



# Back from the Brink: True Stories and Practical Help for Overcoming Depression and Bipolar Disorder

By Graeme Cowan

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## Back from the Brink: True Stories and Practical Help for Overcoming Depression and Bipolar Disorder By Graeme Cowan

On July 24th, 2004, author Graeme Cowan took pen to paper and said goodbye to his family. “I just can’t be a burden any longer,” he wrote. After four failed suicide attempts, and a five-year episode of depression that his psychiatrist described as the worst he had ever treated, Cowan set out on a difficult journey back from the brink. Since then, he has dedicated his life to helping others struggling with depression and bipolar disorder—and that is how this book came to be.

If you have severe depression or bipolar disorder, it is important to remember that you are not alone. Featuring interviews with people from all walks of life, *Back from the Brink* is filled with real stories of hope and healing, information about treatment options and medication, and tools for putting what you’ve learned into practice. If you are ready to put one foot in front of the other and finally set out on the path to recovery, the powerful stories in this book will inform and inspire you to make lasting change.

If you have severe depression or bipolar disorder, you may find it difficult to take that first step toward recovery. You aren’t alone. In our society, many people with depression or bipolar disorder do not seek therapy or medical treatment due to the stigma that surrounds mental illness. Even people in “progressive” communities may not want to admit that they are on antidepressants or mood-balancing medications. Isn’t it time we changed the way we thought about these illnesses?

The book includes a special foreword by actress Glenn Close, and features in-depth interviews with former US Representative Patrick Kennedy; television talk-show host Trisha Goddard; director of public policy at Google, Bob Boorstin; former chief advisor to Tony Blair, Alastair Campbell; former tennis pro, Cliff Richey; former professional football player, Greg Montgomery; and many more.

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## **Back from the Brink: True Stories and Practical Help for Overcoming Depression and Bipolar Disorder** By Graeme Cowan **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“This is a brave book that will certainly help remove stigma, and provides real hope and practical help.”  
—**Tony Blair**, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

“Depression is deeply personal and intense in a way that others may find difficult to comprehend. That’s why individual stories are crucial if we are to educate and combat public stigma. *Back from the Brink* does just that.”

—**Geoffrey Gallop, DPhil**, professor and director of the graduate school of Government at the University of Sydney and former Premier of Western Australia

“Depression and bipolar disorder are serious illnesses, but they can be safely and effectively treated. The incredible personal stories in Cowan’s book show that people suffering from these illnesses are not alone, and that recovery is possible. The practical advice contained in this book will provide a path to recovery, as well as hope that a fulfilling life is within everyone’s reach.”

—**C. Edward Coffey, MD**, vice president of Henry Ford Health System; CEO of Behavioral Health Services; and Kathleen and Earl Ward Chair of Psychiatry, Henry Ford Hospital

“*Back from the Brink* is an extraordinary collection of interviews with famous and not-so-famous individuals who have lived through the experience of depression and bipolar disorder. It provides invaluable insights and practical advice. It also sends the message, ‘You are not alone,’ to anyone struggling with mental illness, and reminds families and friends how much a difference their support can make in the journey toward recovery.”  
—**Michael J. Fitzpatrick, MSW**, executive director at NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

“Too many books about depression and bipolar disorder share only one person’s thoughts and journey in dealing with one of these disorders. But in *Back from the Brink*, Graeme Cowan provides insightful and heartfelt interviews with eight others who’ve made the journey and come out the better for it. Cowan’s engaging interview style and thoughtful questions make it easy to take away inspiration and hope from the book. Friends, family, and anyone who’s grappled with depression or bipolar disorder will appreciate the worth of Cowan’s valuable contribution.”

—**John M. Grohol, PsyD**, founder of psychcentral.com, the leading online mental health network, and coauthor of *Self-Help That Works*

“Powerful personal testimonies from those of us who have experienced mental health problems can inspire as well as shift public perceptions. As we know from anti-stigma work at Time to Change, personal disclosure can dissolve stereotypes and support recovery. This amazing book really puts people in the driving seat of their own recovery and is helpful, hopeful, and empowering.”

—**Sue Baker**, director of Time to Change

## About the Author

**Graeme Cowan** lived through a five-year episode of depression that his psychiatrist described as the worst he had ever treated. This fueled his desire to prevent others from going through the same thing. Through this horrific experience, and his own extensive research, he has guided, taught, and inspired countless people through his books, keynote presentations, and media appearances.

Foreword writer **Glenn Close** is an Emmy, Golden Globe, and Tony Award-winning actress who made her feature film debut in *The World According to Garp*. Her performance earned Close her first Academy Award nomination. She was subsequently Oscar-nominated for her performances in *The Big Chill*, *The Natural*, *Fatal Attraction*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, and most recently, *Albert Nobbs*, which she also cowrote and produced. Among her television credits is the highly-acclaimed TV legal drama, *Damages*, for which she has won two Emmy Awards and a Golden Globe as Best Actress.

In 2009, Close participated in the launch of Bring Change 2 Mind, a non-profit organization working to end the stigma, misunderstanding, and discrimination surrounding mental illness. The idea for this movement evolved out of her first-hand observation of battles with mental illness within her family. Her sister, Jessie, lives with bipolar disorder and Jessie's son, Calen, is living with schizoaffective disorder.

Afterword writer **Allen Doederlein** is president of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), the nation's largest consumer-led mental health organization focusing on mood disorders, and a proud member of the advocacy committee of the International Society of Bipolar Disorders.

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drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial imagining.

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