

Karaoke (How I Got My Mojo Back)
by Justin McGonigle

That's what you get for pretending the danger's not real.
- Pink Floyd

It was 2017, and there I was, in a strange bed, in a strange city, with not enough blankets and a street light coming through the window and straight into my eyes. Only a few hours earlier, I had had a breakdown at my home and here I was to get evaluated, cold and annoyed.

I was glad to be here. I was at the end of my rope. My untreated mental illness had finally caught up with me. I needed a break. I needed to hit rock bottom before I could go up. I needed Modus Interruptus.

My stay wasn't long and after a few group sessions and after 4 days or so, I was brought home, 90 minutes away, during a snow storm. With me in the back seat, my driver and I, in a Subaru, flew past everyone on the highway in about 2 feet of snow. I felt like I was being reborn. I arrived home and so began my journey of recovery.

I began out-patient group therapy, started a mood stabilizer, and almost had another episode. What saved me the moment that the episode was about to take effect, was that I started singing. I was able to clear the air. I felt different. I felt that something big was happening. I went home for lunch that day in a daze.

My time at out-patient therapy was brief. I left in good stead, after about a week or so, and I began to take Audio Therapy. My specialist used gongs, sound bowls and crystals to realign my molecules. The sound enters through the top of the head, and reorders the atoms in the body, into patterns, much like sand on a metal sheet after vibration is applied to it.

When I finished Sound Therapy (after a few weeks), I began CBT (Cognitive Behavior Training) to begin to help rebuild me as a person. I felt lost and unsure of where I fit in. CBT helped me target 'who I am' and helped me share myself with the world.

This is when I began my Karaoke channel Uncle Krusty's Karaoke Hour. I devised a way to film myself singing Karaoke, while I followed along with the song on YouTube. I would then upload the video to YouTube under the heading: Uncle Krusty's Karaoke Hour. There was also a website component, where visitors could request a song for Uncle Krusty to sing. Uncle Krusty is what some of my family call me. As of now, and having made my last video about 2 years ago, I'm up to nearly 50 Uncle Krusty's Karaoke Hour videos.

My singing Karaoke at home led me to singing Karaoke in public. By the time I realized I was singing Karaoke in public, I was a person again. I was good and people liked me.

Along with singing, I had a position as a caretaker of farm animals for private parties. I loved it and the tips were great!

And then Covid hit. I was able to collect, and then after a year and a half, I landed a job in the manufacturing field. Good times.

I continue to care for my mental health everyday and I strive to do good in the world.

Currently, I'm working on a painting series exploring the nature of the 'still life'. I'm also thinking about my next writing project.

If I could change one thing in my life, as of now, 2026, I wish I had made more of a fuss about going to Art School all those years ago. I think Art School would have been good for me at a crucial time in my development and I think that I would have really enjoyed it. What would happen if I went to Art School now?