

Learning To Love My Whole Self, Even The Bizarre Parts

BY KYLE ELLIOTT

Hours upon hours. That's how long the episodes of deja vu would last. Bizarre. Deja vu is a common experience. But those "I have been here before" feelings typically last a few seconds or minutes, not hours.

I was raped in 2014. Prior to the attack, I was already susceptible to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as a result of living with anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). While I had experienced deja vu prior to the attack, the experiences were infrequent and never lasted more than a few minutes.

After the attack, I started experiencing frequent and severe episodes of deja vu. The episodes lasted for hours.

In the evenings, I would have episodes that lasted from the time I got home through the entire night. Four, five, six hours. For months I would wake up in the middle of the night and feel like I was living the same day all over again. Imagine Groundhog Day, but it was directed by the devil; that was my daily life.

I would call my parents and just cry. I'm quick with my words, so it's unusual for me to have nothing to say. While I was able to process and talk about being raped rather quickly, I was having a difficult time understanding my mind. I felt as if I was going insane.

Was I going insane?

It didn't help that I was in my second quarter of graduate school at one of the top public affairs programs in the nation. This was in addition to working and interning more than 40 hours per week. I contemplated dropping out of grad school. I considered moving back home with my parents. What was the point of life?

But with the help of an amazing therapist, I found the strength to love myself, including the delusional parts. The bizarre parts.

As someone who had already struggled with loving themselves – I was severely bullied throughout middle and high school – self-love was difficult. It was a lot of work.

I'm going crazy and you're telling me I have to continue to love myself? I have to find ways to embrace this insanity?

These were the questions I struggled with. It was challenging at first. Harder than any job I've had. Harder than grad school. Harder than deciding not to kill myself.

I worked to find ways to understand what was happening in my head. I read article after article on PTSD, psychosis, and delusion. Despite the intense feelings, I learned that I wasn't going insane. I also learned to love myself. I learned to love the bizarre parts of what makes me, me.

I began exploring the most inner aspects of my mind and thoughts. I've learned to recognize and accept the deja vu, rather than push it away.

The more I embrace the bizarre parts, the more I learn to love myself – bizarre parts and all – the fewer incidents of deja

vu I have.

Or maybe I just don't mind them now?

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Universe Has Your Back: Transform Fear to Faith](#) .

Sip a little more:

***Meet Yourself For The First Time:
A Little Prayer To Grow Self-Love***

The doors to the world of the wild Self
are few but precious. If you have a deep
scar, that is a door, if you have an old, old
story, that is a door. If you love the sky
and the water so much you almost
cannot bear it, that is a door. If you yearn
for a deeper life, a full life, a sane life,
that is a door.

Clarissa Pinkola Estés

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