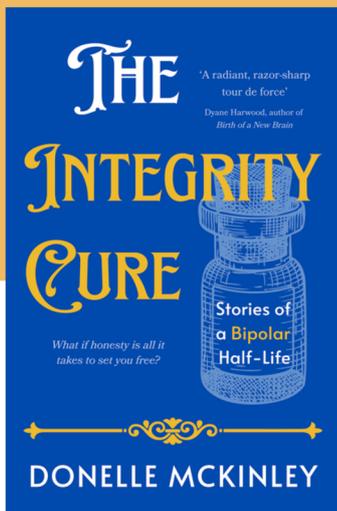


THORNDON PRESS



‘A radiant, razor-sharp tour de force’

Dyane Harwood, author of *Birth of a New Brain*

‘Beautiful’

Daniel Munro, author of *The Naked Truth*



A unique story of clinical recovery from Bipolar Type II that lights the way for others.

In deft literary style, *The Integrity Cure* examines Donelle McKinley’s experience of Bipolar Type II over thirty years, her belated diagnosis at age 46, and the unorthodox approach to therapy that resulted in clinical recovery.

From the wilderness of ignorance to the summit of robust mental health

The Integrity Cure is organised in five parts, and takes the shape of an epic mountaineering expedition:

- Part One: Wilderness covers the author’s late teens and twenties, and early experiences of bipolar in New Zealand, England, Europe and China.
- Part Two: Base Camp is set in Turkey, England, and New Zealand, and reflects on the impact of bipolar on the author’s marriage and career.
- Part Three: Bad Weather builds up to the impact of the “culture wars” on her mental health, and belated diagnosis at age 46.
- Part Four: Acclimatize examines the author’s experience of managing bipolar post-diagnosis, and applies this new knowledge to reflections on her past.
- Part Five: Summit Bid describes the author’s clinical recovery.

‘Bold, experimental, brilliant’ – Dorothy Herson, author of *The Rag Doll Contract*

The Integrity Cure is a work of creative non-fiction, comprised of 30 chapters that lean into the short story and essay form; these are structured chronologically, and can be read consecutively or randomly. With different approaches to storytelling subtly applied to serve dissociation, reinvention, and reflection, stories explore themes of vocation, love, spirituality, integrity, and freedom.

Chapter Outline

1 / BOTH

An arts undergraduate imagines an alternative to breaching the integrity of her polyamorous nature.

2 / THE INTERVENTION

A perfect storm of grief, religion, illicit love, and literature triggers the author’s first bipolar episode.

3 / THE PERFORMANCE (longlisted for the 2025 Katherine Mansfield Competition)

Ava plays out the impact of suppressing sexual orientation in Shakespeare’s Stratford upon Avon.

Chapter Outline continued

4 / UNDER THE VOLCANO

A day in the life of a secondhand bookdealer in a quaint seaside village, and a nod to the healing power of stories.

5 / DANCING ON THE BUND

As Isabel struggles for air between the downward pull of depression and a grey Shanghai sky, she finds moments of joy in the art of dance.

6 / ROGUE

When Brooklyn falls into the arms of a too-good-to-be-true bookshop customer, she is saved by her inner Agatha Christie.

7 / BLESSING

A personal essay that examines the two-sided nature of marriage – legal recognition and social sanction – and the elements of love and integrity.

8 / SELFISH (originally published in *Otherhood* by Massey University Press, 2024)

A light-hearted dive into the choice to live without children, and its contribution to the author's creative pursuits and mental health.

9 / TRANSPORTED

A love letter to Turkey that captures the friction between history and modernity against the backdrop of a faltering marriage.

10 / HAUNTED

A poetic remembering of historic and personal loss during the earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand.

11 / FLOURISH

A bibliophile finds blissful reprieve from suffering while studying book history at University of Oxford.

12 / READING ALOUD

Neurodivergence meets mental illness in an unlikely pairing of souls.

13 / WRITING LESSONS

Alice in Wonderland's 'Tea Party' plays out in the maddening academic landscape of a struggling PhD candidate.

14 / PIVOT

A disillusioned academic swaps civil service for 'van life' and criss-crosses New Zealand in search of peace.

15 / BLANK CANVAS

A lone outsider in a small country town, "starting again (again)", observes the contribution of place, home, and arts therapy to wellbeing.

16 / HERITAGE

A homage to ancestry, inheritance, and belonging that charts the author's efforts to put down roots and cultivate stability in the face of increasingly debilitating mental illness.

17 / THIS MEANS WAR

Immersion in the "culture wars" at New Zealand's oldest university is the tripwire that leads to the author's most crippling bipolar episode and belated diagnosis.

Chapter Outline continued

18 / THE BABY AND THE BATHWATER

A passionate gardener abandons her patch when depression converts to hypomania with devastating consequences.

19 / FAKE GRASS

Reeling from the latest hypomanic whirlwind, the author unpacks thirty years of self-sabotage, and recognises the need for medical intervention.

20 / THAT EXPLAINS A LOT

Inspiring encounters with a gentle GP, a multi-talented naturopath, a renegade researcher, a no-nonsense counsellor, and a mystic psychiatrist connect the dots for an unequivocal and liberating Bipolar Type II diagnosis at the age of 46.

21 / ALL THAT MATTERS

Empowered with the knowledge associated with diagnosis, the author commits to creative writing as a vocation and celebrates it as a force for healing.

22 / TYPICAL

Recalling memories of Thailand, the author reflects on the ability of a destructive mental illness to fly under the radar of general awareness, and compares her natural personality traits with the diagnostic criteria for Bipolar Type II.

23 / TOLERANCE

A personal exploration of hypersensitivity to environment from the perspective of geography, space, beauty, order, light, temperature, sound, time, and energy.

24 / JOY IS NOT NEGOTIABLE

An art lover floats exuberantly through a gallery into the arms of hypomania.

25 / 25 DECEMBER

The joys of the festive season stop short on the eve of the fateful 'family' day, and not for the first time.

26 / RÉSUMÉ REVISED

Reflecting on the impact of mental illness on her career, the author prepares to reinvent herself yet again.

27 / INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIPOLAR

A cheat sheet for managing Bipolar Type II during the phases of hypomania, depression, and euthymia.

28 / STANDARD TREATMENT

A personal take on talking therapy with clinical psychologists as standard treatment for Bipolar Type II.

29 / THE INTEGRITY CURE

The author's experience of intensive integrity coaching defies the generally accepted theory that bipolar is an incurable, chronic illness.

30 / TUNING IN

Free from mental illness after thirty years of suffering, the author doubles down on her intuition and contemplates her future.

Publication details

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