Daniel and Terry’s story

I am President of Iowa State University Professional & Scientific Council, and a Program Coordinator with the Extension Value-added Agriculture Program at Iowa State University.

Early Thursday morning, May 24 2012, my dear wife, 53, a 26-year employee of the ISU Parks Library, tragically lost a decades-long battle with bi-polar disorder by taking her own life. This event was the result of her taking herself off of physician-prescribed medication.

Terri was born October 22, 1958, Greenfield, Wisconsin. She was a 1991 graduate of the Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington. Terri was on the Board-of-Directors of the Ames Izaak Walton League and was a member of various national and local environmental, conservation and outdoor organizations and was an active engaged member of university library social and working groups.

She was a beautiful kind person who brought incredible joy to countless hearts. She always reached out to others, but her illness she kept to herself, hiding the worst aspects of it from me and her psychiatrist. She is greatly missed by all. The pain of her loss, the contrast between the person the world saw and the one with the dark consuming problem, continues to haunt all of us who loved her.

Bi-polar disorder manifests itself in many ways with very serious and sometimes fatal consequences. Her family and friends take this loss to encourage everyone to further their understanding of the many aspects of this disorder (various resources are available online) and to express compassion for our friends and their care-giver loved ones who manage, and at times chronically, suffer its many forms.

If you, a loved one or co-worker experience or exhibit chronic mood swings, depression, manic-depression, illogical financial or compulsive behaviors, please seek guidance from a professional care giver. If you or a loved one are under the care of a physician for bi-polar a bi-polar-related issue or hormone-replacement therapy, please share details of your care with your loved ones, and under no circumstances elect to deviate from physician-prescribed treatment. Be sure to share any details of medication or medication-dosage changes with those closest to you who can monitor your behavior and in an emergency contact your professional care-giver.

I sincerely thank Glenn Close, her family, and everyone who has donated their time and energy to bring this topic to light. We suffer a national epidemic, about which we need to speak out, remove stigmas and communicate. We need to care, we need to do all that we can to help our loved ones. When they are gone, there is no going back.