

On the importance of good personal mental health

Rev Dr K Bill Dost, Group CEO at DND Finance, writes: The World Health Organisation in 2001 stated that 1 in 4 people will at some point be affected by mental or neurological disorders. I would guess this number is woefully low, partly because it's twenty years out of date, but also because of the coronavirus pandemic we've all been living through.

If that's the case than we are ourselves will be dealing with the affects of mental health disorders either directly or indirectly in a short period of time, if we aren't already.

The author of this article can attest to this as in my own family two people suffer from pretty intense mental health issues. One embraces the journey, speaks about it openly to ensure others know that not only are they as normal as can be but that life can be normal enough — and the other suffers in silence and hides it, and sadly brings a lot of pain to their family, not because of the disorder, but because of the lengths they will go to hide what cannot be hidden. So while it would be really easy for me to discuss why it's easy for one person to talk about these issues, or to cast aspersions on why another can't, that isn't the point of this article. There are some similarities I can make in doing life with both of them however that I can share with you.

The biggest and hardest thing I had to learn was this is not my story, it's their story and as thus I am not the hero of this story. That's a very large point for many of us to take on, especially if we are men reading this, we are not Luke Skywalker, Frodo Baggins, or Captain America in this story. In fact we're neither the hero, the villain or even the guide. We're not the foil or any other large player. We're a small bit part in this story. The faster we can recognise our importance (or lack thereof) in the story of someone else's mental health the better off we and they are going to be. In fact the best thing we can do for someone else's mental health is to have the best possible mental health ourselves. Jim Rohn used to say, you do you for you, and I'll do me for me and together we'll make a good world. That's what I am suggesting here, put in modern terms, put on your air mask first when the airplane is in trouble before you even attempt to help someone else.

Our own mental health then is of utmost importance, by ensuring it's strong, we not only build up resilience,



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we set up ourselves for a strong day and future. So below I have the tips and tricks that I use on a daily basis to give myself a leg up and ensure I have a strong outlook on life. So after I have thrown my alarm clock across the room for disturbing my sleep here is what I do.

I take a few moments to be thankful, as you may know me, or have seen the author credit, I have a faith I'm not shy about. So while you may not lean into the faith side of things, nothing stops you from being grateful for all the good things in your life. A mentor of mine encourages people to write down the three wins of the day to help increase their confidence. Whatever works for you is what I am suggesting.

- I remind myself of my major goal for life – to remind myself there is something bigger than me that I am working for

- I remind myself of the values I claim to live my life by – to remind myself I have a compass I am living by
- I pray – I get it, you may not. Then meditate. The point is get to a place where you are quiet and in solitude and you can reflect. For me I ruminate over family, friends, colleagues, world events, things in my life. Praying for the best results. Don't over complicate it.
- I journal – I have two, one for my spouse, about all the great things she did the previous day so I can look at her with love and respect on the day
- The second is on what is going on in my life – what's going on and what I am hoping to accomplish
- I read out of the Good Book every day
- I read 25 pages of a good book daily – to help me grow daily
- I go for a morning run daily – ensuring a good aggressive sweat
- I ensure I take in copious amounts of water (anyone that's been to dinner with me can recall how I often will order multiple bottles of water for myself!)

Why do I do all this, it's found keeping your mind engaged, and on something greater than yourself puts you and your life in perspective, being grateful doesn't just prime your day, it changes your outlook on life and if pointed at people, makes and improves your opinion on people. Reading grows you from the inside out forcing you to think and grow, whereas journaling forces you to be contemplative and to really think about what is going on in your life. Working out releases endorphins giving you the feeling of being better and drinking lots of water keeps your body in good condition and hydrated reducing headaches and keeping you happier.

So as you can see a really strong routine? Even pieces of one can assist you in keeping a handle on your own mental health. When you're doing that you'll be of more use to others in your life. ■

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