

Turning Adversity Into Change

Internet author makes a living on her own terms

BY KATHERINE KOVACICH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Julie Fast took the disorder that once prevented her from functioning in her daily life and turned it into the catalyst for her successful business.

Despite being a woman with lofty aspirations, Fast had been hindered by her bi-polar disorder for more than 15 years. Hopes to be a Broadway singer, a screenwriter and a novelist were thwarted by immobilizing depression and manic episodes.

After taking numerous medications and experiencing even more negative side effects in an attempt to fix her condition, Fast decided she'd had enough.

"I wrote a treatment plan that pretty much got me my life back," she said.

Dealing with shady publishers in an attempt to get her work

published led her to just do it herself. She'd heard of selling downloadable books on the Internet and took a shot at it.

"Within the first month I had \$3,000 in sales. It hasn't stopped since then," she said.

Fast benefits from pay-per-click advertising offered by Google. When a person searches for "bipolar disorder," her website is listed on the side of the page. She only pays when people click on her link.

"I get almost 30,000 people a month to my website," Fast said. "Right now I make 15,000 a month in sales."

Beyond her two download books, "Bipolar Happens! The Health Cards System for Bipolar Disorder" and "The Health Cards System for Depression," Fast has had her works physically published. "Loving Someone with

Bipolar Disorder: Understanding and Helping Your Partner" is with New Harbinger, and "The Health Smart Bipolar Disorder Organizer" is with Penguin Press.

The Internet, though, makes it a lot easier than constantly writing query letters and sending out transcripts, she said.

"What people don't know is that agents and publishing acquisitions editors are on the web looking for people to write books every day," Fast said. "If you have some kind of self-help book or really amazing product that you're selling on the Internet, agents and editors are looking for you."

Fast also speaks to crowds about her business endeavors and will do so again on May 17 at a Women Entrepreneurs of Oregon event.

"There's No Such Thing as Adversity" will be presented at the Embassy Suites Hotel at 319 S.W. Pine St. Tickets range from \$25 to \$30. For more information, visit www.juliefast.com or www.oregonweo.org.



Author Julie Fast will be speaking on May 17 for the Women Entrepreneurs of Oregon.



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Optimism for Self Employment Minority business owners cite success

Minority business owners overwhelmingly indicate they are pleased to be small business owners and are optimistic about the future paths of their companies, according to a special report produced by Wells Fargo and the Gallup Organization.

Eighty-seven percent of minority business owners surveyed say they are satisfied being a small business owner, and nearly 90 percent expressed

feelings of success.

These findings are based on a Gallup survey of about 1,000 minority business owners across the country conducted from August 2003 to December 2004.

"The confidence shown by minority business owners is already translating into personal and business success, which bodes well for the future of minority business owners."

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The confidence shown by minority business owners is already translating into personal and business success, which bodes well for the future of minority business owners and the overall small business segment. - Hadley Robbins, Wells Fargo