

Episode 80: Overcoming Mental Health Struggles To Manifest A...

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SPEAKERS

Kathrin Zenkina, Brennan O'Keefe



Welcome to the Manifestation Babe Podcast. My name is Kathrin Zenkina, and I'm a manifestation expert, master mindset coach, and a multiple seven-figure entrepreneur. I'm obsessed with helping you achieve everything that you once thought was impossible. If you're looking to massively uplevel your life, your finances, your relationships, your productivity, and success, you have come to the right place. My goal in this podcast is to help you see the infinite potential within yourself to be, do, and have anything that your heart desires. Think of this podcast as your weekly dose of mindset development to help you maximize who you are and where you're going. Leave it to me to provide you with tools, resources, strategies, and teachings that you need to manifest a reality wilder than your wildest dreams. I know we're about to have so much fun together, so thank you so much for pushing play today. And now, let's begin. Hello gorgeous souls. It is Kathrin from ManifestationBabe.com, and I am joined today by my husband.

- Brennan O'Keefe 01:25 Hello guys, how are we doing?
- Kathrin Zenkina 01:27

Brennan King O'Keefe. Today we are coming together to finally record a podcast that's been on our minds since about mid-October. It was when we were both in Dubai having a conversation in a car on the way to Abu Dhabi, where we really felt like it was our mission, duty, and obligation to help beautiful souls overcome mental health struggles, in order to manifest a more fulfilling life. To be honest, we kind of sat on this one for a while, because - as you guys know - when inspiration hits, it's highly recommended to do whatever it is that you're called to do as soon as possible. If you even wait a couple of days or weeks, then it just fleets away, you get busy, and things come up. If you're us, you have a wedding that comes up, or you have travel that comes up. So, finally, we are in between our wedding and our honeymoon. We decided to give these couple of days for us to get some of the work done that we really intended on getting done in 2018. We finally finished those loose ends in just the first couple of days of 2019. So, we're excited to record this episode. This is a very different and special episode because as you know - as a loyal listener and subscriber - I'm not typically an interviewer and I don't have interviews on my podcast. I think there's one that I interviewed you at this time, last year. I think I showcased our journey together in our relationship. But other than that, I've done zero interviews. So, if I am rusty at this, I apologize because I'm so good at getting into the flow on my own. Interviewing other people is something that I want to practice and get better at. So, who better to interview then Brennan O'Keefe, my husband. So, welcome to the Manifestation Babe Podcast. Are you excited?

- Brennan O'Keefe 03:32
 - Thank you so much for being here in our studio apartment that we're moving out of soon.
- Kathrin Zenkina 03:38
 Getting ready to move you guys! Finally upgrading our apartment situation.
- Brennan O'Keefe 03:43

I'm really excited to be here. This is something that I think is a very taboo topic in our society. It's not a taboo necessarily because it's bad. It's simply that people don't know how to approach it, and often times, people are speaking from a position without experience. Opinion without experience can be very powerful, but it's also something that lends to the ears. Who can I learn from that has actually gone through this? Who can I learn from that has had challenges, or who has had triumphs? I'm excited to share some that with you today.



Kathrin Zenkina 04:21

This is a really special episode because I know I've spoken about anxiety before and my struggles with anxiety. Brennan and I actually did a training for my MBA students called Anxiety Is My Gift. It was mostly me teaching it because I am someone who has anxiety on and off. Thankfully, I have used every single tool that I teach you guys to overcome about 90 percent of it. The last 10 percent is something that I channeled into my work in a very positive way because I started to see it as my gift. This is super related to this episode because it's not going to be about me, my journey, my anxiety, or my story, but I want to highlight Brennan with his journey around his diagnosis that he received in college. I'm not going to speak for Brennan, I'm going to let him share his story, what the diagnosis was, and how he overcame that label. I think it's so beautiful because I've personally been really inspired by you, babe. And you've been my emotional rock and my emotional support. To even hear the ups and downs that you went through and the low lows that you have come from, it makes me think that if you've overcome that, then what can we all overcome if we are just given the right guidance and the right tools? Before we begin and before I start asking Brennan questions - and yes, I have them written down over here because I want to make sure that I get through as much information and as many of his stories as possible - but before we get into it, it's super important that we give you guys this disclaimer. We are not mental health professionals. We're not here to advise you on your mental health. We're obviously not doctors. We're not licensed to give medical advice. Everything in this podcast episode is around Brennan's personal experience and the lessons that he overcame by being diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. We will be talking about his journey with medication and his journey with getting off of medication. We just want to make sure that you hear this from us, that you should not get off of medication without prior approval from your doctor. We're not here to tell you what's right or what's wrong. We're just here to share Brennan's journey. If your situation is very severe, and if you are in the midst of your own severe mental health struggle that you might need help far beyond this podcast episode, then make sure to seek some mental health professional, counselor or doctor to be able to help you get your feet on the right path. Once you feel more in control of that, then we believe that this podcast and the advice that Brennan gives to you and the lessons that he learned are going to be far more well received by you, especially since you're not struggling or are in the midst of that severe illness.



Brennan O'Keefe 07:22

I think the important thing, guys - and we're going to dig into this a lot more in-depth. But for me, it's one of my main takeaways for all of you. You are on your journey. No one can tell you what your journey looks like. We are absolutely not medical professionals; we do not intend to come across that way. We are not in any way the people who can be telling you what to do. I'm simply sharing with you my journey in hopes that it can inspire you to

become really transparent and honest with yourself about where you are. Perhaps, oftentimes, people will not be taking medication when they need to be taking medication. In that case, maybe the correct move is to take medication or to seek out help from a licensed professional. Conversely, if you perhaps have been walking hypnotized by someone else telling you what it is that you have or what it is that makes you the way that you are, there are certain situations where you can always be self-reflective. But, again, please do not get off medication without prior approval from your doctor. That is not the intention of this at all. This is not the medication episode. This is simply the self-awareness episode, where we can say to ourselves, "Wow, I am having this struggle and I need help," or "I'm having this struggle and there are other ways I can augment myself, including help," or "Maybe I'm blowing this struggle a bit out of proportion."

Kathrin Zenkina 08:55

Yeah, this will be the 'reframe' episode for you, beyond anything else. So, Brennan, why are you most excited to sit down and share your message on your mental health struggles today?

- Brennan O'Keefe 09:08
 You swear a lot on this podcast, right?
- Kathrin Zenkina 09:10 I do, yeah.
- Brennan O'Keefe 09:11

Because it needs to be fucking addressed. I know many people who are incredibly successful, who share these types of challenges, struggles, or medical conditions on their platforms. It's beautiful because awareness is so important. But you have to follow up awareness with the ears. You can't simply lead with the mouth. You need to be able to listen to people with these experiences, and not be coming from a place of a directive; not be coming from a place of what you should or shouldn't do, or how it should or shouldn't look. The truth is, we are walking energetic particles, and our brain chemistry is infinitely complex. That brain chemistry is not something that medicine has created a systematized system to make it easier to address these issues, but it's far from perfect. So, I'm really excited to share with you, because it needs to be fucking addressed and because I think that a lot of people get caught in believing what they hear, instead of listening to themselves and really looking at "What is it in me that is really empowering? What is it in

me that's disempowering? What can I do with that?" And that's why I'm excited to share.



Kathrin Zenkina 10:31

Boom! I know that a lot of my listeners already know you and who you are, because you show up in a lot of my images and stories, and we do have some content together in my courses. But there are always new people and I'm sure that most people don't actually know your story. You don't have to go really deep with it, babe, just tell us a little bit about your story. Especially, taking us back to when you were in college. So, this really started in your college days leading up to your diagnosis. What actually led up to your diagnosis, and where were you in your life?



Brennan O'Keefe 11:09

Sure thing, I started in High School, and I was a quality student. I was someone who was a leader in athletics; I was captain of the basketball team; I was also the band president. So, externally, I led a very successful-achiever style of life up to that point. So, I had high expectations for myself. Others had high expectations of me. I grew up with an amazing family who loved me unconditionally; it was a beautiful upbringing. But when I got to college, I actually had reached out all of the pre-college exams and tests in my senior year. I was taking full course load. I had always been told I had some sort of ADD, ADHD, or some sort of attention deficit as a kid. So, I tried medication when I was younger. I vividly remember a story my parents told me. They gave me Ritalin, and I would not shut up until around 4:00 in the morning. This is at 11 or 12 years old, and so my parents knew that this was not right; this is not how this should be. So, my parents really moved away from it, but as I matured, I became more in charge of my own decisions. My parents weren't going with me to medical appointments. I actually almost convinced myself of my need to use stimulants. Adderall was what I had initially begun taking at the end of High School. In High School, it served me very well: it augmented my energy, I was pushing through these exams, and studying late nights. And there's so much support; there's a network, your family, you live at home, and all these great things in High School. But when I got to college, I was all of a sudden inundated with this new world, to the extent that there was very little support. There was a lot of external support that the college would like you to see in your parents. But really, you're on your own. You're in charge of your own discipline, to do your homework and go to class, and whatnot. Around the same time, I experienced the breakup. Let's just call that a traumatic episode, I think that's the best way to describe it. Things went kind of gangbusters for a minute. To this day, I don't really know exactly what made me do what I did the way that I did. But I went almost immediately into quite a depressed state for about a week and a half, something I'd never been in before; I was not getting up nearly at all, making choices around drugs and

alcohol with my friends. I was kind of a big man on Campus in my own network of these young freshmen. Of course, this wasn't true. This was all my perception of it. But I perceived that people liked me and that I was cool and in charge. So, when I hit this depression, I became maniacal about upholding this image; this image of this big man on campus who has it all together. I created, in essence, this disparity between what I was actually feeling and what I was trying to show. So, what happened was that I would continue to take my Adderall medication. But with the depression, what I was doing is I was taking my Adderall medication later in the evening. This was making me stay up till 3:00 to 5:00 in the morning with anxiety, sweats, and a running mind. I was sleeping through my classes in the morning, and as you can imagine, this wasn't super conducive to being successful in school. To summarize things in short, I failed two classes and got pretty good marks in two classes - those two classes being the evening classes. However, I continued to self-sabotage myself with drugs and alcohol, staying up late and living this double life. I was completely ignorant of my situation, convincing myself that I was something I wasn't.

- Kathrin Zenkina 15:14
 Is this while you were depressed?
- Brennan O'Keefe 15:16
 The depression lasted for about a week and a half, at which point my psychiatrists basically said I experienced my first mania spike. I had hit rock bottom, and then through self-medication and self-sabotage, I created a manic cycle where I was staying up late and then sleeping in. I didn't feel depressed, but it was only because I wasn't paying

attention to the polarity between feeling really depressed and feeling very high.

- Kathrin Zenkina 15:46
 What led you to see a psychiatrist? Had you seen one before because of the medication since you were a kid?
- Brennan O'Keefe 15:52
 I had been in and out of therapy since I was a child. I am blessed that my parents were very helpful.

- Kathrin Zenkina 15:59 They're amazing people, by the way.
- Brennan O'Keefe 16:01 My Mom and Dad are probably the most loving people on the planet, no offense to

anyone else who's very loving. They supported me for years. They knew I had high energy and attention struggles. So, I had been in and out of counseling and through different therapists. By the time I was in college, I probably had already seen 10 or 11 therapists over a decade of my life, so I was very used to this. So, seeing a counselor was nothing new to me. But when I talked about my psychiatrist - I'm actually forward splashing the story to the next step - so long story short, I had a really hard time at school. I convinced myself I was fine, but I was not fine. When my grades came out, my parents said, "This isn't going to cut it, and no, you don't get a second chance." They actually took me out of school, and I had to go home with my parents, which kind of began the next chapter. So, without getting too much into that, that was a really challenging period for me.

- Kathrin Zenkina 17:05 When did you actually get the label?
- Brennan O'Keefe 17:08 I labeled myself after I left school because I talked to psychiatrists. I had built this persona for myself of being this big successful man on campus. And I was so ravaged by this experience, that I became entirely consumed to the point of almost psychosis of remedying what I had lost. Everything I was doing was to appear fine, at my best, amazing, and cool. That was all I was focused on, to get back to where I was at the cost of
- Kathrin Zenkina 17:56

first introduction to college.

When were you actually given Bipolar Disorder medication, or a label? Or was that something where you felt like, "These psychiatrists are telling me things that might lead me to believe this, and so, therefore, this must be my label, because I need an explanation for what's going on?"

doing things with morality, or at the cost of doing things from the heart. So, that was my

Brennan O'Keefe 18:13

That's a fantastic question for non-interviewer. For me, it began when I left school. I became certified as a personal trainer. That was very challenging for me, but I finally got what I needed to do together. That began something, that some of you may know. I did personal training for years after that as part of what I was doing. But it was really a dark time for me, where I was trying to find certainty in the opinions of others because I had lost everything. So, anything that could give me some semblance of certainty to get back to where I was, I grasped and held on to. So, I was making bad decisions. For example, I ran a business where I was throwing nightclubs for kids my age, where we rent a venue and hire security and a DJ. It was a very lucrative cash business, but it was absolutely playing into my mania and bipolar at the time. It wasn't really until that period after my first semester in school and leaving that I began to see psychiatrists. It became important to me to get a diagnosis from them to create certainty and get an explanation, so that I could find a solution to remedy all that I had destroyed - and not even internally. It was really to remedy what I destroyed in the eyes of everyone else, because I cared so much more about what everyone else thought of me than actually what was going on.

Kathrin Zenkina 19:51
Got it. What was your lowest moment, then? And how did you get through it?

Brennan O'Keefe 19:57

Oh, man, my lowest moment I think was probably realizing that I was leaving school. That might sound silly to some of you who have had incredibly traumatic experiences, but I think we're all here to share our relative experiences because there's power in community. There are people who have suffered immense pain, but for me, this was my rock bottom moment because it was everything I had dreamed of being taken away. I had no one to blame but myself, but I was so caught in a self-sabotage manic cycle that I wasn't even able to see that it was me. I lashed out at my parents and lashed out at the system. I felt like it was happening to me; like somehow, they were the ones who were delusional. In reality, I made everyone else accountable except the accountability that I needed to take myself.

Kathrin Zenkina 20:56

How did you get through that low moment? What was the first step? I want to really highlight your breakthroughs, because I've lived through your breakthroughs, especially much later in life. Guys, we're talking about a decade ago. We're married and we've only known each other for three years, so about a year into our relationship, I lived through

Brennan's biggest breakthroughs to where I can ask much better questions, as we get closer to the breakthrough. But I'm very interested to hear about what this label meant to you. How did it impact the meaning you gave to your life?

В

Brennan O'Keefe 21:40

So, I think what I will do in the course of telling this story is - there's a huge blip beyond this that I think is easy to skip, to really jump into UPW which is I think what we'll do. I think it's important to mention that at this point, in college, I was doing anything and everything to get back what I had lost. It was mostly because of the guilt and shame for wasting my parents' money, for feeling like I wasn't worthy or talented enough, or that I was stupid around my friends - all of these different self-sabotage ideas. I think the label came because it gave an explanation. So, at this period, I was doing anything and everything to appear to my psychiatrist and parents that I was at least experiencing enough normalcy; that I could survive through college and graduate. So, I began taking a litany of different medications, trying most of them to very disappointing results... until I found one medication. The irony of this medication - that we'll get to later on - is that it was horrible. It was a drug that literally dimmed my light. They say, "Don't let them dim your light." Well, this didn't dim my light; it broke the light bulb and cut the power of the building. It was something that I would take in the evening and it would basically knock me out. It wasn't Ambien, it's not like a sleep-aid, but it was a very powerful anti-psychotic drug that was meant to help people. It's actually an anti-schizophrenic drug, which is to help people quell voices in their heads. While I feel very blessed to have never experienced voices in my head, my brain is very visual. And so, I would experience restless nights with my brain flashing images to me at a rapid pace, and it would basically keep me awake. It was like my raw subconscious perpetually on overdrive. And so, that was really challenging for me. So, when I tried this drug, it stopped that. When I took this drug, and it stopped it and I could prove to my parents and psychiatrist that I was sleeping, all of a sudden - in NLP, we talked about the results and the outcome. It didn't matter that it was a crappy drug or that it didn't address my issues at all. I just got my outcome, which was, "I could sleep, I'm under control, I'm calm, I'm relaxed. Can I please go back to school and try to remedy my image that I care way too much about over everyone else?"

- Kathrin Zenkina 24:16
 I remember when we first -
- Brennan O'Keefe 24:19
 Can I add one more thing? I just want to add that that was really the moment when I

classified myself as being bipolar. It was when they were telling me, but when I found - okay, this inner work is not ongoing, guys. It's always ongoing. I think that when I said, "Oh my God, this works. Then I must be bipolar!" It wasn't "I must be bipolar. This works." It was, "If this works, then I must be bipolar and I'm getting what I want." Therefore, everything became wired to that. My identity became wired to that.

Kathrin Zenkina 24:54

I remember you telling me about this one particular counselor who finally started to listen to you and gave you the description saying, "Brennan, you're not bipolar because you told me that you had only one depressive episode in your life, and you've had many manic episodes." Tell me a little bit about what that opened you up to, and how that counselor started to shift your perception of yourself.

- Brennan O'Keefe 25:19
 Certainly. I think that we all have a box. One of the ways I describe when I coach Kathrin, or people on our retreats, whether it's in Bali -
- Kathrin Zenkina 25:27
 and he really does coach me, by the way.
- Brennan O'Keefe 25:30
 So, one of the things I love to think about is that we're always in a box. Even if we are open-minded, we always have a box. There's always some limitation to our mind. So, the people who really experience an unlimited mindset; the people who are really into this personal growth. Even Kathrin has a box; she's just constantly, perpetually tapping at it and breaking that box -
- Kathrin Zenkina 25:52
 And moving it -
- Brennan O'Keefe 25:53
 so that she can grow into a bigger box, and then she goes into a bigger box and then taps it again. So, what she's referencing is actually a breakthrough moment in my life.

 After years of being identified as bipolar and I did eventually graduate school, and for

years, I couldn't even feel proud of that because of the shame and quilt of what I went through. Glad to say that's not true anymore, but that was the case for years in my life. This counselor, I had been seeing - my dad actually. I found a counselor who was a very different type of counselor. He actually did not have an MD; he was not a licensed psychologist; he was technically a counselor. So, what he studied, he was fascinated with the side effects of drugs. Instead of taking something at a medical and pharmaceutical level, you would be taking a drug at a non-pharmaceutical level - so, you're taking a fraction of the amount that you would be taking to prescribe an illness. The side effects could benefit other things that you're having in your life. I bring that up because - it's unimportant to the story, but it is important to recognize this was a very different approach than what I was used to before. This was the first person in my entire life who, when I was describing my situation, I said, "Well, I'm bipolar," and he said, "No, you're not bipolar. You're actually unipolar, the way you described it." I was confused, thinking, "He just gave a name to it." But what he did was that he took my box, which was a bipolar box for a decade. He took a little pick, and he just put a crack in it. That was it. That was the only difference. He took my identity and he made me question it. That was massive in what happened. I look back to that moment and say, "Wow, I needed that." I didn't know at the time how impactful it was, but at the time, I needed it. It made me question if I was really as bipolar as I was determined to believe for a decade.

Kathrin Zenkina 26:27

I remember when I met Brennan, maybe two weeks into our relationship. Just from staying up late and texting each other, when you guys are crazy about each other but you're not living together so you text each other all day while you're at work. I remember you were working in a finance job. I was at home building a beachbody business. Then, I remember when you would get off of work and get off your - what was it? You were just training a lot

- Brennan O'Keefe 28:30
 - Are you talking about the medicine? When I ran out?
- Kathrin Zenkina 28:32
 Well, I just want to share a little bit about how I learned about you, and how you were on and off medicine; because it's very interesting that I didn't notice the difference between when you were on medication and off medication.

- Brennan O'Keefe 28:43
 This is really interesting, actually.
- Kathrin Zenkina 28:44

 So, I just remember Brennan at first. I was always amazed by how late he could stay up and how little sleep he could survive off of. I was just like, "Man, this guy could be a rockstar on one to two hours of sleep." I don't remember exactly what you said, but you said something like, "I don't know if you really knew the truth about me, if you would still be with me." I was like, "What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, there's a reason why I'm so energized. And there's a reason why I can thrive off of so little sleep." And I said, "What are you talking about?"
- B Brennan O'Keefe 29:22 That's a Pandora's Box, oftentimes.
- Kathrin Zenkina 29:24
 So, he said "Well, I'm actually bipolar." I don't even remember what I responded, but it didn't affect me at all because I was just so enamored by you. I saw you as such a normal individual and, of course, you were medicated at the time, so there was something helping you kind of control that.
- Brennan O'Keefe 29:41
 Your reaction was not what I expected.
- Kathrin Zenkina 29:44
 Yeah, I said something like, "Oh, that's cool. That makes sense." I remember you were taking a pill every night to help you sleep. Was it to help you sleep? Was there a daytime pill and nighttime pill?
- B Brennan O'Keefe 29:58 Yes, yes, I was.



Kathrin Zenkina 29:59

I remember you were taking pills when you would sleepover at my parents' house. I remember there were two particular moments when Brennan forgot to take his pill. One of them was when he came over to my house for the night and forgot his morning pill. We were driving to the mall, and I remember him being so spaced out and distracted. It was almost like there was so much stimuli coming at him to where he couldn't hold a conversation with me. He had to pay attention to the cars in front of him and the cars around him. If he were to focus on me, he would stop driving well. That was dangerous, of course. So, I remember we couldn't have a normal conversation. I thought, "Wow, this is so fascinating. This is very interesting." Yet I still chose not to see him differently. I just said, "Okay, he just needs medication, and that's fine. I'm going to be open to that." I remember another time when we were sitting and eating dinner at sushi. You could not talk to me; we couldn't hold a conversation because you kept looking behind you, because you kept feeling energy behind you. And now I know that you're an empath, and Brennan still gets this way. But he learned how to control it in a more natural way, because he learned pretty much what it is. He's an empath to other people's energy. But, at that time, you explained it as, "I forgot to take my medication." I also remember you going to the counselor and you telling me that you are unipolar and not bipolar, even though that doesn't exist in the DSM. Is that what it's called, the DSM? The book of diagnoses that psychologists and psychiatrists refer to? I'm not entirely sure of exactly what it does and doesn't - There's no actual label, but jump in.



Brennan O'Keefe 31:43

I want to dive into this really quickly. If you think about your brain, if you just close your eyes and visualize your brain, what is your brain? It is the weirdest, alien-looking damn thing in the world, floating in fluid, with electrons that we sell fire ourselves. How on earth could all of us have the same brain? I'm going to borrow from Tony because I love what Tony says. I've actually had the honor of seeing some direct messages on Instagram lately. One, in particular said, "Wow, Kathrin, I love you so much. I was listening to Tony Robbins, I turned it off. I was listening to Gary Bernstein, I turned it off." These are people that have really impacted me and Kathrin's lives. But this woman says, "They're not the same, I want to listen to you." So, we're honored to have that. But Tony, I just want to say this. He says we have a two-million-year-old reptilian brain. It is not wired to make you happy; it is wired to make you survive - - and just work properly - - and just do things, survive, and breathe, or whatever. But if you really think about it, our brains are so infinitely complex. We are all so different. We may look at each other and see similarities but if you really think about it: if your brain is THAT unique, and the chemistry that makes it up is THAT unique, then does it really make sense that diagnoses of your brain's psychological conditions are really tailored to you? Or is it the inverse? Is it that it's easier to classify

mass groups of people by their similarities, rather than by their uniqueness? I want to bring that up, because for me, it's been so impactful just realizing. I used to talk a lot about brain chemistry. My dad, psychologist, and psychiatrist all used it as a buzz word. Brain chemistry inherently is not the same. It can't possibly be the same. I think Kathrin brings this up at a really valid time, which is this guy testing my thoughts of this unipolar brain and taking me out of the box. It makes you wonder, "What really is bipolar anyway? Does everyone that has bipolar act exactly the same? Do they have the same thoughts? Do they have the same life experiences that led to their initial -"

Kathrin Zenkina 34:13 Low points?

help people.

- Brennan O'Keefe 34:15
 I believe they call it the episodes. Any of you that have experienced this may even have trauma associated with your first episode. It's a buzzword that they use for it. None of us have the same chemistry. So, in some ways, it's the easiest and most efficient way to try to
- Kathrin Zenkina 34:40
 I think it's that there are many different ways to help people. I think that's what it comes down to. It's that medication is one option, and it's a great option when you need it. But your help can go beyond that.
- Brennan O'Keefe 34:56
 I want to jump in and say something because this is something I've been dying to say the whole episode; it's one of my intentions from this episode.
- Kathrin Zenkina 35:03 Go for it.
- Brennan O'Keefe 35:04
 I think it ties into where we are in the story very well. I may have come off medication before I was ready.

- Kathrin Zenkina 35:10

 Well, let's not get into that until we share how you got off medication because that's a very -
- B Brennan O'Keefe 35:14
 but I was off medication.
- Kathrin Zenkina 35:16
 When we met?
- Brennan O'Keefe 35:17 No, not when we met.
- Kathrin Zenkina 35:18

No, not yet. We're still on when we met. So, I just remember Brennan going to a counselor. I remember just thinking, "He just has these needs, and that's totally fine." I was so open to it, and I'm very happy that my parents raised me to accept people of different genders, colors, races, and backgrounds. I didn't even know that was a thing until I got older, until I was much older and witnessed what goes on in the world; the judgments that people have against each other; that one thing is a taboo and another thing isn't. I just didn't see the world that way because of the way I was raised. I was so grateful for that and I'm so grateful for my parents. I don't think our relationship would have gotten this far if I did judge you for being bipolar or thinking, "I don't want to be with this you quote-unquote crazy person. I don't want my kids to be quote-unquote crazy. What if this is genetic, and we have kids together? Then I have to deal with this quote-unquote crazy husband and crazy kids." I just did not see it that way, and I'm really grateful for the way I was raised. I remember being so open. You did take medication in the first year of our relationship. You were on medication. When we moved to LA, we made sure that you went to a pharmacy and got a year's supply since you didn't know when you were going to become employed and have insurance. I remember it was so important for you to have your medication. Then came this breakthrough moment - and I'm going to let you speak about this, of course. Well, talk about your first UPW; first of all, how you even got around to UPW, and what happened at UPW that helped you see your mental illness or mental health in a completely different light.

Brennan O'Keefe 37:05

If you don't know our story, there's lots of our story about how we moved to LA and how I had a hard time finding a job; how Kathrin was building her beachbody business and working at a desk of a home health agency, and all this stuff. So, if you want to dig into that, there are other episodes on that. There are a lot of posts about that. But I really think we're jumping and leaping forward. When we moved to LA, I had a hard time finding a job. I was not making a lot of money. I was catering, and that was a very challenging thing for someone who was relatively educated and had high expectations of themselves -

- Kathrin Zenkina 37:38
 and had a good job in Seattle.
- Brennan O'Keefe 37:44

So, the first week we moved to LA, Kathrin had shared with me I Am Not Your Guru by Tony Robbins. That documentary did not blow my mind as much as everyone probably thought it may have. What it really did was make me very skeptical of Tony Robbins. I thought, "Who is this loud, arrogant guy changing lives? He's very salesy, Kathrin, be careful! Stay away. Are you sure about him?" And I was very anti-Tony.

- Kathrin Zenkina 38:15

 And, honestly, your opinion on the Law of Attraction, manifestation, personal development -
- Brennan O'Keefe 38:21

Yes. So, that was my box, and I Am Not Your Guru on Netflix - if you have not watched it, you absolutely should - all that did was that it took my box of "Hell no, Tony Robbins" and put a crack in it and said "Maybe Tony Robbins." And so, over the next few months in LA, things were hard. I was not getting the job opportunities I was looking for. I thought it would be easy, and it was not. Kathrin became really focused on us going to UPW. As I was struggling, this became more and more appealing to me as perhaps a solution to my problems. I think honestly that's the truth.

Kathrin Zenkina 39:02
I think it's because you witnessed so many changes in me, that you thought, "Okay, maybe

there's something in here for me too."

Brennan O'Keefe 39:09

I also thought it might fix my problems. I think it was both. I think I was delusional that it would fix my problems. But that was part of it. I thought, "Tony will inspire me, I'll get a job, everything will be good, and I'll make money." So anyway, when we went to UPW San Jose, we drove Kathrin's Jetta there.

- Kathrin Zenkina 39:30
 We could not afford to fly.
- Brennan O'Keefe 39:32
 We could not afford to fly. We bought bread at the store and made sandwiches at Tony Robbins'.
- Kathrin Zenkina 39:38
 We stayed in a shared Airbnb.
- Brennan O'Keefe 39:42

We stayed in a shared Airbnb for the journey. We did not have a whole lot of resources when we went there. I was very overwhelmed, but one of the most important moments that we decided on is that we were going to sit separately. Ironically, they gave me a different color tag. So, I was in the very front row of the VIP section, and Kathrin's in the Executive section, so of course, she was scoping me on the spot. Jump forward a little bit. Tony was a very transformational experience for me. I saw things with my eyes.

Kathrin Zenkina 40:20

Can I share a text that I got? From this text forward is where I saw the most transformation in Brennan. It was as if his box - the old one - someone just took it off his head and tossed it away. It was literally this text that I got. We were in the audience and I think it was after Day One or maybe after Day Three - it was a Tony day. I received a text and I asked Brennan to send me his breakthroughs as he's having the breakthroughs. I told him to tell me how it's going because I was super curious. Now, knowing that I like to take people to their first UPWs, it's one of my hobbies and passions.

- Brennan O'Keefe 41:02
 Well, you've taken about 120 people now.
- Kathrin Zenkina 41:04
 Yeah, I've taken about 120 people to their first UPW but you were my first. I remember receiving a text, and Brennan in this text says, "Oh my god. Tony Robbins is a manic mofo."
- B Brennan O'Keefe 41:23
 That was not the language I used!
- Kathrin Zenkina 41:26
 You totally did! You said, "If Tony Robbins can stand on a stage for 15 hours, run up and down, and be so pumped up with energy, why am I seeing this as my downfall?"
- Brennan O'Keefe 41:41
 And I didn't even get there yet. That was a moment that I had later on.
- Kathrin Zenkina 41:44

 But you did say, "This is my gift." I remember that. And, boom, I think this was the pivot point. In my opinion and from what I've witnessed in your journey I could be wrong but I remember that being the pivotal point.
- Brennan O'Keefe 42:01
 So, Kathrin's right, absolutely. But it was when we did the mantras. Kathrin has done so many. She calls them different things; we have affirmations, mantras, hypnosis, meditation, and all those things. But it was actually writing down my rules and what I believe to be true of myself. I struggled with this, but I was so honest with myself. Because I was sitting separate from Kathrin, I really had the support of my group of random people. I was sharing, crying, and being vulnerable, raw, and honest. I realized in some of the closed eye exercises that my bipolar isn't my disorder; it's my gift. That lit a beam of light through my body that I carry with me until now. It shifted everything for me because what I realized was that I was defining myself by my limitations for my bipolar, instead of

counting all the ways that make me absolutely exceptional and phenomenal because I have high energy, big dreams, and because my mind doesn't stop; because I have these visions and pictures; because I'm outgoing; because I'm such a people-person. There's a huge list of all the things that makes me so proud of myself. And I wasn't giving my brain chemistry or bipolar credit to that. I was only seeing the ways that limited me, not the ways that it augmented me. That was a huge pivotal moment for me in my journey,

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Kathrin Zenkina 43:38

I think that you got off medication pretty much then, right? I think that was the last day you took a pill. You must have had a lot of faith. It just blows my mind that it was so - not sudden, but you were so empowered by this new identity and by this new meaning to the extent that you were like, "I don't need medication because this is no longer my disorder. This is my gift." I know based on the first time that we met, seeing you off medication, you were literally the same person on and off medication from that point where I actually did not see a difference between Brennan medicated and Brennan off medication. It was almost as if that identity shift put you back into control. Would you agree with that?

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Brennan O'Keefe 44:29

Absolutely. This is where for me it becomes... For those of you that are listening now, I'm honored and humbled to share my story with you. But I think it's so important for you to recognize that this is my journey and my experiences, and this may not be you. There may be people out there right now who are thinking, "God, the pain of this world right now is pressing down on me; I feel like I'm carrying this darkness on my back; I feel it at my throat." This is not simply a place to say "what worked for him will work for me." As we said, this is not a medical diagnosis, I think that what you can realize is that anything that you've identified with will drive your life. For example, if I were to advise someone who was feeling the way that I did on medication, I would not tell them to get off medication. I would never do that. It's not my right and it's not my place. I can't imagine what they've been through. I cannot advise them on their journey. No doctor could, even though doctors are allowed to. But what I would say to them is this: What makes you amazing? And how much time are you spending focusing on what makes you amazing? How much time and energy are you putting into the things in your life that are making people love you, appreciate you, and want to be around, absorb your energy and give you love? I guarantee you, if you're feeling anxious, you're not feeling anxious 100 percent of the time. Even the worst cases of feeling anxious - let's say in the worst case you're feeling 99 percent of the time. But that 1 percent? What is going in that 1 percent of the time you're not feeling anxious? Write it out. What does it look like? What do you feel like? What happens? What's your experience of life? What are the feelings that you feel? What are

the emotions that you feel? How is that different from the other 99 percent?

Kathrin Zenkina 46:42

- and how can you expand on that?

Brennan O'Keefe 46:44

So, instead of having this become an episode about medication, that was never the intention. The question is, this is always a mindset game. If you're on medication, you should stay on medication and the only one that could tell you otherwise is your medical professional. It is not anyone's place to tell you otherwise, to judge you, be cruel to you, or even say, "Wow, it's so great that you're taking medication!" It's no one's business. What this is about is exploring the identity that has been conditioned into you. You can do that on medication. I recommend that you do it on medication, if you're on medication. If you're not on medication and this is too painful to explore, perhaps it's time to seek some support from someone - whether it's a psychiatrist, doctor, counselor, coach, or friend. It's important to be able to explore these spaces with a community who cares about you and is there to support you. It's always something in all of us that makes us feel good, that has an empowering future, and has something to look forward to.

Kathrin Zenkina 47:50

Something that I tell my audience all the time is that manifestation is a science in itself. There is a science to manifesting what you want, but there is an art to getting certainty. Certainty is a very important piece in the manifestation process. When people reach out to me - a lot of people with anxiety - I feel called and able to speak about anxiety because it's something that I've struggled with. However, I have a hard time when people with severe depression, bipolar or whatever the label that they identify with, reach out to me; I have a really hard time giving them advice. But one thing I have said is that their form of certainty is just going to be different from people who don't struggle with those, quote-unquote, mental illnesses. Would you agree with that? And what kind of advice would you give to people who are on a manifestation journey, but feel like this is their downfall? Or feel like this is the obstacle that's going to keep them from being successful? What piece of advice would you give to the people who do identify with some sort of mental illness?

Brennan O'Keefe 48:52
Oh, man, what else could this mean?

- Kathrin Zenkina 48:55
 Is that the question you'd ask yourself?
- Brennan O'Keefe 48:56
 I think that it could be something. First of all, I do agree with you. Second of all, I think that when you're in this darkness, it's really hard to see anything else. We've experienced these people in our lives, and we've experienced it ourselves. I'm speaking to my story about this. I've absolutely felt like things are hopeless. The thing that's important to remember is that this is not an episode for when you're hopeless, to be like "Well, stop taking your pills,
- Kathrin Zenkina 49:29
 You need that certainty to feel empowered enough to make a change.

boom! You are now wired to be identified with "I have anxiety."

it's just fine!" Well, it doesn't feel fine! So, that's not the answer.

- Brennan O'Keefe 49:33

 That's the answer that someone would give you if they're not listening to you. People will give you advice when they're not listening to how you're feeling. The only person that can really make that decision for you is you, but what I hope to empower and inspire in you is that there is self-reflection that maybe this isn't as permanent. Maybe this suffering isn't necessary. Maybe there's something more out there for me. If I spend the time to say, "How have I created this identity even more than anything that's inherently in me?"

 Because I think that's so missed. Everyone has anxiety, but it's not clinical anxiety. The difference is if you feel anxious thoughts, and you go ask someone who's a professional, "Why?" And they say, "Well, you might have some anxiety. Here is some medication." Then
- Kathrin Zenkina 50:39
 It's "my" anxiety. All of a sudden you own it.
- B Brennan O'Keefe 50:42
 It becomes a part of everything that you do.
- Kathrin Zenkina 50:45

It's a filter.

Brennan O'Keefe 50:46

You are able to do things in spite of your anxiety, and you're not able to do things because of your anxiety. You're able to do things in spite of being bipolar, and you're not able to do things because you're bipolar. The most important question you have to ask yourself is, "Is this true? Or is this something that maybe I told myself enough or heard from others enough, that I made this my truth and my belief system?" Maybe that's not the way it has to be.

Kathrin Zenkina 51:21

I really love that, babe. What would you say is your number one trick to getting certainty? Or your number one manifestation hack? Because you really are a Master Manifester. I don't know if I told you guys, but Brennan in a casino is a force to be reckoned with. He's just so good at manifesting money and connections. He's such a great networker. There are so many elements that he's manifested into our lives that I can't do. There's a lot that I'm kind of in charge of and I'm really good at manifesting; and then there's a whole other slew of items and different criteria that he has manifested into our life. What would you say helped you become that master manifester, regardless of your challenges or what you used to believe is the reason why you're never going to be successful? What helped you become successful, and what would you say your number one tool is?

Brennan O'Keefe 52:20

I think that recognizing your weaknesses is the most important thing that you can do; being real with your weaknesses, but not seeing them as worse than they are. Being really honest with yourself about what you struggle with, but then immediately after, being super honest with what you rock at. You don't spend enough time focusing on what you're good at or even thinking about it. Often times people focus on "What am I not good at?" That is the energy. The casino thing is funny because for so many people who are classified as bipolar, a casino is like warning signs galore. We've even received DMs about that, asking "Are you concerned with Brennan being in the casino?" The tie in it for me is this: I could stay up in the casino until 6:00 am. I do actually, sometimes. But the thing is, I do not rely upon the casino to provide me with anything. I have learned to recognize that if I am not consciously walking through moments where I appear more manic, that I can make decisions that can hurt myself or Kathrin. That's really important, and I'll give you a really simple example. When I win money at the casino, I put it upstairs in the safe and literally lock it. And she can testify to that! Because I know that maybe if I win more, I

might continue to play and then I could lose it. Instead I say, "I know myself. If I won 1000 bucks, then let me just take 100 out and go play for another two hours. But there are 900 bucks. We're good, we're up. It's all good." So, that's just a minor example. I think manifestation-wise, if we're going to come back to the broad question is, what really makes me good at manifesting is how in tune I've always been. For a long time, I didn't recognize it. Kathrin mentioned I'm an empath; I pick up on people's energy like crazy.

Kathrin Zenkina 53:52
When in Vegas... From a mile away.

Brennan O'Keefe 54:45

It used to stress her out, but now she's learned to just ask what's going on instead of asking what's wrong. I'll just say something like, "A dad is feeling stressed in the airplane with his child!" She's looking at me, thinking, "What are you talking about?" But I pick up on the energy. I think I was always aware of this energy, but I didn't treat it as though I was playing with it. I treated it as though I was just observing it. Now I'm more intentional about how I see energy and others and where I put mine.

Kathrin Zenkina 55:19

What really spoke to me is knowing your weaknesses and then really playing off of your strengths; it is powerful, because I've noticed that the moment you stopped trying to make your weaknesses better and putting so much focus on your weaknesses. When you focus so hard on your limiting beliefs and your weaknesses, for the sake of trying to improve them, sometimes unconsciously what we end up doing is we end up manifesting more of a reality in which our weaknesses and limiting beliefs are present. So, it's good to acknowledge them and know yourself, and it's good to think, "This might be a limiting belief that I want to take a look at." But living in that place, you are just going to create more of that reality. When you start to shift your focus to "What are my empowering beliefs, and how can I strengthen them?" Or "What are my strengthsm and how can I strengthen them?" With Brennan, it really is his energy. It really is his voice and his intensity. It really is your kindness, babe. You are one of the kindest and most heartfelt individuals I've ever met. You will go out of your way to help anybody, and you give people the best advice. I've just witnessed you at my retreats. Even at our wedding, we ended up coaching a couple of people, both of us included. Just seeing how much care you have for others, that energy just returns to you and you just find your way through anything that you want to manifest because you started to focus on your strengths, and not your weaknesses.

- Brennan O'Keefe 56:49
 Totally. I feel like it's a great opportunity to talk about 80/20. What's the 80/20 rule?
- Kathrin Zenkina 56:55
 Pareto's principle? 80 percent of your results come from 20 percent of your actions.
- Brennan O'Keefe 57:06
 Yes, exactly. It's like focusing on what you're best at. It's so important to recognize your limiting beliefs, but you will be working on your limiting beliefs -
- Kathrin Zenkina 57:15
 for the rest of your life.
- Brennan O'Keefe 57:16
 So, if you just spend all your time there, you'll just be rolling in a dull drum, rather than stepping out of it and just recognizing it.
- Kathrin Zenkina 57:26

 So, let's wrap up here. Brennan and I can go on for hours, but I want to make this as actionable for you as possible, where you get inspired. You're like, "Whoa, this is not my obstacle. This is my challenge, but there are also so many gifts within this challenge." The biggest takeaway that we want you to get out of this is how to reframe your mental health, mental illness, struggle, or whatever you call it. We really want to show you that this does not prevent you from manifesting your dream life; this will not prevent you from succeeding, unless you focus on all the reasons why you can't succeed because of this.
- Brennan O'Keefe 58:12

 Also, just take a moment and recognize that no one can tell you how to take on your journey no one. That's so important to me because I spent so much time listening to other people. This is meant to reframe this journey for you, so that you can make multiple and everyday decisions about how to live your life, the choices that you make, the choices to view yourself a certain way, and your choices to view your challenges in a certain way.

 Do this in the hope that you can find a place where you can say, "Wow, I've got challenges

- we all do. But I'm exceptional anyway, and I am working on my challenges. But I know my strengths, and that's what's driving me exactly to where I want to go."

Kathrin Zenkina 59:04

Boom. So, I have two more questions for you, babe. One is, what are you most proud of in your journey so far?

Brennan O'Keefe 59:15

It's a great question. I think I am most proud of recognizing that I'm no different now than I was then; I just gave it a different meaning. I still stay up till 2:00 am. I am still loud and hyper as hell. I walk into a room and Kathrin will look at me and she'll say, "Your energy is owning the room." And that's a mention to me to just cool it. What I mean by this is that I'm still the same person. I'm so high energy. I'm so intense. I'm loud. I'm absent-minded. I have visions.

Kathrin Zenkina 59:54
You're not for everyone, just as I'm not for everyone too.

Brennan O'Keefe 59:57

Yeah, exactly. But I think it's important to recognize that I am exactly the same as I've always been. I just found a way to say, "This is what makes me incredible. This is what makes me, ME," instead of viewing it through a lens of, "God, you're so loud. You're so insomniac." I mean, I could look at it with all these negative viewpoints, but instead I've chosen to make it mean "You are exceptional because of your gifts."

Kathrin Zenkina 60:35

I love that. So, I'm going to kind of put you on the spot, just because a million and a half people have been asking Brennan where they can find more about his journey and content. I don't know if you're ready for that, babe. But, either way, you do have an Instagram and a Facebook -

B Brennan O'Keefe 60:53
You guys are welcome to find me.

Kathrin Zenkina 60:54

You do show up on my social media. So, if you guys watch my stories, Brennan will show up at least once a day. But where can people find more about you and your journey? Where can people follow you?

Brennan O'Keefe 61:06

I spend a lot of my time on social media and on IG as Brennan King O'Keefe - that's my full name.

- Kathrin Zenkina 61:12
 That's Instagram, by the way. Brennan King O'Keefe, no apostrophe.
- Brennan O'Keefe 61:18

That's a place for me to share bits and pieces of me and Kathrin's personal brand. It's something that's beautiful. Not all of us have the same ambitions in terms of being a personal brand. But for me, it's beautiful to watch that unfold. I do share quite a few things about my journey there. And we'll continue to do more of that.

Kathrin Zenkina 61:45

And you are very inspiring, let me tell you that. People ask me all the time, "When is Brennan speaking on stage? Where is his podcast?" But I have been learning over the last two years to not pressure anyone into doing anything that they don't want to do. Just like he overcame medication in his own time and way, I will let his own journey unfold beautifully. As of now, Brennan is - basically, you are chief... What do we call you? COO? Chief?

- Brennan O'Keefe 62:17
 We're partners in business, but I call myself COO, yes.
- Kathrin Zenkina 62:22
 What does COO stand for? Is it Chief Operations Officer?

- B Brennan O'Keefe 62:27 Operating Officer.
- Kathrin Zenkina 62:28 Chief Operating Officer.
- Brennan O'Keefe 62:29

We're not even a corporation, so none of these titles even mean anything, but it's just an easy way to do it. We are partners in business and life, and it's a fantastic existence.

Kathrin Zenkina 62:37
So yeah, auvs do me a favo

So yeah, guys do me a favor. This is just coming from me purely. But if this episode has helped you in any way, shape, or form, tag us both and also feel free to send a DM to Brennan, leave a comment on his Instagram, or even send him an email if you feel called to (Brennan@ManifestationBabe.com) and just share with him how impactful he's been with this episode; how his tips and tricks, the story that he shared and what he overcame. If you found any bit of this episode helpful to you in any way, shape, or form, please let us know. Take a screenshot of this, share it in your story, leave a review, and send him a message. And please share this with a friend. Maybe you personally aren't struggling with mental health, but you do have a friend or family member who would appreciate you sharing the link to this episode. Whether you're on iTunes, Spotify, or Pod Bean, you can find this episode across all three platforms.

Brennan O'Keefe 63:41

I do want to bring up one last thing, even though Kathrin had a beautiful segue there. I want to bring up - I know the question will be asked. "How do I support someone in my life dealing with these challenges, even though I'm not experiencing them?" The truth of the matter is the only thing that you can do is share your love and support. Because everyone - just like medication - is on their own journey. They're on their own experience of life. And if you tie their decisions to your sense of guilt, shame, worth, judgments, opinions, or experience, you not only will be hurting them, but you'll be hurting yourself. So, my advice to you is to simply be there for them, to be supportive of them, and to share with them exceptional levels of love and support, because they may not be at the point. Everyone has their rock bottom at the moment that it makes sense for them. That is a painful part of addiction cycles, something that here in the USA we are experiencing; an opioid epidemic that is touching thousands or millions of people. Every addict has a rock bottom,

and every mental illness is going to have a rock bottom.

Kathrin Zenkina 65:00

Every life and business - I had many rock bottoms with anxiety, and all areas of my life. In my health journey, I struggled with anorexia, bulimia, and orthorexia. With every journey comes a rock bottom, but as you said, with the support and love, I believe that we can all overcome anything.

Brennan O'Keefe 65:29

The painful truth is this. The painful truth is that my parents offered me immense love and support. The people at my college offered me immense love and support. My exgirlfriends offered me immense love and support. My sister offered me immense love and support. Everyone in my life that cared about me offered me immense love and support. And only I could find my life in the timing that it was meant to. So, be easy on yourself. Love those who you care about and support them. Help them grow; help give them the things that they need at that time, but don't judge them and don't get frustrated with them. They're just doing the best that they can with the resources that they have at this part of their journey. You can only hope that in time they will be ready, but that's not on you to carry the shame or guilt. You're only there to do the best that you can to support them and love them. For anyone that's listening and going through this, please acknowledge that if you're currently in a mental health challenge, there is so much hope for you. But please also tag anyone that you appreciate for helping you and reaching out to you - even if it wasn't something that felt good; even if you lashed out at them; even if you got mad at them or blocked them on social media; whatever it is. If there's someone who was trying to help in your life and now you're having a moment of reflection, realizing, "Damn, I was so pissed and hurt. I was so mad. I hated you, but you were trying to show me love and support." Please let them know, because only at the end of all this will they really realize that we're all just trying to live together and help each other.

Kathrin Zenkina 65:37

Mic drop, Brennan! I love you so much. You have helped me in so many ways in my own journey. You've been my emotional rock; you've been my biggest inspiration and I cannot wait to see what comes your way - not just our way - but your way in 2019, and for the rest of your life. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you so much for sharing your words of wisdom. I know this episode is going to be a game-changer and that it is going to help a lot of people. Thank you for helping me co-create this episode and being the star of this episode, helping me interview people, and also being so open and honest with your

journey. So, thank you.

- Brennan O'Keefe 67:48
 I love you and I'm honored by you.
- Kathrin Zenkina 67:51

Alright you guys. Have a fantastic weekend, night, day, morning, whenever you're listening to this. Hope you have a fantastic day. And again, share with us what your breakthroughs are and let us know how impactful this was. Love you guys so much. Bye. Thank you so much for tuning into today's episode. If you absolutely loved what you heard today, be sure to share it with me by leaving a review on iTunes so that I can keep up the good stuff coming your way. If you aren't already following me on social media, come soak up the extra inspiration on Instagram by searching @ManifestationBabe, or visiting my website at ManifestationBabe.com. I love and adore you so much and cannot wait to connect with you in the next episode. In the meantime, go out there and manifest in magic.