

Life is what you make it

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Publication: Srishti Publishers, New Delhi, India

Paperback **Pages:** 224 **Price:** Rs 120

ISBN: 978-93-80349-30-5

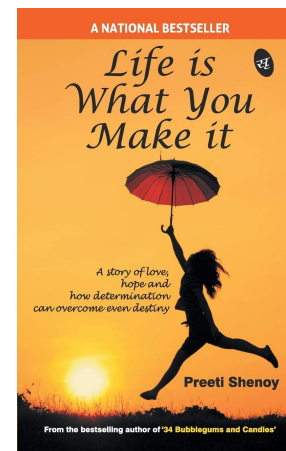
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Significance of the book: The book 'Life is what you make it' is a version of a female about what it means to be suffering from Bipolar Affective Disorder. Initially the story moves very interestingly like a Bollywood movie where the protagonist is good in almost everything that she does or has. She is good looking, attractive, vibrant, good in studies, famous among boys etc. The story takes a serious note when after disagreement and her cold attitude towards her boyfriend leads him towards suicide. Though she moves on in life, joins a reputed management college for studies, and tries never to think about that incident of past; she however never probably could wash away that guilt away from her mind.

Later she describes in detail the phase when her need of sleep reduces, she remains energetic for almost everything even without getting proper sleep for days and weeks, attainment of magical powers as she was able to work very hard, had sharpened memory for whatsoever she reads, abilities increasing 3 fold times than her previous self etc which gives a good description of what a person goes through while in manic state. The family members not having heard or seen of any such thing feel proud of their daughter as they see her working hard and in excelling in every field. Her friends do notice some oddities in behavior however her sheer magnetism and good performance doesn't ring alarm bells in their ears too. However life changes for her parents when she starts moving towards the other side of polarity i.e. depression. She drops out from her college because of panic attacks.

Justification of the title: The description of the varied emotions that she faces along with 2 suicidal attempts is unnerving. The heartening account when she experiences sadness, fear etc moves the reader. It is with certainty that many patients with a similar disorder will be able to

relate or identify themselves for having gone through similar experiences.

Further the author describes in detail the cold attitude of the psychiatrist towards the patients, and their only concern related to labeling the problem and of writing the prescription for treating the problem at hand. Despite all the enduring pain that the patient was experiencing, the thoughts that raced within her mind on meeting the psychiatrist, I could not stop laughing and smiling for those quick witted thoughts even during the moments of such despair.

When her problems could not dealt with further she was advised admission to a mental hospital and again the author, in a very lucid manner, comments what impact the ambience and atmosphere of such an OPD leaves on a person visiting a psychiatry facility for consultation (willingly or unwillingly). Description of the agony and feeling of abandonment that a patient feels when she is admitted in the mental hospital is very touching. As she describes her path of developing a mental disorder, similarly she has described in detail the road to her recovery and attainment of entirely a new meaning of life.

Critical evaluation: Further from the patient's perspective the author explains how a little talk and explanation from the doctor helps and makes patient feels that her existence matters. She goes onto highlight that if doctors show transparency, it does help to build trust and confidence and patient starts participating actively in treatment process. There need not be strict walls between the doctor and the patient in the name of maintaining a therapeutic relationship. A little humanistic and personal touch might work wonders in an otherwise difficult to treat case.

Source of Funding: Nil **Conflict of Interest:** None

Received on: 20-10-2019 **Revised on:** 13-02-2020

Accepted on: 24-02-2020 **Published on:** 26-02-2020