



My Alien Self: My Journey Back to Me

Amanda Green

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If I told you I'd been to twenty-four Countries (twenty-one by the time I was twenty-two), that I'd worked in Japan for nine months, toured Australia for six months, enjoyed seven months in Thailand and met and campaigned for the Orangutan in Borneo, you might think that I was pretty lucky.

If I told you I'd worked in the hotel industry, for a sexual health department in a hospital and with prisoners in a drug cell block of a male prison, that I'd worked as a recruitment consultant, in so many office jobs I've lost count, as well as having my own company and multiple websites, at age thirty-six, then you might think I've had an interesting life.

But if I added to that a mix of child rape, mental health problems, promiscuity, drug taking, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, self-harm, violence, mood swings, obsession, jealousy, loss of self worth, being raised by a mentally ill mother, bankruptcy, thyroid and gastro problems and public masturbation in school at age nine, then I am not sure what you'd think.

But this is me; Amanda Green. This is my life, my story; my journey back to me from depression, anxiety, panic attacks, OCD and Borderline Personality Disorder – mental illness which manifested during my life and came out 'to its peak' in my thirties.

I was able to use my collection of mementos, photos, diaries, journals, letters, emails and text messages of my past to finally see who I had become, and more importantly with a combination of therapy, medication and my writing, how I became that alien self and how I found the real me.

The editor (Debz Hobbs-Wyatt) adds...

This is the journey of a normal working class girl, trapped in a roller coaster world of disorder and excitement, love and joy, depression and anger – and her fight against stigma

While My Alien Self would be inspiring for any sufferer, their families or medical teams in its honest insights into living with a mental illness, it also has universal appeal. For who, at times, has not felt their life spin into chaos and wondered what is normal? This story effectively and openly highlights just how fine the line is between what is normal, and what is 'mental illness' And everyone who reads it will be able to relate to it.

Contains explicit language and sexual scenes

My Alien Self: My Journey Back to Me Details

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Renny Barcelos says

I believe I've never read a memoir before in my life. I read biographies when I was young -- used to love them back then, but never memoirs.

Nevertheless, the moment I read the description of "My Alien Self, My Journey back to me", by Amanda Green, I wanted to read it.

The journey described is intense, almost brutal at some points. And yet there's tenderness in the way Amanda tells it all, no holding back—after all, it's her life; she's her own main character.

Reading fiction can be easy, even if the subject is difficult, because you have the comfort of knowing it all came from a creative mind; here, however, it all really happened.

This is a tough story, but it's also about redemption and recovery. It will make you change your pre-conceptions about mental illness, and will certainly help so many people!

Amanda Green says

Ha ha, well I could so I did! I like it a lot anyway and my editor did me proud with this very honest memoir of mine! :-)

Michelle says

I loved the message of this book, probably as I can relate so well. At times, the author tended to ramble and it was a little difficult to remain connected. But overall, extremely interesting and informative.

Lisa Wightman says

Very interesting subject. Although I think if you'd never had any mental health issues yourself nor knew anyone that had, it probably wouldn't have the same impact. She really did lay herself bare, warts and all. Very brave...

Elizabeth says

I share some of Amanda's background as my mother had schizophrenia & Bipolar disorder. It started when I was 5 years old. Feelings related by Amanda of her mother really hit home for me. Some of these feelings I have felt myself, such as extreme fear of abandonment & an over-riding need to "not be like her." I felt like I was reading something that I could have written and/or expressed myself.

I applaud Amanda for her strength in purpose and of will to overcome her own battle with BPD, anxiety, OCD, and depression. It mirrors my own determination to overcome my own battle with Depression and Anxiety. This is a must read for anyone seeking to understand mental illness for themselves, a loved one, or for a friend.

Soo says

I finished reading this book exactly one month ago. I find it really difficult to review a book that is, essentially, the story of another persons life. For this reason I have taken some time to try and strike a balance between the story and its presentation, which I truly hope I have managed to do.

The story is a no-holds-barred, this is me, account of a life packed with extremes. On many occasions I found myself actively disliking the writer. When it first happened I took a cup of coffee into my garden and thought about what I was feeling. I've undergone Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and it's good to discover why we feel the way we do instead of just reacting. My conclusion was that the author didn't like herself, at that point in her life, and I was feeling what she had felt.

I am in awe of Amanda's courage in writing this book and there were many times when she could have been describing me. For this reason I totally agree with Amanda's wanting to change the way mental illness is viewed and this leads to the presentation of the book.

I have long held the belief that mental illness is simply the way an individual mind deals with the realities of life. Society wants to file everything into neat little boxes, which in turn complicates things even more. However, I really believe that any approach to this subject is better left to after the personal story.

I actually skipped over parts that, to be brutally honest, felt a bit 'preachy' to continue the story. These parts of the book are, I feel, as important to Amanda as her personal journey and it would be a shame for them to be overlooked as they do contain an awful lot of really important information. This, I believe, is where there needs to be some serious editing; if only to separate the life that was from the life that is.

Jasmine Bath says

While reading "My Alien Self" I often felt off kilter, as if what I was reading was going off in several different directions at once and then when I realized that Amanda Green was actually conveying her own inner turmoil, it helped me to truly understand what life can often be like for someone with Borderline Personality Disorder.

Through all the confusion, chaos of dealing with her mother's own mental health issues as well as her own, Amanda is able to give a personal testimony that you cannot gain from reading other books about BPD. Ms. Green has done an amazing job of giving detailed, intimate descriptions of her thought processes while trying to keep it together in search of a more balanced life, proving that people with mental health issues are not any different than people who are thought to be 'normal.'

This book would benefit mental health professionals as well as family members of those who suffer with BPD as it offers an insight not found in many books.

Samantha says

I felt that for me, My Alien Self did two important things; it gave an honest portrayal of living with a mental illness thereby educating and demystifying it, and it gave hope and inspiration to those who may either be experiencing mental illness themselves or know someone who is.

Amanda Green did a fantastic job of putting this book together trying to balance her personal experiences through narrative and journal entries, with the more informational/educational aspects in the form of lists of symptoms, CBT methods, etc. Although sometimes it may have appeared disconnected, with her breaking the narrative to give lists of symptoms, or going to different topics or dates within her life, I think this added to the overall 'feel' of the story and personally it enabled me to see things through Amanda's eyes more effectively, giving a real insight into how she was feeling.

I really enjoyed reading about Amanda's travels and like that this made me feel that at times I was reading a fictional novel - having not really travelled myself very much, I found her writing and descriptions here fascinating. She has certainly packed a lot in to her life and although the reasons for her impulsivity were due to her BPD, I am quite jealous of her bravery and adventurousness- whereas I am afraid to leave my village...

I am glad I came across this book, I hope many others also gain from reading it. It's a story that everyone should read, whether it is personally relevant to them or not. Because going through the experiences with Amanda is a journey that will enlighten you, inspire you, and leave you with more knowledge about mental illness than when you started. You never know who is silently suffering, it could be someone close to you that has not yet been able to be open about it - by reading this book, others may be helped. Well done Amanda, I will look forward to a sequel!

Doreen says

It takes great courage for a writer to disclose the darkest, most embarrassing situations that have occurred in her life. Is such a memoir simply an 'airing of dirty laundry,' an act of grandiosity as some might think? Or, is the disclosure a tool with therapeutic value for not just the author but, more so, for others who must do daily battle with similar mental conditions and with the stigma that adds to their battle?

Several empowering words came into my mind and stayed with me during my read of MY ALIEN SELF: MY JOURNEY BACK TO ME: Resilience, courage and hope. Yes, Ms. Greene made choices that took her further down into the depths of depression and despair. Why those choices? In her journal, Ms. Greene wrote, "If I kept moving, 'it' couldn't get me." Who or what is this 'it?' I wondered and then got an answer. "Was 'it' an illness or was that just me?" Ms. Greene asked herself. It is very difficult to comprehend the depth of another's fears relative to their having a mental illness. Schizophrenia does have a genetic component and the author's mother suffered from this disorder and from side effects of the various treatment modalities that were tried. Whenever one parent is diagnosed with a debilitating disease or mental illness, children cannot help but be adversely affected.

Ms Greene runs from her pain, her fears. She runs into the arms of damaged men, into the degradation of drug abuse, eating disorders and self-mutilation. She runs to other countries. By age 22, Amanda had visited

24 countries; excitement and change kept her from falling apart, at least for a while. Despite the mental illness that she was trying to outrun, Amanda had tremendous career achievements. She had successful careers in the hotel industry, beginning while living in Japan, and as a recruitment consultant, photographer and website designer, eventually starting her own company.

These successes affirm that Amanda Greene has amazing survival tools; is incredibly resilient and courageous. For no matter how deeply depressed she became, Amanda found a way to keep moving forward; to continue to seek and utilize healthier coping strategies. During my read of JOURNEY BACK TO ME, there were shades of joy that surfaced in her descriptions of the places to which she traveled; the encounters that she had with others, and a special experience that she had with Orangutans.

Amanda Greene offers her memoir as a tool for helping others come to terms with the mental illness symptoms of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and Depression. The most important tool that is prevalent throughout JOURNEY BACK TO ME is an often drowned-out yet constant companion, hope.

Jack says

A moving autobiographical account of a woman's life affected by a difficult childhood, growing up with a schizophrenic mother, and her adult struggle with accepting and managing her own mental health problems

Michael says

This book is great ... I cannot recommend it highly enough ... Well written and brutally honest ... It's a moving, inspiring and exciting read from cover to cover ... This memoir is a must have read for all bpd sufferers or people who want to try and understand the condition ... I couldn't put it down!

Cara says

I loved reading this book so much that I finished it in three days, and afterwards, it left me wanting more! It is a book that is easily relate-able as many people have a mental illness or a friend or family member with one, and the fact that the story takes place throughout Amanda's life makes it a good read for most ages (I would say 8th grade and up due to some sexual content). This book is honest and truly captures the thoughts (including word-for-word diary entries) of someone with a mental illness.

Reading this book has brought me comfort, as I suffer from various mental illnesses as well, and left me feeling like I am not so alone in this, and that recovery is possible. I liked that it was written in first person because it has that "story-telling" effect. I am going to tell my mom and friends to read it, because I believe that this book could give them a better understanding of how I feel and what it is like to live with a mental illness.

Kari Lynn Mackey says

My Alien Self by Amanda Green provides a fascinating window into the life of someone with a mental illness. Perhaps Green could have benefited from having some assistance with the organizational structure of the book, however, because her thoughts are translated to the page in a very disordered fashion. For example, at times, she breaks off from her narrative and starts merely listing experiences or side effects of her medication, as if she included her outline or notes into the final text without fleshing them out (or even putting them into complete sentences) for the reader's benefit. It would have been interesting to hear more about her diagnosis and treatment for borderline personality disorder, rather than so much about her abusive personal relationships and history of substance abuse, since the subject of her memoir is in fact supposed to be her life with and recovery from mental illness.

Rachael Phillips says

I read this book a few weeks ago and struggled to find the words to write a review. Not because I didn't like it but because I wanted to do it justice. I believe many will relate to a book like this either from personal experiences of mental health issues or of others they know. The story highlights the stigma still attached to mental health issues which is so frustrating. It demonstrates how hard it can be to ask for help and then to actually get help. It shows this young woman's determination to get better and to find a way to identify and recover from her BPD and OCD among other things.

Mental health issues have been misunderstood for so long and books like this one should help others to understand they are not alone and that help is there. It is a very brave and compelling read written with sincerity and brutal honesty. I believe 'Amanda' has written it in her own voice and in her own style, which works well for her story and the lack of detail of certain areas, as other reviewers have referred, is not necessary as the focus is on Amanda, as it should be for this type of story.

To lay yourself bare, warts and all, for all to read about is very brave and while there are aspects of the story that annoyed me I quickly realised that if I had written about my life then I would have those moments too! It is so easy to judge and hopefully this book will help others to understand the sometimes irrational reactions and actions of those suffering from mental health issues. It is not a choice to suffer from such illnesses and with help recovery can begin. Well done on sharing your story Amanda.

Simone Smith says

I downloaded this book to read, as I have family members who are suffering with Mental Illness and have also worked in the mental health sector and was intrigued to read about someone who not only for many years suffered with this illness, but actually wrote a book about her life and what she went thought to overcome it.

This story is a must read for people who have suffered mental illness or have a friend or family member going through this, or even if its just to understand and help with the stigma attached to mental illness, or just want a really great read.

I could not put this book down I admire Amanda for her honesty to her illness and are amazed by what she achieved in her life with her jobs and her traveling to numerous country's, while suffering from BPD, anxiety, OCD.

What a amazing journey I was taking on through Amanda Greens life! It's moving, exciting, sad, funny, endearing and inspiring. Even if mental illness has not touched you or others in your life this is a brilliant read, and maybe it will just make you help or just understand someone who is going through this illness.
