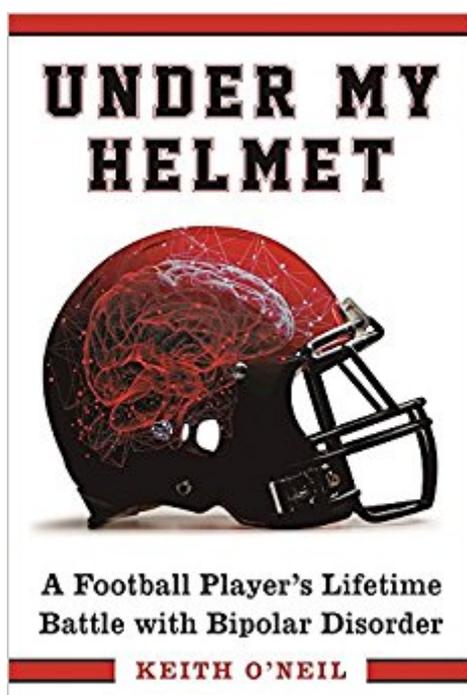


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# Under My Helmet: A Football Player's Lifelong Battle With Bipolar Disorder



## Synopsis

An athlete's battle with mental illness. Ever since he was a child, Keith O'Neil wanted to play football. Born on the same day that his father, Ed O'Neil, was cut from the New England Patriots, football was all Keith could think about . . . aside from his anxiety. Offered a scholarship to Northern Arizona University, O'Neil jumped at the chance to prove himself. Though it wasn't a Division I-A school, he brought his all, achieving first-team All-Big Sky choice as a junior and senior and earning All-American honors. The Dallas Cowboys offered O'Neil an invite to rookie mini-camp. But while learning the playbook, his anxiety and insomnia returned. Even so, he made the team as an undrafted free agent. His dream had come true. Yet, sleepless nights, constant anxiety, and suicidal thoughts clouded his mind.

O'Neil considered stepping away from the game multiple times, even speaking to his coach, Bill Parcells. Parcells gave him the wisdom that "Everyone has a demon in their head, and we have to beat that demon. Beat the demon!" After being released from the Cowboys, O'Neil spent time with the Colts and Giants but still could not escape his inner demons. It finally became too much for him to handle, and he decided to walk away from the game. It wasn't until sometime later that he was finally diagnosed: bipolar I disorder. Finally, everything made sense. Under My Helmet is the personal story of a man working every day to prove his worth while struggling with a debilitating and undiagnosed mental illness. O'Neil's voice is honest and open as he shares his battles and the steps he's taken to overcome adversity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Keith O'Neil is a retired football player who spent parts of four seasons with the Dallas Cowboys, Indianapolis Colts, and New York Giants. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder upon his retirement from the NFL, O'Neil is now a public advocate and speaker on mental illness through his 4th and Forever Foundation, as well as with the Brain & Behavioral Research Foundation, the Mental Health Association, the International Bipolar Foundation, and numerous other organizations. Keith lives in Buffalo, New York, with his wife and two young children. Andrew Postman is an author, collaborator, and ghostwriter of a dozen books on a wide range of subjects, including *Chasing Daylight: How My Forthcoming Death Transformed My Life* and *The Power of Story*. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and numerous magazines. He lives in New York City.

I finished your book in one day and could totally relate. It resonates with my bipolar. Keith is very lucky... He had the best family possible and nostalgic life. You did well, Keith, most people who have Bipolar don't have a good support system, only the basements you mention at NAMI meetings. I too crawl out of my skin at the meetings. Almost all are on disability. I know you are doing great work, but the less fortunate can't relate to your story, they are too marginalized by society. They can't afford treatment and end up homeless or dead. I find the book inspirational; at the same time feel sad for those less fortunate. Just my personal opinion.

This is a great book to get educated on what someone goes through having a mental illness. This book helped me to just not know someone with mental illness but to really understand and know that person with mental illness. Knowing someone that has the challenges of Bipolar and depression can and is at times intimidating. This book is a must read to help everyone understand what is going on with someone diagnosed with a mental illness disorder and to open your eyes/minds/hearts to that person and their struggles. Proud of you coming forward and sharing your real life story.

Wow!!! I couldn't put this great book down. Keith takes us on his incredible ride from his childhood challenges to his battles of insomnia and beyond. Keith is truly an amazing human being for telling his emotional story and bringing bipolar disease out in the open. Whether you or your family suffer from mental illness it doesn't matter this is a must read for everyone. We all need to be better educated on mental illness. Keith - thanks for sharing your story with the World, not an easy thing to do!!!

Keith, What a great read. Thank you for taking the time to tell us all your story. Its people like you that make this world a better place for all. Good luck with everything that you do.

A very powerful and compelling memoir about bipolar disorder. O'Neil's voice is honest and sincere. A must read for anyone living with mental illness or knows anyone suffering with it.

Great book, Keith, thank you for your comprehensive candor in sharing your life story. It is helpful and encouraging to me as I have a bipolar family member.

Shines the light on bipolar disorder.

Excellent read.

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