

Life Hacks - Mental Health

if you have a body you have physical health. If you have a soul you have spiritual health. If you have a brain you have mental health. So what does this tell us?! We ALL have mental health!!

From the CDC:

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Just like our physical or spiritual health, our mental health will have times when it's thriving, and times when it's struggling.

Our Mental Health can be impacted by a wide variety of influences

- Difficult circumstances
- Change of any kind (good or bad!)
- Financial stressors
- Trauma
- Physical causes such as hormonal or chemical changes
- The Weather!!

All of these things can change the way we think, feel, or act.

The term “Mental Health” is not the same as Mental Illness. Everyone has “Mental Health” - Mental Illness is an acute medical condition that cannot be self managed and requires medical care.

Mental Health Life Hacks

1) Cultivate your Tribe

Spend time with your friends

Healthy friendships improve your emotional intelligence. Spending time with a good friend releases a powerful cocktail of oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin (all your feel-good hormones) elevating your mood and optimizing your hormonal response to stress.

Be intentional with your relationships

A great example of friendship can be found in 1 Sam chapters 18-20

David and Jonathan -

1 Sam 18:1-4 After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king's son. There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David. 2 From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn't let him return home. 3 And Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, because he loved him as he loved himself. 4 Jonathan sealed the pact by taking off his robe and giving it to David, together with his tunic, sword, bow, and belt.

- David got to spend **lots of time** with Jonathan and they became great friends. (time spent together builds connection - don't isolate yourself!)
- Jonathan encouraged and supported David. When he gave him his robe and armor he was acknowledging that David was on a journey to be the next King - a position that technically should have been Jonathans!

Even Jesus cultivated his tribe - the 12 disciples

2) Get rid of the clutter!!

1 Tim 6:7-8 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

This life hack goes so much deeper than just a clean closet or kitchen counter, it goes deep to the heart.

Exodus 20:17 17 "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."

3) Feed your body well

Eat good food // Exercise // Rest Well //Go outside

Eat Good Food:

In an article from the Texas institute for neurological disorders they state:

Excessive sugar consumption is harmful to brain health, and can lead to memory deficiencies, sugar addiction, and decline in overall health.

Study done at Harvard Medical - "The effects of added sugar intake — higher blood pressure, inflammation, weight gain, diabetes, and fatty liver disease — are all linked to an increased risk for heart attack and stroke,"

A Proverb from Solomon as inspired by the Holy Spirit reads: **Proverbs 25:16 Do you like honey?**

Don't eat too much, or it will make you sick!

Paul in describing people who are determined to walk their own path - people he calls "enemy of the Cross" says this: **Philippians 3:19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.**

Exercise:

Regular exercise can help improve our mental health by:

- Releasing feel-good endorphins, natural cannabis-like brain chemicals (endogenous cannabinoids) and other natural brain chemicals that can enhance your sense of well-being
- Taking your mind off worries so you can get away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression and anxiety
- Gain confidence.
- Get more social interaction.
- Cope in a healthy way.

Rest Well:

Get some sleep!! Slow down, take a day off.

If God took a day off to rest then SO SHOULD YOU!!

Resting reminds us that God is God and we are not - it aligns our hearts and minds by reminding us that we are dependent on the Lord. That's a good thing!

Busyness does not define your value - who you are in Christ defines your value. (and if you didn't already know this - you are fully loved and adopted into Christ's family - that's who you are!)

Go Outside:

- Luke 5:16- But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.

4) You Gotta Forgive

If you are holding onto offense against someone you are actively attacking your mental health.

Forgiveness is hard to talk about because we sometimes confuse forgiveness with forgetting, or with reconciliation. Forgiveness is allowing God into your wounds - and fighting to keep Him there. Because if we let God into our hurts He will heal them up like only He can. Forgiveness is about releasing yourself from the bondage of bitterness and hate - it has very little to do with the person that offended you.

The book of Jonah gives us a good example of what happens to us when we don't forgive.

Matthew 6:14-15 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Not a salvation issue - a quality of life issue - unforgiveness in your life interferes with our relationship with Jesus.

5) Serve Others

Acts 20:35 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Galatians 5:13-14 13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh ; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 20:28 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Serving others puts everything in perspective.

It helps you to

- 1) **Find your Tribe** - develop friendships with those you serve with
- 2) **Clear the Clutter** - serving others fills your heart, keeping you content in a supernatural way
- 3) **Feed your body well** - an article posted by the mayo clinic - volunteers report better health than non volunteers
- 4) **Forgive Others** - When we serve others and sacrifice our time and talents, we are reminded of the great sacrifice and forgiveness that we have received through Jesus.