

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS, YOU MATTER

by:

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There is a limit to what a person can deal with in this lifetime. Whether it's from our work, our studies, our families, our relationship with other people, or even our relationship with ourselves. We can only take so much of what is happening around us and sometimes it causes us to break, cry and fall---which is absolutely fine and utterly normal.

The pile of things to be done, the helplessness of not being able to do something, the thought of being not good enough, the fear of what the future will be, and the burden of life as it is, are all posing as threats to the deterioration of our mental health. They cause us to question everything we know, our worth as a person, our belief system, and our life as a whole. They test our faith and our strength to continue. They challenge our will to live and still be here...trying....working....living.

There are so many factors that contribute to this situation. So many factors that may later become either a trigger, a breaking point, or an activator that would set off a drastic measure to not continue. But this is not an article about this. This is not an essay about the suffering of life. For just like what Buddha said, life is suffering and that to live is a series of suffering, stress, and dissatisfaction. This is, however, a story of how I am still trying to overcome my intrusive thoughts, my issues, my gloomy outlook on life, and take life as it, Life. I am hoping that I will be able to help others overcome it too.

It was during the height of the pandemic that I started to have dark thoughts crawling in my mind, occupying my thoughts, affecting my view in life, and changing who I am as a person. As a teacher, I would consider it as the darkest day of my life where

despite many hours working, there is still the feeling of not doing the work. It's like every hour of every day, the tasks keep on piling up, but the main job of teaching is not done. There are times that I caught myself crying from time to time, overthinking, doubting, and just wanting to quit. Problems from family, friends, work, and even studies keep me up all night. However, instead of seeking help, I tried diverting it to other things.

That's where I went wrong, the thought of me asking for help made me feel weak and powerless, thinking that it doesn't matter, and that I don't matter. I prided myself on being a strong independent person which was why it was hard for me to open up to others. To say that I am struggling mentally, that is a weakness I don't want others to see. And just like what I said before, a person can only take so much so when the thing gets hard, the thoughts that comes into my mind made me realize that now more than ever, I need help.

I need help from my family, from a specialist, and from our God. It wasn't easy baring your inner, darkest thoughts. Uncovering every single insecurity, fear, and issue that I have, unveiling the fragile person that I am, and exposing myself to other people during those times. But I am glad I did. For if I didn't, I would not be who I am today... a stronger, braver, and happier version of what I am before. Because now that I am reminiscing about those situations, I believe that in those times of weakness, I was at my strongest. So please allow me to share some tips that I did to take good care of myself and my mental health.

First, acknowledge you are not okay and that's okay. By recognizing your thoughts and your emotion you are more inclined to do something about them and seek help for it. Next, make sure you're getting enough sleep as it gives us more energy and it rest our mind and body. Another is, take time to exercise or do something you love or try something new. By making yourself busy and happy it will slowly bring back the light in your mind and the joy in your life. Next, set your goals, they don't have to be grand just the goals you want to accomplish. Create your schedules of things to do and things to be

done to avoid being anxious and overthinking. Put some boundaries with you work, and studies to avoid burnout. Another is, practice the art of gratitude which is reminding yourself of the daily blessing that comes into your life. Next is, to make yourself your priority and be kind to yourself, and lastly, take it one day at a time, be patient with yourself and love yourself more than the way you love others. For it is not selfishness but self-care and you owe it to yourself to be as healthy as possible.

It may not be easy at first, but it will sure get better. Because your mental health matters and you matter.

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