

Mind Over Matter?

Family means everything to me. My mom is my best friend, my dad is my role model, and my sister is my soul mate. They are my core, my reason for living, all my stars and all my moons. So when my sister started lashing out on all of us by having major temper tantrums and anxiety attacks, we were all taken aback. I was frightened and was unsure of how to help her. I have a very Stoic point of view; I believe to always stay calm and in control of your emotions, and be patient with your life because things will eventually work out exactly how they are supposed to. So when my sister would complain to me about feeling incredibly anxious, depressed, or angry, I would just tell her to relax. "Mind over matter," I would say, "You are in control of your emotions!" This would just amplify her emotions, resulting in her yelling at me, calling me cold or numb. That's when I wondered, are all things truly a case of "mind over matter?" Or are some things truly out of our control?

After taking my sister to the doctors and getting multiple tests done, we discovered she is bipolar. But, with the right medications she would be much better. My sister now has to take a "happy pill" every morning; otherwise her emotions will get the better of her. When she takes her pill, she is happy as a clam. No one would know she has a minor mental illness. But when she forgets those pills, the littlest things will set her off. This is still very hard for me to grasp. Like Marcus Aurelius stated, "It is within your power, always and everywhere, to be content with what the gods have given you, to deal justly with people as you find them, and to guard your thoughts against the intrusion of untested or inchoate ideas." I totally agree with this statement and have overcome many life obstacles by exercising my brain to think happy thoughts and face every battle head on, fearless. The fact that a single pill controls my sisters' emotions baffles me. While she is in completely good spirits and is so thankful for her "chill pills" (she is even light-hearted enough to make jokes about them!), I cannot imagine living a life where I am not in control of my emotions. So while some instances are "mind over matter," unfortunately it is not that easy for everyone.