

:: OPERATION: BETTER BIPOLAR BALANCE ::

If you are ready to take a timeout for self-reflection and healing, then congratulations –you are on the right path! This document offers a few ideas that may help you design your own ‘Wellness Reboot Camp’.

The idea to create my own wellness program, custom-tailored to my own needs, came to me about a decade ago, before I was even diagnosed with bipolar. I was being treated and medicated for depression (... which I now know was only half the story!). I felt filled with electricity but disconnected from myself, and something had to give.

Admission to an inpatient psychiatric facility didn't even cross my mind at the time. I was (blissfully) unaware that unchecked bipolar disorder can easily spiral into disaster. Hell, I was unaware that I even had bipolar brain chemistry to begin with! I was unwilling to take time off of work, but also knew that drastic measures were warranted.

I wanted a program to follow on my own—something positive, supportive, and customized—over which I could have total control. So, I took stock of what I thought would be most therapeutic for me and decided to dedicate the upcoming month to my own wellness.

I have continued to rely on this process—which I've dubbed “Operation: Better Bipolar Balance”—during times of intense overwhelm. It helps me gain a sense of renewal, peace, and confidence—I wish the same for you.

Good luck in your endeavor! Let me know how it goes at brooke@betterbipolarbalance.com!

Brooke Bacon

CONTENTS:

Planning	2
Defining	3
Documenting	4-6

:: PLANNING TIPS ::

When it's time to slow down and do a major self-check-in, consider using the ideas below to help determine your mission and develop your strategy.

- 1 FOCUS.** Dedicate this period of time—typically a month—on self-evaluation, self-motivation, and self-improvement. When developing the strategy for your program, keep in mind that:
 - Study and research are critical elements of self-evaluation.
 - Inspiration and creativity are the fuel for self-motivation.
 - Reflection and mindfulness are essential for self-improvement.
- 2 SCHEDULE.** Whether it's clearing your calendar or adding to it, you'll likely want to make some adjustments to your daily grind for the duration of your mental health time-out. Postponing a meeting or two could alleviate some anxiety; signing up for a handful of yoga classes could boost positive energy. Everyone finds renewal in different places at different times—keep the focus on what's most therapeutic for you.
- 3 MITIGATE.** Minimize negative energy by setting boundaries. Here are a few examples:
 - Do: Embrace your curious and artistic side by trying out a new hobby.
 - Don't: Feel obligated to accomplish something or to continue with the hobby if you aren't enjoying it.
 - Do: Cut back on spontaneous decisions by planning a few pleasant activities that complement your program.
 - Don't: Overcommit yourself.
 - Do: Seek to hear and learn from others' experiences online.
 - Don't: Get involved in discussion boards, debates, and commentary online.
- 4 SHARE. (OR, DON'T.)** One one hand, telling others can set us up to feel like we need to meet another person's expectations—which is NOT what this journey is about. On the other hand, having an advocate in our corner can help us feel supported, encouraged and confident. We all have different ideas and preferences about disclosure—just give it some thought in advance. If you could benefit from having an extra (unbiased, non-judgmental) person on your support team, please consider [reaching out to me](#).
- 5 DOCUMENT.** It's important to find a way to reconnect later with the insights and inspiration you find during this time of focus. I've included a 30-Day Journal at the end of this packet that provides a simple way to summarize your journey. Here are a few other ideas:
 - Mood tracking app
 - Art
 - Photography
 - Scrapbook
 - Mental notes
 - Calendar
 - Folder
 - Journal
 - Talk therapy
 - Charts/checklists

:: MISSION STATEMENT ::

I will dedicate a month to taking care of myself because I feel too overwhelmed. I will not make big decisions or act on impulsive ideas during this time. I will be patient. I will be kind to myself. I will not be waiting for a switch to flip, but doing the hard work of focusing inward to find the lasting change I seek to achieve.

:: STRATEGY

What activities can I do daily to enrich my mind, body, and spirit?

MIND: Read and research; other: _____

BODY: Challenge and/or soothe the senses; other: _____

SPIRIT: Write, Meditate; other: _____

:: TIME PERIOD

When will I begin and end my personal retreat?

_____ to _____

OPERATION: _____

:: Daily Journal ::

A simple way to document your journey is to summarize each day in one sentence.

DAY 1: _____

DAY 2: _____

DAY 3: _____

DAY 4: _____

DAY 5: _____

DAY 6: _____

DAY 7: _____

DAY 8: _____

DAY 9: _____

DAY 10: _____

DAY 11: _____

DAY 12: _____

DAY 13: _____

DAY 14: _____

DAY 15: _____

DAY 16: _____

DAY 17: _____

DAY 18: _____

DAY 19: _____

DAY 20: _____

DAY 21: _____

DAY 22: _____

DAY 23: _____

DAY 24: _____

DAY 25: _____

DAY 26: _____

DAY 27: _____

DAY 28: _____

DAY 29: _____

DAY 30: _____