

How Are You Doing... Really?

WEEK 3: LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Research shows that at least 50 percent of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetimes. In spite of that, it's still something that can be seen as stigmatized by our culture and hard to open up about personally. But that's not helping anyone. So . . . let's talk about it.

START TALKING

1. Can you remember the first time you recognized that you felt "not okay"? What was happening in your life? How did you deal with it?
2. When you think of people who have been "safe" for you in times of intense struggle, who comes to mind and why?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

1. Have you ever felt worse after achieving something you thought might bring you happiness and fulfillment? When? What happened?
2. If struggles with mental health are so common that they're likely to affect us or someone in our immediate circle at some point, why do you think there is still such a stigma attached to mental illness?
3. Dr. Wendy Dickinson said she likes to visualize stress as a color spectrum ranging from green (a day at the beach) through yellow (the standard bustle of everyday life) and all the way into red (extreme stress). Where are you on that spectrum right now? Where would you say you've been on average over the last three to four months?

LOOK IT UP

Read the following passages before answering the questions below: Matthew 5:1–10, 26:31–46, and 27:45–50.

1. Does it surprise you to know that Jesus said his "soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death"? Why or why not?
2. How do you interpret the fact that Jesus—who Christians consider to be God on Earth—dealt with moments of soul-crushing depression?
3. Why is it dangerous to view our degree of happiness at any given moment as an indicator of how spiritually healthy we are?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. How can you be on the lookout for opportunities to be a safe place for the people in your life who are struggling right now? What would it look like to stay connected beyond the initial contact?

2. What steps do you need to take this week to share your struggles with people who can offer you help and support?
3. Who can you “mourn” with during this time? Who do you know who has lost a job, a loved one, an opportunity, an experience, or stability?
4. What might it look like for you to let those you trust know when you need help?
5. Wendy emphasized the importance of showing ourselves gentleness during times of intense stress and uncertainty. Where in your life are you denying yourself grace by demanding perfection right now? What would it look like to introduce gentleness into your thinking?