

THIS I BELIEVE

on good terms with one's darker side and one's darker energies. And, above all, that one should learn from turmoil and pain, share one's joy with those less joyful, and encourage passion when it seems likely to promote the common good.

Knowledge is marvelous, but wisdom is even better.

KAY REDFIELD JAMISON is a professor of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She has written a number of books, including *An Unquiet Mind* and *Exuberance: The Passion for Life*. She was honored with a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2001.

*The Benefits of Restlessness and Jagged Edges*

KAY REDFIELD JAMISON

I BELIEVE THAT CURIOSITY, WONDER, AND PASSION are defining qualities of imaginative minds and great teachers; that restlessness and discontent are vital things; and that intense experience and suffering instruct us in ways less intense emotions can never do. I believe, in short, we are equally beholden to heart and mind, and that those who have particularly passionate temperaments and questioning minds leave the world a different place for their having been there. It is important to value intellect and discipline, of course, but it is also important to recognize the power of irrationality, enthusiasm, and vast energy. Intensity has its costs,

of course—in pain, in hastily and poorly reckoned plans, in impetuosity—but it has its advantages as well.

Like millions of Americans, I was dealt a hand of intense emotions and volatile moods. I have had manic-depressive illness, also known as bipolar disorder, since I was eighteen years old. It is an illness that ensures that those who have it will experience a frightening, chaotic, and emotional ride. It is not a gentle or easy disease. And, yet, from it I have come to see how important a certain restlessness and discontent can be in one's life; how important the jagged edges and pain can be in determining the course and force of one's life.

I have often longed for peace and tranquility—looked into the lives of others and envied a kind of calmness—and yet I don't know if this tranquility is what I truly would have wished for myself. One is, after all, only really acquainted with one's own temperament and way of going through life. It is best to acknowledge this, to accept it, and to admire the diversity of temperaments Nature has dealt us.

An intense temperament has convinced me to teach not only from books, but from what I have learned from experience. So I try to impress upon young doctors and graduate students that tumultuousness, if coupled to discipline and a cool mind, is not such a bad sort of thing. That unless one wants to live a stunningly boring life, one ought to be