

“As you start to walk on the way, the way appears.”

— Rumi

Drunk on
Too Much
Life

A FILM BY MICHELLE MELLES

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DRUNK ON TOO MUCH LIFE

DVD CHAPTERS

MICHELLE MELLES & PEDRO ORREGO



1) VOICES AND VISIONS FROM THE DARKNESS

Joseph Campbell wrote that "the psychotic drowns in the same waters in which the mystic swims with delight." This quote is fundamentally relevant to this film.

When our daughter Corrina was 21 years old, she began to suffer greatly. She seemed catatonic one moment, then terrified the next. She spoke about being evil and the cause of the world coming to an end. As a family, we had no idea what was happening to her or whether she was ever going to emerge from that state. We were overwhelmed and didn't know who to turn to for help; that's when we rushed her to the hospital.

Psychiatrists told us that Corrina was experiencing "psychosis" which they described as an extreme psychic state that affects the way a person's brain processes information and makes it difficult for them to distinguish what is "real" and what is not. They told us that people in psychosis see, hear, and believe things that don't correlate with reality, or have unusual and often persistent thoughts, emotions and behaviors that make it difficult for them to function, and for others to reach them. They described psychosis to be like "a fever" that can result from an underlying complex mental illness such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. About 3 out of every 100 people will experience an episode of psychosis in their lifetime. Psychosis also usually first appears in a person's late teens or early twenties.

We were told that psychiatric drugs were the only way to get her out of that state, and that there was a strong possibility that she might need to be on them for a long period of time – perhaps her whole life. When we asked the young doctor, who was treating Corrina if there was another way to treat what she had besides medication – she answered “no there isn’t.” Biological psychiatry speculates that mental disorders are brain diseases or chemical imbalances and emphasizes pharmacological treatment to target presumed biological abnormalities.

As a family, however, we began to feel that doctors focused on treating Corrina’s symptoms in a cold and clinical way with meds,



while seemingly ignoring the life circumstances that might have led her to become so overwhelmed in the first place. Doctors also dismissed the visions, voices and fixed ideas Corrina was experiencing as meaningless white noise, without considering that they might have

personal meaning to Corrina and hold clues to what it was that she was struggling with.

Corrina was put on many cocktails of medications, and though some of them helped her return to her everyday life for a while, none of them were effective over the long term. For Corrina at least, some elemental things were not being addressed with the biomedical approach. As a family we decided to start *Drunk on Too Much Life* (DOTML) as an attempt to offer a new way of understanding the unusual psychic and emotional states that Corrina has gone through. Stepping outside of the mainstream mental health system and avoiding diagnostic language, we sought out peer support workers,

community-based mental health services, clinicians, poets, artists, and doctors that were telling another story about hearing voices and visual hallucinations. We found that by reconceptualizing her condition and understanding the role of trauma in developing mental illness, Corrina began to accept herself and blossom.



2) ART, MUSIC, & POETRY

For an unsettling period during Corrina's first hospitalization, she was barely verbal and seemed very disconnected from her family and the world. We desperately tried to connect with her in any way we could. We tried reading her books, telling her stories and sharing anecdotes – but we found that language sometimes made things worse. Corrina was interpreting everything through the lens of her “delusions”, and our words took on unintended and terrifying meanings in her head. We also learned that it was impossible to “talk her out” of her extreme state because, essentially, she was not grounded in the same reality as we were.

One day, Pedro brought out his guitar at the hospital and started to sing. Suddenly, Corrina began to sing along with him and we saw her whole demeanor change radically from one moment to another. She smiled, her eyes brightened and her whole body seemed to relax. Many of the “clients” – all young people in their early twenties – came into Corrina's room to listen to the music and/or sing. Music, art, and poetry are such powerful forces because they are not rational; they are creative; they are spiritual, and they are emotional. They go deeper into our being and psyches than the rational. Corrina wandered around the hospital psych ward encouraging all her new friends – fellow “clients” locked up in the “Early Psychosis Unit (EPU)” to create poetry together.

In our experience, there is a link between madness and creativity. There is clearly an inspiration, a lateral way of thinking, an opening, and a lack of inhibitions associated with "madness" or alternative states of consciousness where the person sees connections everywhere. And that state can be fertile ground for anything creative.

Corrina's art, music, and poetry opened a mystical, colorful door that allowed us to step outside of the positivist, materialist worldview that explains all irrational experiences and even consciousness itself as something that emerges from brain chemistry and neural connections. We sought to bring back the meaning and mythology, art, music and poetry to our understanding of madness.

At its core, DOTML is a celebration of the human spirit and the vast range of human experience. The narrative spine of the film is our family journey to reconceptualize the dialogue around mental illness from a limited conversation about madness as a debilitating disease to a broader conversation that reaffirms and celebrates Corrina's unique and poetic way of being in the world, despite her struggles. We learned that healing is a creative process and must address the whole person (mind, body and spirit) as well as the broader family, community and societal context in which the person lives.



3) MONSTERS & MEDICATION

As parents, we began to feel that Corrina was a science experiment. She was given multiple rounds of numerous medications: anti-psychotics, mood stabilizers, drugs for mental acuity, drugs to help her sleep, drugs to relax her, antidepressants, an anti-seizure medication, and drugs to counteract the side effects of the primary drugs. There is an eye-opening moment in this chapter of the film where Corrina shows all of her pills and shares how difficult it is to be on so many

medications. There seemed to be a relentless pursuit of psychopharmacological treatments, and the medications had horrible side effects. In a half a year alone, Corrina gained close to 60 pounds. Her prolactin levels were so high, doctors worried that her bones would start to disintegrate. She didn't feel herself. She had difficulty reading and she couldn't concentrate. It became clear that doctors and parents want to "cure," but the drive to fix the problem can be part of the problem.

We live in an era where more people are taking psychiatric drugs than ever before. The number of adults and children who struggle with their mental health has skyrocketed over the past thirty years, in spite of the fact that the spending on pharmaceutical medications to address the problem has increased 80-fold.

Should we begin to think of mental illness as an experience, or set of experiences, rather than a disease? Yes, mental illness can be debilitating, life-changing and sometimes life-threatening but calling it an illness is only one way to think about it.



4) EMBRACING THE TREE OF LIFE

For Carl Jung, one of the fathers of psychology, The Tree of Life represented the self in a process of psychological growth – planted in the Earth, its roots reach down through the terrestrial darkness and shadows while its branches stretch up through the celestial, star-filled heavens.

Corrina often hugged trees upon being released from the hospital and her art was filled with the image of the Tree of Life. As I say in the film, we turn to the Tree of Life when we need renewal – when we are looking for a new creation story. The Tree of Life is a symbol and mythology that has appeared in countless civilizations throughout

history. Indeed, it is a universal archetype. These symbols provide alternative perspectives on scientific rationalism and offer new ways of thinking about our interrelationality, our interdependency, and the significance of trees to human life, consciousness and spirituality across cultures and through time.

Throughout the making of this film and now launching it into the world, I see my role as the film's director and Corrina's mother, to be like a hub tree giving my daughter and the film love and positive energy.



The film is rooted in nature and the mycelial network that supports and connects the forest. It is rooted in grassroots peer support networks, community mental health care, the recovery model of care, and the healing potential of the arts. DOTML seeks a new story with different language for mental illness, from one that describes a debilitating disease or a chemical imbalance to one that reaffirms and celebrates Corrina's unique way of being in the world and the importance of connection, community, creativity, and greater meaning.

This is a story that celebrates Corrina's self-determination and capacity to develop resiliency. As she says herself, quoting Rumi, "As

you start to walk on the way, the way appears." And recovery is not a straight path to being cured but a crooked and bumpy journey and series of small awakenings.



5) JOURNEY TOWARDS CONNECTION

When the biomedical model does not lead to healing, how can we come to reconceptualize mental illness so that recovery is possible? This is the central research question of *Drunk on Too Much Life*.

Doctors do acknowledge that personal and social circumstances and life events are important, but for decades, we have been primed to believe that medicine can fix our ailments and that it is entirely possible to cure "mental illnesses" with a pill. We want a quick fix. The chemical imbalance theory in mental disorders has been widely publicized for many years although it has now been shown to be a fallacy.¹ When we emphasize the individual biological causes of mental illness, we do not have to put the work into the impact of personal, systemic and collective traumas, and the cultural, political, and economic factors that shape and influence our lives, emotions and psyches. It is not simply our own individual neural connections that create a healthy mind. Mental anguish is not a private problem suffered by damaged individuals.²

Corrina, who was rapid cycling from one extreme state to the other, and in and out of hospitals, had to leave University where she was studying psychology. She was suffering and was disconnected

¹ Joanna Moncrieff, Ruth E. Cooper, Tom Stockmann, et al., "The serotonin theory of depression: a systematic umbrella review of the evidence," *Molecular Psychiatry*, July 20, 2022. See also <https://www.joannamoncrieff.com>

² Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Alresford, Hampshire, UK: Zero Books, 2009).

from herself and others. She needed connection and grounding. We began practicing QiGong and Sifu Rupert Harvey guided us as a family, teaching us how movement and energy are connected to the brain, body, mind and spirit. Balance happens on multiple levels, connecting left and right sides of our brain, and connecting the physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, psychological, and greater consciousness. He teaches Corrina about mindfulness, how to release self-guilt and let go of the pressure to achieve.

Corrina's aunt Elena and grandmother Manena have been integral parts of our familial forest of connection. They have been loving, supportive, and have made sure that Corrina never feels isolated or that nobody is listening to her – no matter what state she is in. They have been invaluable to Corrina's recovery.



6) SHAMANISM AND MADNESS

In this hyper-rational, positivist moment – it can be hard to talk about psychic visions and experiences that cannot be explained through traditional logic and reason. It is clear, however, that in contemporary cultures around the planet people who experience visions and hear voices are embraced and valued – not thrown into psychiatric institutions. We noticed that the more Corrina (and those around her) feared and rejected her visions, the scarier and more unbearable life circumstances became for her. As a family, we started to encourage Corrina to think of her voices and visions as another way of experiencing the world, understanding herself, and possibly gaining insights that other people do not have access to.

According to Carl Jung, the figure of a serpent is an emblem of the shamanic experience, ascending from the shadows to the spiritual plane. One sees the serpent in Jung's imagery of the Tree of Life

and it appears often in Corrina's artwork, and throughout the film's animation. These archetypal symbols helped us understand that Corrina's psychic states, her visions and her voices were not simply a result of a biochemical or neurological malfunction.

Is there a connection between shamanism and psychosis? Albert Powers (Assistant Professor at the Yale University Department of Psychiatry and Medical Director of the PRIME Psychosis Research Clinic at Yale) and Philip Corlett (Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at Yale University) show that psychics who appear to inhabit shaman-like roles are largely indistinguishable from those people diagnosed with psychotic illnesses who hear voices. They state that approximately 13% of people in the world's general population hear voices.³ Considering that schizophrenia has a prevalence rate of only 1%, it is clear that individuals with a so-called psychotic disorder are only a portion of those with auditory or visual hallucinations. Powers and Corlett argue for a continuum of severity from odd and unusual experience, through shamanism, to psychosis.⁴

All the participants in DOTML firmly believe that in spiritually-based cultures there is much more recognition and encouragement early in life for people who have visions and hear voices. If people who hear voices and see visions lived in these cultures, their extreme psychic states would not result in "mental illness" and they would not be labeled as "sick".



³ Albert R. Powers, Philip R. Corlett, and David A. Ross, "Guided by Voices: Hallucinations and the Psychosis Spectrum," *Biological Psychiatry* 84, no. 6 (2018), e43-e45.

⁴ Albert R. Powers and Philip R. Corlett, "Shamanism and Psychosis: Shared Mechanisms?," *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, vol. 41 (2018): e83.

7) MADX AND LIVING WITH YOUR VOICES

As a family, we began learning more about the mad underground and the value of community-support systems and peer support. We met Kevin Healey at a MADx event at a downtown Toronto pub. Originally from the UK, Kevin is charismatic, articulate, lucid, brilliant, and speaks his mind. He is iconoclastic and laughs easily. Kevin co-founded MADx and writes:

MADx is about this question...

What does it take to free ourselves of others' ideas of who they would have us be?

MADx is about being human – and about the spirit it requires of us to be human in a world that sometimes seems designed to negate and crush that spirit.

MADx is about being real.

MADx is about performance based events in which we can come together, use our voice and witness each other, hear each other, connect.

MADx is about voice – we create performance-based spaces in which you can find and use yours and where we can witness each other doing that.

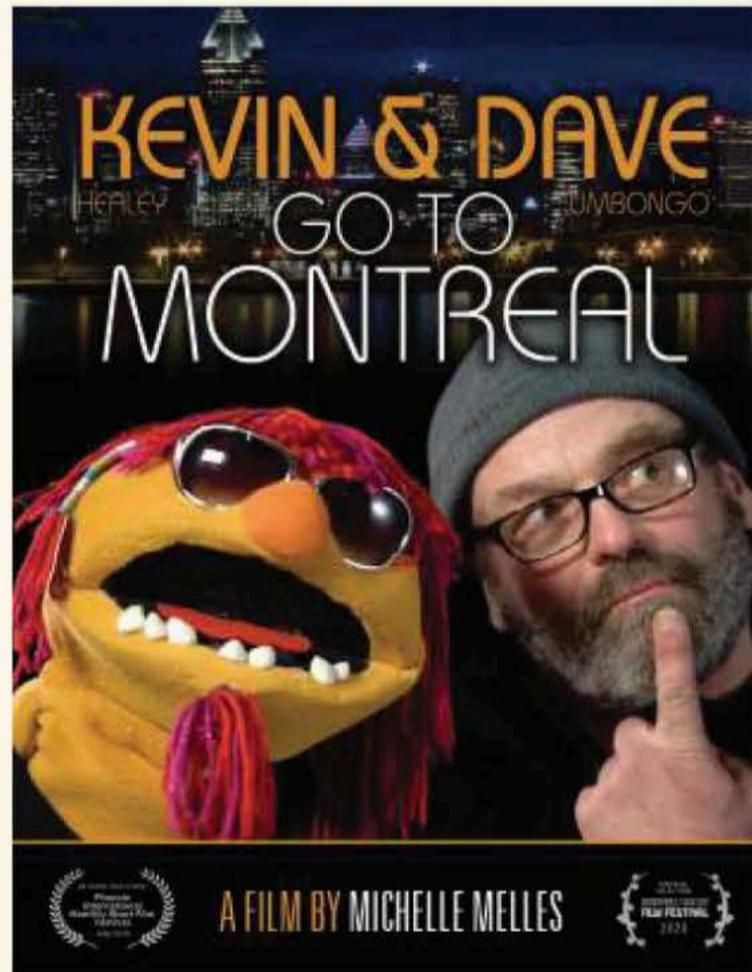
MADx is a grassroots, community organized space. We want everyone to feel they can join in the fun...

MADx aims to create a space in which we can be real, be seen, be heard, and be felt – and witness each other.

MADx aims to create spaces in which we can find and use our voice – with many voices and many ways of voicing.⁵

⁵ Kevin Healey, "About MADx" MADx online, accessed August 1, 2022, <https://madx.ca/about-madx/>

For Kevin, hearing voices is a normal human experience. He hears multiple voices, each with their own personality or presence but “Dave” is the voice he hears most often. Dave (whose last name is Umbongo) describes himself as a “quantum phenomenon” and he has come to emerge as a cool-looking puppet that looks similar to the wild-eyed “Animal” from the Muppets. Dave, who is seemingly quite outspoken, has his own Facebook page, twitter and YouTube accounts. Kevin (and Dave) introduced our family to the Hearing Voices Movement (HVM), a peer-run movement that successfully challenges the medical framework of mental health by asserting that hearing voices has meaning within the context of a person’s life experiences. The HVM is a recovery-oriented, participatory mental health organization that promotes understanding, validation, and empowerment for people who hear voices. My short film “Kevin & Dave Go To Montreal”



(included in the DVD extras) follows Kevin (and Dave) as they go from Toronto to the World Hearing Voices Congress in Montreal in October of 2019 where Kevin is hosting a puppet-making workshop he calls “Carnival de Voix” – a creative and powerful way to understand and give voice to one’s voices. Kevin meets the co-founder of the Hearing Voices Movement, Dr. Marius Romme who argues that voice-hearing should not be seen as a symptom of psychiatric illness, but part of the human condition to be accepted and made sense of.



8) POETIC SPARK THAT CATCHES FIRE

At our heights we may find ourselves capable of creating music, art, words, and inventions which touch people's souls and shape the course of history. At our depths we may end up alienated and alone, incarcerated in psychiatric institutions, or dead by our own hands.⁶

This chapter shows Corrina relapsing and Kevin giving her peer support in the hospital. Like the rings of a tree, each time Corrina goes into the hospital, and gets help from her various peer support workers, she grows stronger and more resilient. She becomes more self-aware.

The hospital is useful because it offers Corrina a place to rest, and medications that can allow her to catch up on much needed sleep, but someone like Kevin who has similar lived experience to Corrina, can offer her hope. He can share insights and tools that helped him get through similar hard times and, most importantly, reassure Corrina that things really CAN get better.

Unfortunately, our society still seems to be divided into two camps - you are either "for" or "against" the mental health system - "for" or "against" medication. We believe in self-determination and polyphony. As a family our shared journey was one that embraced

⁶ The Icarus Project, founded in 2002, not only critiqued the terms and practices central to biomedical psychiatry, it also inspired a new language and a new community for people struggling with mental health issues in the 21st century. The Icarus Project believes that humans are meaning makers, that meaning is created through developing intrapersonal and interpersonal narratives, and that these narratives are important sites of creativity, struggle, and growth. The Icarus counter narrative and the community it fostered has been invaluable for people around the world dealing with psychic diversity - particularly for people alienated by mainstream approaches.

Sascha Dubrul, "The Icarus Project: A Counter Narrative for Psychic Diversity," *Mad in America*, January 7, 2012,

<https://www.madinamerica.com/2012/01/a-counter-narrative-for-psychic-diversity/>

the principles of empowerment, hope, recovery, collaboration, identity, responsibility and meaning in life.



9) WHO'S DRIVING THE BUS?

The American writer, activist, and clinician Sascha DuBrul, who co-founded the Icarus Project, seeks to create a vibrant social and political movement that has the wisdom and reverence for the human spirit and understands the intertwined complexity of mental health and social justice.⁷ Part of that vision is creating a new narrative surrounding what gets called mental illness. The original Icarus Project Vision Statement says, "Defining ourselves outside of convention, we see our conditions as *dangerous gifts to be cultivated and taken care of* rather than seen as diseases or disorders needed to be 'cured' or eliminated."⁸ DuBrul also says, "I don't take psych drugs to manage my mental illness, I take them to control my superpowers."⁹

The scientific language surrounding "mental illness" is just one way of thinking of ourselves and there are literally thousands of years of philosophy, art, music, and poetry all related to the human condition

⁷ In DOTML, I chose not to go into depth about the intertwined complexity of mental health, race, gender, class, and epistemic injustice. I do want to say, however, one of the main participants in my film Shawn Pendenque was put in prison before he was given access to mental health care. The label paranoid schizophrenic is much more commonly given to black men while the label of borderline personality disorder is more commonly given to women.

Randy A. Sansone, and Lori A. Sansone, "Gender Patterns in Borderline Personality Disorder," *Innovations in Clinical Neuroscience* 8, no. 5 (2011): 16-20.

Robert C. Schwartz, and David M. Blankenship, "Racial Disparities in Psychotic Disorder Diagnosis: A Review of Empirical Literature," *World Journal of Psychiatry* 4, no. 4 (2014): 133-140.

⁸ Sascha DuBrul, in DOTML, 2021.

⁹ Ibid.

and what it means to be mad.¹⁰ By reducing the stories we tell about these experiences to diagnostic language, we do a great disservice to ourselves and people who struggle. As the poet Jeanette Winterston says, "language is not something we speak; *it speaks us.*"¹¹ From words come our thoughts. Alternative stories, alternative forms of stories, and different languages create alternative worlds. DuBrul argues that there needs to be a clearer distinction between the usefulness of psychiatric medications on the one hand, and, on the other, the limitations of biological psychiatry that reduces the complexity of human experience and behavior to chemicals and neurotransmitters.



In biological psychiatry, Corrina has no power in this story, no agency to heal. DOTML shines a light on the extreme sensitivity, and creative expression contained within states of madness. In our world, madness is "the other" but when we shift our understanding and

¹⁰ Sascha DuBrul, in recorded discussion via Zoom for DOTML, August 2020.

¹¹ Natalie Loveless, "Haraway's Dog," *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2019), 24.

change the story of what gets called “mental illness”, we make room for difference, vulnerability, and change. We make room for the complexity of human experience.

This chapter also introduces viewers to a very helpful therapeutic method called Internal Family Systems – a model of psychotherapy that sees the mind as naturally multiple, or composed of discrete subpersonalities – each with its own unique viewpoint and qualities. These multiple parts are trying to get our attention, and underlying them is a person’s core Self. IFS therapy aims to heal wounded parts and restore mental balance. So, our aim is to have our core Self driving the bus and not our freaked-out little kid parts.



10) GABOR MATÉ

In 2019, on our family journey, we sat with the speaker, author and family physician Dr. Gabor Maté in his house in Vancouver for a one-on-one family therapy session, on-camera. Dr. Maté was honored by the Order of Canada for his work on addictions, trauma, the mind-body unity and the necessity of social change. Sitting with Dr. Maté, our family began to uncover the trauma that lay beneath Corrina’s more extreme psychic and emotional states and Dr. Maté made us aware of how extremely sensitive Corrina is. Essentially, Dr. Maté believes that Corrina was like a lightning rod that absorbed the family trauma and the family pain.

As difficult as it was, Dr. Maté provided our family with valuable insights and tools for moving forward. If the “psychotic drowns in the waters that the mystic swims in with delight”, trauma could be one of the reasons they experience difficulty swimming. If childhood trauma was a factor in Corrina’s painful psychic and emotional experiences, then, as parents, we wanted to take responsibility. As Kevin has

reminded us over and over, “a person struggling is in pain.” And this pain, and a person’s relationship to trauma, is often connected to their extreme sensitivity. As Dr. Maté tells us in the film, “it’s very difficult to know what to do with such a sensitive child. Much less has to happen to a highly sensitive person to hurt them immensely.”¹²

As a therapeutic method, we also embraced autoethnographic filmmaking – our own creative way of working through struggle, pain, confusion, anger, and trauma. Similar to narrative therapy, we were able to make sense out of a difficult situation, to maneuver through uncertainty, and creatively attempt to make life better for our family, and hopefully for other families as well.



11) WHAT DOES RESILIENCE SOUND LIKE?

Trauma is the Greek word for “wound” and wounds can heal. Trauma is also disconnection and disconnection, dehumanization, and disempowerment are the root causes of mental illness. A struggling person can develop resilience if they remain connected – connected to their core Self, to others, to the world, community, family and/or friends.

“Resilience grows as we heal our wounds,” Kevin says in the film.

The central recurring visual metaphor of DOTML is the tree, embedded in the mycelial network (the wood wide web) of connection, support and nourishment. There is no better example of resilience in nature than trees with their branching nature and connections to the mycelial network beneath the surface. Resilience is a major theme in DOTML and resilience is not a solo project. It is not up

¹² Dr. Maté’s interview in *Drunk on Too Much Life*, 2021.

to the individual to become resilient: we exist in a community. Like a person, a tree can only be as strong as the forest that surrounds it.¹³ "Their well-being depends on their community," writes Peter Wohlleben, in *The Hidden Life of Trees*, "and when the supposedly feeble trees disappear in the forest, the others lose as well."¹⁴ Trees synchronize their performance so that they are all equally successful. Like trees, our connectedness with nature and our community makes us stronger.



12) FINDING MEANING AND PEER SUPPORT

Like the mycelial network, DOTML is a film that works from the organic roots up, not top-down. It rebels against the straight walls of the asylum and the patriarchal figures associated with institutionalized insanity. It rebels against the monologue on mental illness and celebrates polyphony. It shines a light on the meaning behind madness.

DOTML is a love letter to Corrina and to peer support workers.

At its most basic level, peer support is when a peer with lived experience, of what gets called mental illness, someone like Kevin Healey, Shawn Pendenque, or Sascha DuBrul, helps and supports another peer who is struggling with their mental health, or family member who has someone who is struggling.

Peer support is about normalizing what has been named abnormal because of other people's discomfort.

¹³ Peter Wohlleben, Tim F. Flannery, S. Simard, et al., *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate: Discoveries from a Secret World* (Vancouver: David Suzuki Institute, 2016), 17.

¹⁴ Ibid.

It is based on the belief that people who have faced, endured, and overcome adversity can offer useful support, encouragement, hope, and perhaps mentorship to others facing similar situations.

The values and processes of peer support are recovery, empowerment, and hope. Peer support is about helping individuals develop the skills they need to take charge of their lives, and help change mental health services so that they can better contribute to the recovery process.

It's the simple idea that friends make the best medicine.

Traditional therapeutic relationships are different from peer relationships. Peer relationships have more of a mutual, reciprocal nature and include friendship and an equal power base. There is mounting evidence that peer support is associated with: reductions in hospitalizations for mental health problems, improvements in social support and in people's quality of life. DOTML introduces audiences to the peer support movement in a personal way: through Corrina's story. She seeks out the advice of peer supporters including Shawn and Kevin, seeks a welcoming, inclusive community at Stella's Place with young adults, and, by the end of the film, desires to become a peer supporter.



13) MADNESS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY, NOT THE END RESULT

While Corrina was in a psychiatric institution, Pedro was diagnosed with cancer. One thing that became very clear to us early on was the stark differences in the treatment they both received from the Canadian health care system. At Princess Margaret Hospital, one of the world's leading cancer treatment centers, Pedro's treatment was caring, thorough and holistic while Corrina's treatment in psychiatric

units was inconsistent and limited. Pedro had access to two brilliant oncologists, a nutritionist, a therapist; a whole caring and devoted team, while, most of the time all Corrina had access to was a bed and various medications. The contrast was eye-opening and extremely sad.



We must say that in the time since Corrina entered the psychiatric system in 2014, conditions, and access to various programs have improved somewhat (at least in Canada). But we have a very long way to go before people are offered a holistic, caring approach that doesn't strip them of their humanity.

Madness is not an identity but an emergent state of being, like identity itself. Madness is relational and interrelational. Madness is

biology. Madness is consciousness. Madness is poetry, art, music, and performance. And madness is us. Kevin Healey writes:

Mad as the natural state of the universe

What is madness but the human form of entropy? The chaos, creativity, entropy, resistance, refusal to conform and comply that is judged by society as not useful; the wild and the wildness within us that we fear most? Entropy and madness are both necessary – without some chaos nothing can change. And there is plenty in this world that needs to change so we best get used to some madness.¹⁵

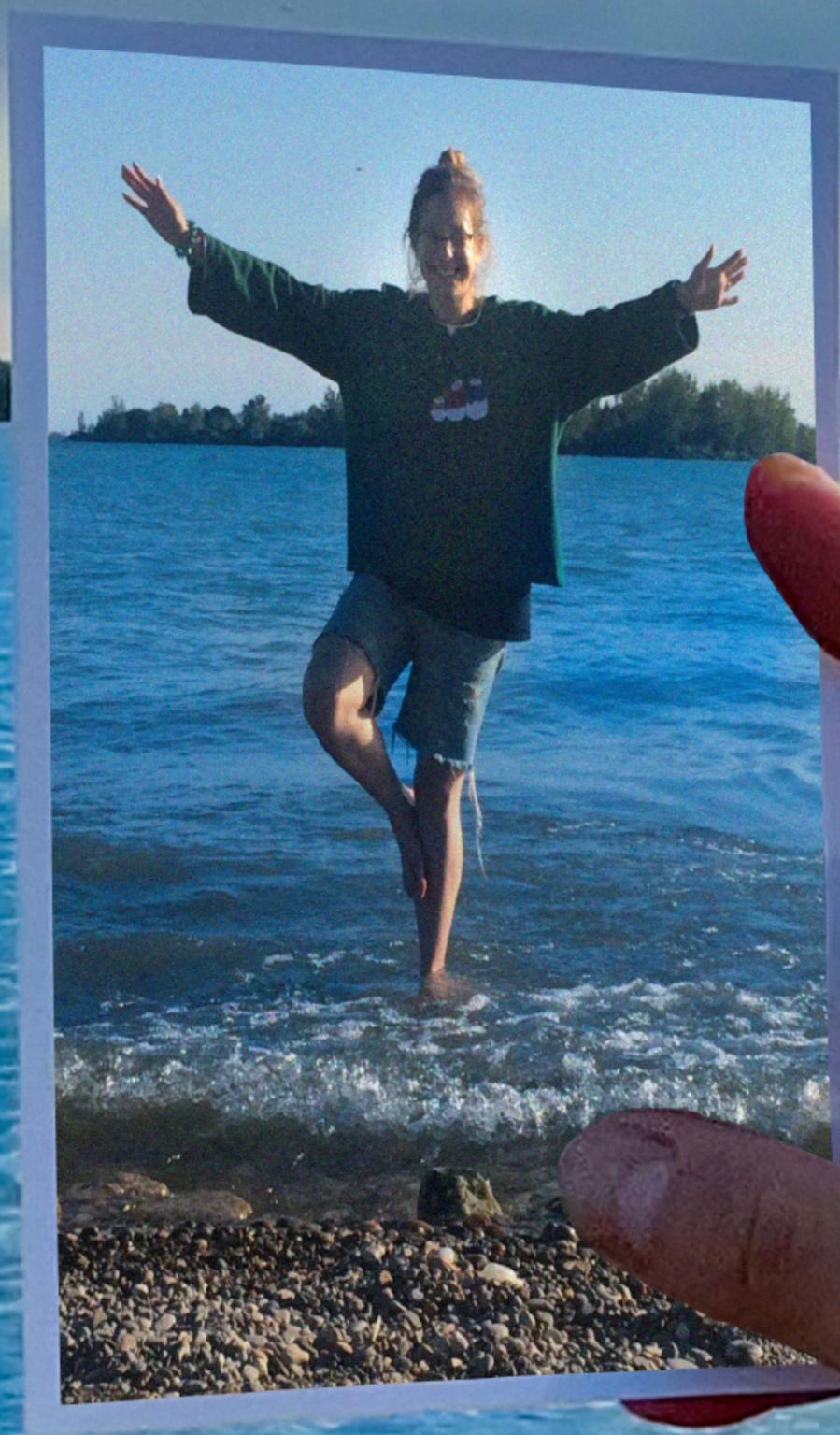
These ideas become part of how we reconceptualize “mental illness” in the film. But to be clear, and to quote the poet Jeanette Winterson, “Going mad is the beginning of a journey, it’s not supposed to be the end result.”¹⁶



¹⁵ Kevin Healey, “Mad, innit?,” recovery network: Toronto, March 27, 2017, <https://recoverynet.ca/2017/03/27/mad-innit/>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

A Film By Michelle Melles



Drunk on too much Life

A PARALLEL VISION PICTURES FILM

