have ever known suffered from depression/bipolar disorder

Steve says it's important to know yourself and your triggers when it comes to this disorder. Exercise frequently and don't forget to give yourself credit for even the little things you do, especially during the bleak, dark times

when it feels like there's no way out. Those are the times when you just have to get yourself to take the next small step. And in this audio, you'll hear what those steps are and how to manage all of them.

*Hi this is Kris Costello and I teamed up with Michael Senoff, to bring can bring you the world best health-related interviews. So if you know anyone struggling with their weight with cancer, diabetes, ADHD, autism, heart disease or other health issues send them over to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).*

Kris: Today we're talking with author Steve Millard author of 'At Bi-polar Life, Fifty Years of Battling Manic Depressive Illness Didn't Stop Me From Building a 60 Million Dollar Business'. Steve thank you so much for joining us.

Steve: Oh, and thank you Kris. And I thank you for the opportunity to be on your show.

Kris: Well it's just a pleasure to have you with us today. So I wanna start way back. You started out in the Air Force, right? With your career.

Steve: I did. I graduated from the University of Vermont and then went right in the Air Force. And I was in the Air Force 3 years and then I took a job as an instructor to the Hawaii Air National Guard. So I was actually 4 years in the service.

Kris: In Bi-polar Life you've got a lot of interesting descriptions. A lot of very high stress and situations you were in. A lot times you sounds like you really saved people lives by bringing them down with airplanes that weren't working and things like that.

Steve: I had a number of cases that way but what put me down, my illness broke out my last year with a broken engagement, which you would not think would do that. But my illness broke out with that broken engagement and wound up going to the hospital in Honolulu for a week or so and then returning to my job in the island of Kauai as an instructor. But that was the first episode, I was 27 years old.

Kris: So you were 27 when you first felt these symptoms. And so did you ever before that point have any inkling that there was something not quite right?

Steve: Good question. I've been asked that before and the answer is none. I never had a situation that set me back like this engagement in Hawaii. And age 27 oddly enough is about the average where the illness breaks out. Lots of young people get it but the average age is 27. And prior to that I wouldn't have had the slightest inkling and I was in denial the whole time because as an Air Force officer I couldn't accept the fact that I had a mental problem. I was supported by the International Guard that I was working for, they were really quite good about it. But I don't know now in the military, I guess they are more accommodating. One of the people who was Bi-Polar was Alden, he went up in the space capsules and he was Bi-Polar. So perhaps there is a little more understanding of the illness.

Kris: So what were your symptoms when you first at 27 you said you had your first Bi-polar episode. What happened to you?

Steve: I woke up frightened to death, it wasn't depression, it was fear and anxiety and they put me in the local hospital. And that calmed me down and I calmed down when I went to Honolulu. But the initial one was the unbelievable fear. I guess you'd just have to call it extreme anxiety.

Kris: Was it just kind of a generalized fearfulness? Or was it certain things?

Steve: No, everything. I woke up with it and I couldn't shake it. It was very frightening having never experienced that before.

Kris: And Steve you know one of the most interesting things about your story in the book 'Bi-polar Life' is that you spent the next 30 years building a phenomenal career. I mean working for a Reader's Digest, LL Bean, Land's End just terrific business success. But you did this without people knowing for the most part about your illnesses.

Steve: That's correct. And interestingly I've talked to my Psychiatrist about people who are Bi-polar and half of the patients that he's taken care of live a very guarded life, afraid of the next step episode. But I was in the other half and as soon as I would feel well I would progress, I would do what I planned to do. I always wanted my own business I worked for Brookstone, had no episodes during that period. If a lot of it depended on when I was doing and if I was happy and busy and I didn't have any episodes. And so then I would crash and some sort of depression when I came out of it and go right back to what I was doing. I would almost forget that I was low.

Kris: What we've seen with the people that we interviewed a lot of these conditions there's great difficulty involved but there are also a great gifts. And obviously you have that in your ability to build a \$60,000,000 business the Millard group and all of the companies that you've been involved with. But I wanna go back a little bit more and just talk about, the people that don't know, that maybe are searching, what are the symptoms, what are some of things that people will see if they are dealing with a bipolar illness?

Steve: Well as I said with me it started out with high anxiety. The first 10 or 15 years my primary symptom was fear sweaty palms just intense anxiety. As I got older it switched to depression and that's where it has been for the last 15-20 years and I'll slip into a depression in my journal show that I have had 18 years of deep depression. Now that isn't at one time, that's in six months here, 12 months there, 18 months that added up and it comes to 18 years. I'd like those years back because I can (inaudible) now. Having said that 30 years of productivity, so I'm ahead of the game.

Kris: So with a Bi-polar it's the highs, that feeling of being able to accomplish anything mixed in with this sounds like a dose of pretty serious depression. Unable to do things, tiredness, things like that, right?



Steve: Well any high you have an, any manic episode or hypo-manic episode guaranteed it will be followed by a depression. I mean is just like night and day, if you're high you're going to experience a depression at some point, that upsetting. But people I wanna tell your listeners that even though they might not be diagnosed with bipolar that are suffering depression the techniques that outlined in my book are for anybody who's depressed, you don't have to be Bi-polar be depressed.

Kris: And the numbers are huge. I mean obviously you look at the television advertising for antidepressants and there's a lot of people out there with depression.

Steve: And that's almost as a problem too, probably the best treatment that I know is cognitive therapy and medication. But there so many types of medication it might take quite a while to find the one that matches your chemistry. It's a matter of your chemistry and their chemistry. And there so much of it out there that I've had to experiment with oh, a dozen or so before I found one that worked. So don't be discouraged.

Kris: So Steve how important do you think running is? In getting over things like depression. Running, exercise, things like that.

Steve: By running and exercise that's perfect. My book, I think again about three chapters on simple techniques and I mean simple techniques, that when you read them you'll say Oh that can work. Something like cleaning the garage or cleaning up that mess and are neater kitchen sink or clean the seller or just simple things when you finish them you could endorse yourself. You can say look what I did it, I didn't think I'd I could do anything. As opposed to doing nothing and heating yourself at the end of the day.

Kris: And just small steps. It starts out with getting out of bed and making a few steps and then taking a few more steps and you've gotta give yourself that time.



Steve: You hit it right on the head. Just getting out of bed, just getting dressed, just taking a shower those things can be overwhelming. And what I've recommended is make a list of obnoxious jobs in your house and take the easiest one 1st, don't take on and tough one, take the easiest one and just keep an ongoing list of things you can do to endorse yourself. You hit the right thing with are running no question.

Kris: One of the things that's remarkable about your story is you had this decade's long career and you pretty much a self-diagnosed and self-recovered on your own. Quite bit sounds like. What does you do that work for you?

Steve: You mean getting out of depressions?

Kris: Yeah. All those years you are really kind of handling it yourself.

Steve: But I had a lot of good years Kris where I wasn't depressed and where I wasn't an anxious. And the good years I took advantage of. I always wanted my own business and at that time I was working for the Brookestone Company and had made a reputation in the industry. I gave a lot of speeches and panels and whatnot. So I had acquired a number of potential clients. And I was anxious for a year when I decided to go but I considered that normal anxiety. You know it's very difficult to decide to leave a great job and go off on your own. So that anxiety was not severe and I considered that normal. And when I did go off on my own, here's where my illness helped me, I knows to my boss that I was meeting January 1st, I think, and right after I talk to him I went up. And not manic but hypo-manic. No concern about how much money would take. No concern about where I was going to get clients. Although the things that would normally concerned somebody starting out did not concern me. So I was hypo-manic for about 10 months and the business succeeded. And suddenly my gal, there were just two of us, and she said I think we have enough money coming in next month to pay the bills. And that point nation have been

even higher but instead I crashed. And that again I told you any high I you can expect a low. I was depressed for about six months. You know I had to work so I kept doing it.

*For more interviews on health, mind, body, and spirit go to Michael Senoff's [hardtofindseminars.com](http://www.hardtofindseminars.com).*

Kris: You guys were doing great right?

Steve: Oh yeah. She said that money was coming and, it looked like we could pay bills next month's. At that point I'd been using savings. That should have put me even higher but instead I didn't need the illness anymore. I needed the hypo-manic, I needed that kind of drive. The four hours' sleep that night, the calling client seven days a week and when I didn't need the illness anymore I crashed. And I was depressed for about six months. Badly depressed. I kept working so that's why I said to you before any high you gotta expect a low.

Kris: There were some other things that you did. Specifically you mentioned a Dr. Lowe, that was very helpful.

Steve: There was a broken romance and a sled and two aides psychotic state. Thank God it's only happened to me once. But I believed I was the redeemer. And that's not uncommon hallucinations by the way. But in any case I believed it. And Abraham Lincoln was my hero and I believe that he was growing economy and we would have a conversation. I was legitimately crazy. But that lasted for 4 or 5 months and a friend from Rockland County came over her and rescued me. And they got me over to the other side of the room. I lost my job I had nothing, Kris. I have lost my job, I had lost all of my money, I was and zero. Substitute teaching for \$40.00 a day and then I heard about recovery. Which was what you just asked about. It was called recovery now it's Abraham Lowe's Self-Help System. And there in Chicago. Anyway I heard about them and enjoying that group. They really saved my life, I mean I was surrounded by people who had the same problems. Some worse in mind, I can

imagine being worse than mine that they were. Similar to AA it doesn't cost any money, they have 400 units around the country, they meet church halls and not sort of thing, so there's no money involved. But Dr. Lowe is recognized as the first doctor who practiced cognitive therapy. And he did that because he found his patients were cured and they'd wind up coming back. So he came up with this cognitive therapy, his books all talk, my book gives a couple of pages of some sayings in techniques he wants you to use. So anyway it's a wonderful organization and a lot of people don't know about it.

Kris: So what are some of those techniques that the Lowe group recommends?

Steve: You may be helpless but you are not hopeless. Move your muscles that's what you and I were both talking about. You know do something, that's two that come to mind. And there are lots of others there in the book.

Kris: And so when you have that episode, that was so disturbing you were basically marketing director at Reader's Digest, right?

Steve: No, I was assistant sales manager for Brookes. And when I had that psychotic break and they couldn't keep me. They wanted me to go into a hospital and I wouldn't do it so I lost my job. So I really started zero and worked my way back.

Kris: One of things that struck me in the book was that even though he were going through the low point for yourself the people around you were very in a way supportive.

Steve: They were. I had a good friend over in Rocklin County so brought me over, help me find a little house, and he bit his house for a while. He had a real estate company, so Real estate but it was a bad market.

Kris: Yeah I loved that story were you said you were two on is probably to sell Real estate and you direct people to the competitors house.

Steve: He's a good friend of mine. He's one of my fishing and hunting companions.

Kris: Obviously you've had a tremendously successful career and you've helped other people make millions, I don't know maybe more than millions of dollars. What are the things that I hope you do that?

Steve: Well the Bi-polar helped. Is that which are asking?

Kris: Yeah, I am.

Steve: I gave you that example of when I started my business instead of being fearful which would be the normal reaction I totally lacked any fear I didn't worry about money. And I didn't have that much capital and the business. I only had I think \$50,000. So there's a case where I was hypo-manic, there's no question about that and that really helped me build the business. I credit my illness to my success. Once it got going it just kept going, I wound up with 220 employees, so a pretty big company.

Kris: And did very well with it. But you never had another break as badly as the one that you had at Readers Digest.

Steve: Oh God no! A lot of Bi-polar people do not have psychotic breaks. I mean I was under a hell of the strain that was the problem. But that is not common.

Kris: I was gonna say are there things you can pinpoint the lead up to it that maybe others that are listening can try to avoid? So that they don't have to go through that

Steve: Well I can remember very clearly I wanted to marry this young girl, she was young and she did know a working at the Reader's Digest, she didn't like the fact that I was catholic. So I was trying to do of these things, I mean that's too much. The church, the company and then she left and so emotionally it was far too much for anybody.

Kris: So handling stress can really be helpful. And we hear that a lot just trying to find those things like meditation and exercise and knowing yourself really, is knowing how far you can push it.

Steve: I give you another example, you talk about your running. Kristmas gets me down and I was in a very depressed state the day before Kristmas and I knew I had to do something to get out of it because I was going to spend a day with my close friends. You know the last thing they needed was a depressed guy. So I settled decorate the house, this is not too many years ago I went down to store an wreaths and tinsel and swags and lights and I worked all day and the house with like the cheap Wal-Mart but I was completely out of the depression just because I had done something. I had actually done a lot.

Kris: It's back to that movement thing. It's back to that do something no matter what it is. I loved your description of your wood sculpting career also, that was pretty good.

Steve: I forgot about that. I took up in the work, woodworking. That was a tremendous help you could only focus on one thing at a time and if you're focusing, really focusing on woodwork you're not thinking about the depression.

Kris: The other thing that you very candidly and openly talk about in Bi-polar Life you do get to the point where you actually were contemplating taking your own life.

Steve: That was after that psychotic episode. I went into I'll never forget it was the deepest depression I've ever been in and when I came out of it I realized that I had lost my job, I didn't have the money and I was so depressed I tried to kill myself. But I stopped, I remember saying I'm too tough for this. I took the gun ban next day and had the barrel welded so that it couldn't fire. I never tried it again. I look at the gun, I still have it. As bad as I would get I would never do that again.

Kris: Just hopefully for anybody listening you know they can get a sense of hope for this interview that when you are in those dark very, very week times you can get through it. You know? And when you get through it it's amazing you know you can't even remember it.

Steve: I would come out of a depression and I was normal, level I just started thinking about the next thing that I was gonna do.

Kris: And so Steve what else can we tell people? Is there anything else that you'd like to share with them today about your story?

Steve: Well I guess if people are struggling or not sure what to do I would urge them to get into some cognitive therapy with medication. Okay? And I didn't do that for 25 years because I couldn't afford it. That's only about half the answer. The other half of the answer is you have to do things on your own. And a therapist who is a good cognitive therapist he will urge you to do certain things on your own. And like I said I've got 2 or 3 chapters in my book on what I do myself, because you only see therapists want to place a week. And medication you may not hit the right one 1st they need gonna do things on your own. I mean you can't live with the therapist. So you're gonna have to do things on your own. And there other tips in there. You've already outlined one with are running which is perfect. I mean the silliest things, reading or running or exercise or creating a closet just little things and make a list of things you want to get done. And then at the end of them no matter how small they are endorse yourself. Endorse yourself, say and look what I did today. So that would probably be the most important thing I'd like to pass on to your listeners Kris.

Kris: And then you know that's one of the things that I don't think we've talked enough about Steve, it is you so important to find their right therapist or the right doctor. And sometimes it takes a long time

Steve: Good point, I have that point in my book. If you find that you find it their press and you just don't have the right chemistry, don't stay. Find another one. You waste a lot of time, and you've got to find the right chemistry with the doctor. So the first 1 you try isn't right, move on.

Kris: And then the reading, I stumbled across Mike Wallace's biography which is astounding to see someone of that caliber.

Steve: He was a depressive, a very bad one.

Kris: Remarkable what he accomplished. The same way William Sterne.

Steve: He was even worse. I mean I don't mean whirs but he had more severe attacks, I think than Wallace did.

Kris: But beautifully described in his book and there's great comfort in knowing there's other people that have accomplished great things have gone through these kind of things.

Steve: I'm fortunate to have had the right therapist. He lived in New Hampshire where I live, but he moved to Portland, Maine so like open see him once in awhile. But mostly we talk on the phone I'll say to call me at the end of the day and who call me maybe at 4:30 to see if I've got a problem, or oh I'm down or the medication's not working and we talk on the phone. That's just as effective I think as having a visit. Oh, listen that me mention one other book that I refer to in my book, the one book I want you to get the most is the one by Abraham Lowe Self-Help System, it's called, 'Mental Health Through Will Training', 'Mental Health Through Will Training'. And the other one I refer to, not is often but he's excellent is Dr. David Burns URNS, the title of his book is 'Feeling Good'. And it's about depression, just depression not Bi-polar. And there are 4 million of his books in print so you can be sure he's well accepted. And he has interesting things to say, like he said what comes first motivation or an action? And you would agree that it's motivation then



action. And he said, no its action and then motivation. Which is the perfect thing you and I have and talking about, action comes first then you'll have the motivation.

Kris: And the first action for anybody that's battling any of these kind of issues is get some help, and don't try and do this on your own. Because it's a big project.

Steve: It is. Any way I hope I've been some help to your listeners.

Kris: Oh I'm sure you have. And Steve I wanna thank you so much for bringing Bi-polar Life into the public eye and we just wish you the greatest success with it. And thank you again for joining us.

Steve: Oh Kris thank you so much for letting me be on the show, and really enjoyed it.

*That's the end of our interview, and I hope you've enjoyed it. For more great health related interviews go to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).*