

## Introduction

My name is Pieter Overduin. If you had addressed me with that name in September 2001, I would have thought you were out of your mind. At that time I was called Gandhi and God, respectively.

Apart from myself, my family consists of a father, Jan, a mother, Zoet, a brother, Kees and three sisters; Caroline and her husband Jacco, Esther and her boyfriend Ad and Angèle and her boyfriend Danny. I'm the second oldest sibling.

This book is primarily about (hypo) mania, manic psychosis and its effects. I could only give you a cursory description of what a manic episode is. However, I choose to go into the subject in depth by describing two types of megalomania.

I will also describe my voluntary admissions. In doing so I will try to give you an inside view of a world unknown to many of you. If anything I say is in some way familiar to you I hope it is also useful. If everything seems to be unfamiliar to you I hope it will remain that way.

Other topics I will go into are the 'second opinion', 'life chart', 'crisis chart' and 'crisis plan'.

As you can see I have found several people who have been directly involved in my life willing to join me in the writing of this book. They are my co-writers. They commit to the paper what they think and feel in certain situations. Out of this grows a story to which family and relatives give a valuable contribution. What is it like for them having a manic psychotic son, brother, friend and brother-in-law.

I read their pieces during my own writing process and they gave me a lot of insight with regard to how difficult my manic episodes can be for the people around me.

Especially when the manic episode really takes shape in me.

The person who is suffering from the manic episode experiences the world in a totally different way than the people around him or her.

Pieter Overduin, summer 2004.

## **Diary**

*Do you know that feeling of having to come from afar?  
And that the road is long?  
But you know you will make it.  
I will return!*

Thursday, 4 January

One evening Shannon, one of my colleagues, pays me a visit. We talk about our work in psychiatry. We have some Drinks, something to eat. 'How exactly did you manage to go through those psychotic episodes?' she asks. Very direct and curious.

'Great parents, medication, a positive attitude,' I reply.

'And last but not least, humour. Apart from those things, I wrote a lot of it out of my system,' I conclude.

'Did you keep anything of what you wrote?' she asks.

'Yes, almost all of it.'

'Can I read some of it?' she tries.

'No problem,' I reply. 'If you give me a minute, I'll try to find the products of my pen.' I correct myself. 'Well, they're just a bunch of notes.'

'Oh, come on,' she says. I hand her a pile of paper.

While she's reading, I'm making some tea. From inside the kitchen I can hear her laughing in the living room.

A few moments later, I go into the room with a pot of tea.

'Do you like it?' I ask.

'I think it's great,' she says enthusiastically.

I smile when I pour the tea. It's no use. She's oblivious of her tea, of me, or of anything else which is not part of my notes.

Her enthusiasm eventually leads to a manuscript. She's not in it.

Several months later the manuscript is transformed into a book. Now she is in it. Between the manuscript and the book I have a short relationship with my colleague. But she doesn't have one with me.

Monday, 10 September

My book has been published. I get a few complimentary copies. Armed with the diary in my hand, I make my way to the recycling centre. In search of my buddy from the time I was working there. The recycling centre has moved since I left. Nevertheless, I have no problem finding it. When I enter the yard I see new loading wagons. My eyes focus on a door with "entrance" on it. Suddenly I hear someone call out from a distance, 'Pimple-faced goat dick! get your fucking car the hell out of here!' A bit further down one wagon of a row of wagons moves forward with a high-speed. My eye catches a young man. I look him straight in the eye. There he is. His outward appearance has remained unchanged. Our eyes show signs of recognition. 'Willie!'

'Pieter, you shithead!'

We exchange warm greetings.

'What on earth brings you here?' Willie asks.

'I've come to give a book. I wrote it after I left this place. You're in it as well.'

'That's nice,' Willie says. 'You know what, Pieter? Why don't you join me on my round and read that part to me.' Whether he intended to do it or not, Willie takes the exact same route that he and I took on our first round together. It's going to be a sentimental journey. Willie is totally absorbed in the story. Every now and then he laughs. Or he nods in approval. The story has ended. We turn into the yard. Willie's got a question. 'You write somewhere that I'm retarded. What exactly does that mean?'

'In this case it's a word used by someone who couldn't find the words to describe a very special person. Would you like to have the book, Willie?' I ask.

'Only the part about me,' he replies. He takes the book out of my hands. Rips out the pages in question. And stuffs them away in his pocket.

*What to write about Pieter's manic episodes/psychosis after the publication of his book I love myself... and the feeling is mutual? Usually it's not difficult for me to write something down on a piece of paper. But this is different. I read the book bit by bit. Sometimes with a slight unwillingness. Because in between, situations turn up which in my opinion are much more distressing than the light-hearted pieces are likely to make you think. Perhaps a mother is more sensitive to those situations. To me the book only shows the reader 'the tip of the iceberg'. But how welcome he is to his glory. He's in several newspapers and his books are in our local bookstore. He walks past the shop window at least a few times a day. Paul de Leeuw has invited him to appear in his radio show. He has a lot of success in the Dutch Association for Manic-Depressive People, where the books sell like hot cakes.*