

An Unquiet Mind Book Summary, by Kay Redfield Jamison

by Allen Cheng

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Want to learn the ideas in An Unquiet Mind better than ever? Read the world's #1 book summary of An Unquiet Mind by Kay Redfield Jamison here.

Read a brief 1-Page Summary or watch video summaries curated by our expert team. Note: this book guide is not affiliated with or endorsed by the publisher or author, and we always encourage you to purchase and read the full book.

Video Summaries of An Unquiet Mind

We've scoured the Internet for the very best videos on An Unquiet Mind, from high-quality videos summaries to interviews or commentary by Kay Redfield Jamison.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0cZsDK0Shc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAC6jC4giu0>

1-Page Summary of An Unquiet Mind

Overall Summary

In *An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness*, renowned psychiatrist Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison describes her lifelong struggle with manic-depressive illness. The memoir tells the story of how she came to understand herself better through love, academia, and introspection. It begins by describing Jamison's childhood near an Air Force base in Washington D.C., as well as her early interest in medicine demonstrated by volunteering as a candy striper at a local hospital when she was young. As a teenager, however, her moods became more difficult to manage—but after visiting a nearby psychiatric institution for the first time when she was fifteen years old, she grew too afraid to admit what was happening to herself or anybody else. At eighteen years old, after experiencing her first true manic episode while attending UCLA (University of California Los Angeles), where she studied psychology on scholarship while working part-time as a research assistant in one of her professor's laboratories, Jamison enrolled in the university's doctoral program in psychology. After graduating from UCLA with two master's degrees and marrying a sensitive French artist whom she met there, though still struggling with symptoms that mirrored those associated with bipolar disorder, such as cycling between depression and mania, which often distracted her from schoolwork but were attributed instead to other factors like stress or anxiety about relationships or work problems, Jamison decided it would be best if they moved back home.

In Part Two, Kay describes her descent into madness while she was an assistant professor at UCLA. She

experienced increased productivity, confidence, sexual desire and joy during mania but suffered from mental breakdowns that were debilitating. Her brother helped her financially and one of her colleagues also knew about the situation and suggested she see a psychiatrist. After a particularly violent episode of mania, she began seeing a psychiatrist at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute although she feared losing her job if anyone found out about it.

Kay struggled with lithium and didn't take it as prescribed. She experienced strong side effects, felt rebellious, and was told that she should be able to manage her moods on her own by her sister. Eventually, Kay attempted suicide by ingesting an entire bottle of lithium pills but recovered after being admitted to the hospital.

Kay tried to kill herself, but she survived. Her mother came to help her recover. Kay had a long road ahead of her, and it was difficult for her, but with the help of friends, family members, colleagues and doctors she began to heal. She sought a tenured position at UCLA because she wanted security and stability in life. To get tenure she worked hard over several years by proving that she could handle clinical work even while suffering from mental illness. Eventually Jamison got tenure and felt like a great triumph not just over the sexist academic system that made it so hard for women to succeed in getting tenure but also over parts of herself which were holding back progress towards success

In Part Three, Jamison writes about a relationship she had with David Laurie. He was the psychiatrist for British Royal Army Medical Corps and he helped her through her depression. They became very close and fell in love, but when she told him about her manic-depressive illness, he reacted kindly to it. She dreamt of living happily ever after with him but then he died suddenly from a heart attack. This caused Kay to retreat into work and push herself too hard until she decided to take a sabbatical to focus on healing herself.

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