

Brothers and Sisters,

We have come here to this place to unite together as people who have survived brain disorder and mental illness.

I am Bipolar, some of you are depressed, or schizo effective, or you have personality disorders, or perhaps you are paranoid and delusional. Whatever we have, we are MUCH more than the names and stigmas of our disorder. We are united today by the simple fact that we are still here. WE ARE STILL HERE.

We are not worthless bums that society can THROW AWAY.

We are POWERFUL and USEFUL members of society.

We are not unfeeling and useless people with no value.

We are BEAUTIFUL, passionate people with wonderful hearts that beat loudly in our chests and announce to all that WE ARE REAL! WE ARE AMAZING! WE ARE HERE!

We are not hopeless people waiting to DIE without a future.

We are FILLED with hope for OUR future.

We are filled with hope that we CAN make a difference

We are filled with hope that God LOVES us just the way we are.

We are filled with hope that if we are SMART about our meds,

If we are SMART about our doctors and listen to them,

If we are SMART about our circle of friends and family,

If we are SMART about asking God to help us.....

Then there is absolutely NOTHING that we can not do.

And EVERYTHING that we CAN do.

We can do ANYTHING.

Brothers and Sisters, please take this Oath of Hope with me  
Repeat after me:

I promise to NEVER lose hope  
To be SMART about my meds  
To LISTEN to and RESPECT my doctors  
To LOVE and cherish my family and friends  
To NEVER try to outsmart my illness.  
I promise to NEVER lose hope for myself  
I promise to NEVER lose hope for my potential  
I promise to NEVER lose hope for God  
And his promise to love ME just as I am.  
I know that God has a PURPOSE for me  
EVEN in my weakness and disorder.  
I know that there is ALWAYS hope for me,  
No matter how DARK the night may seem.  
I promise to NEVER lose hope.  
For I am AMAZING and beautiful,  
I am a DESERVING citizen of this country.  
I am POWERFUL and important  
And I COUNT.

Brothers and Sisters, we have mental illnesses, but they will  
NOT stop us from being the BEST we can be.

We are AMAZING

We are READY.

We are READY (chant)

Brothers and Sisters, are you ready to WALK FOR HOPE?!!!