change your narrative

WHERE IS GOD WHEN I STRUGGLE WITH AN IMAGE MATTER?

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SHIFTING INCOMPLETE STORIES
OF IMAGE MATTERS
TOWARDS TRUTH.

How To Use This Book

Depending on what you are looking for, you can use this book in a variety of ways. Feel free to skim, read every line, or just check out our videos.

We believe important topics call for important conversations which is why some of our material is presented via videos. In order to access the videos, you will need to click the link if you are reading via a digital device such as Kindle. If you have a physical copy of the book, you can access the links via QR codes.

A QR Code looks like this and can be scanned using your device's camera:

On an iOS device, simply open the camera app and point your camera over the code. A notification will pop up, asking if you would like to head to YouTube.

On an Android device, you will need to download a QR code app. Our team recommends several options, all of which are free as of this printing:

- QR & Barcode Scanner
- QR Code Reader
- Free QR Scanner by Avira
- QR DROID PRIVATE
- Kaspersky QR Scanner

I Am Glad You Are Here...

The goal of this book is to create an environment of support along with hosting resource and tools which guide individuals who struggle with an image matter towards wholeness, all while inviting God into the discussion.

I want to acknowledge the fact that in our hardest moments and toughest questions, many of us have a natural instinct to reach out and ask, “Where is God?”

I do not believe God is scared or offended by that question. Instead, I believe it is healthy to wrestle through it. For that reason, this booklet was created.

You might have grabbed this booklet for numerous reasons. You might be struggling with an image matter or wonder what to do. You might have grown up hearing about God all of your life, or He might seem like a distant concept, hard to understand. You also might be extremely mad at Him or may not believe He exists.

No matter the reason you are here, you are welcome into the question. We are glad you are here and hope to share insight which offers you guidance. Keep in mind, I will be sharing everything from one specific perspective based off of my own life experience combined with my knowledge of God which comes from the Bible.

As you go through the next few pages, know I believe in your future and hope you find all of the tools you might be looking for to help you fight back against an image matter which seeks to call the shots of your life.

Let's Admit, This Is Hard

I want to acknowledge its hard to know *how* to find ways to take action. Even with God's help, I believe complex trauma produces wounds which can take a long time to heal. Healing is not a one-time event. It is a process. Throughout that process, there are numerous obstacles. This must be acknowledged. It does not mean God has left or abandoned you. He has promised to be near and walk with you. Finding Him in it, is the key... but it is hard.

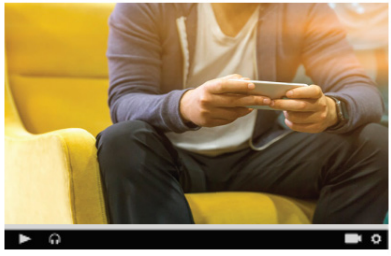
But even with the challenge, I believe you have what it takes to make it through. We are rooting for each of you out there, during the journey, and in every step of it.

If you or someone you care for is in danger of harm, please contact one of the numbers below or turn to the resource section at the back of this book.

For Immediate Help:

Covenant House- 1800-999-9999
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Youth Crisis Line – 1800 Hit Home
Hopeline 1800-442-5673
http://www.crisischat.org/chat

Video: What Is Is Like To Call A Hotline?



Watch video

https://youtu.be/6IRGmusmp1M

The Core Principles Of This Book

In order to have this discussion, I need to frame it well. This means, there are a few key items I need to explain in order to proceed. Why? Because this book hinges on a specific foundation with key principles.

Principle #1 - Who is God?

God is the Ruler and Maker of the universe. He created the earth, sky, and every living creature, including humanity. As Creator, He is both our God and our King. Yet, He doesn't stop there. He is a relational God who expresses Himself in relationships–both with us and Himself. God expresses Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit–who are three distinct identities and yet are all one triune Being. We know who God the Father and God the Spirit are because God the Son was revealed to us as Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in ancient Israel, 2,000 years ago.

Principle #2 - Why did Jesus come?

When we were first created at the beginning of time, we were in perfect relationship with God. As Creator, God placed order and rules into His universe in order to maintain healthy boundaries in order to enjoy whole and right relationships. Yet, humanity rebelled against God's ways and chose to disobey. This disobedience is known as sin. It brought death into the world. Anytime someone acts selfishly, wrongs another person, is cruel, unkind, hateful, or harms another–this is against God's perfect order. This is not the world He designed or behaviors He intended humanity to engage in. It is out of His will.

Principle #3 - So, why did God let them disobey?

Obedience is only so–if it is a choice. Mankind had to be given free will in order to choose to love, trust, and obey God. We often call this "free will." We have the ability to choose to exercise our will to do what we want, but there are consequences to every action.

Again, it is not God's intention for us to use our free will in ways which do not align with His character which is good, loving, kind, caring, compassionate, and healthy.

Yet, you and I engage in the opposite of these actions all of the time. So do the people we know.

This leaves mankind in dire need of a way to know how to choose right, how to act in a way which mirrors God's character and be back in right relationship with God so we could know how to be in healthy, whole relationships with each other.

This is the backdrop which made it necessary for God the Son to come and show us how.

Principle #4 - So, I'll ask again: "Why did Jesus come?"

To make a way for us to find wholeness.

Remember, humanity broke God's perfect order. The only way to put it back was for Someone who was perfect to make a payment for the wrong we had done.

It was necessary for God the Son, Jesus, to die on our behalf in order for wholeness and restoration of our relationship with Him to be possible again.

By Him coming, He not only made payment for the rift in relationship we had opened up by rebelling against Him, but He also showed us His nature.

Principle #5 - Who is God? What is His character?

He is good. He is kind. He cares.
He is moved to compassion when He sees suffering.
He cried when He saw pain firsthand.
He wanted to be with people in their worst moments.
He revealed His nature more and more every time He got near humanity's brokenness.
He doesn't always change circumstances–but He always provides a way through them.
He promises to be with us.
He paid the way for us to have relationship with Him.
He has a plan for our life.

It is from these lens of truth from the Bible which will frame the rest of our discussion. I am excited to get started with you.

Core Principles - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/EtrHq6_JHQ0

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE of lost hope

What Is An Image Matter?

The Oxford dictionary defines self image as, “The idea one has of one’s abilities, appearance, and personality.”[1]

But is appearance is tied to ability and personality?

In a media saturated world—I believe many of us are struggling with an image matter—which I would define as an unhealthy view that one’s own worth, value, and identity being first defined by physical appearance.

But what if you are more?

Studies have shown that image matters are rampant. Many individuals who struggle wrestle with confidence, self-esteem, or negative self-talk. Some individuals pair negative thoughts with harmful behaviors. When those behaviors become habit—this might be defined as an eating disorder.

This does not mean all individuals who struggle with an image matter have an eating disorder.

But if you are one of the 30 million people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder in the U.S.[2], I want you to know you are not alone.

No matter the severity of your behaviors or thought patters, I want you to know my team and I are rooting for you.

The thoughts in your head and heart may be sourced from a legitimately sourced desire, yet allowing an image matter to hold the pen of your story is not your final fate.

I believe you have what it takes to shift the incomplete story of an image matter towards truth and discover an identity which goes beyond image.

What Is An Image Matter? - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/0H0rBxjNUO4

What Is An Eating Disorder?

While the three top eating disorders remain Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder there are several, disorders which are recognized by the American Psychiatric Association's (DSM-5).

Whether common or rare, each of these conditions disrupt the lives of thousands. If you recognize these behaviors, we recommend seeking professional care.

Healthline.com helps us to understand the fact each of these issues are about more than food. They state that each of these are "complex mental health conditions that often require the intervention of medical and psychological experts to alter their course."[3] These conditions include:

Anorexia Nervosa

Characterized by restrictive habits in an effort to lose weight along with a misconception of one's physical appearance, no matter their weight level.

Bulimia Nervosa

Characterized by eating large amounts of food often followed by purging that food from the body.

Binge Eating Disorder

Characterized by eating large amounts of food, without purging behaviors.

Rumination Disorder

Characterized by regurgitation & re-swallowing.

Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

Characterized by purposefully avoiding or restricting food intake.

Purging Disorder

Characterized by purging behaviors without binging.

To learn more about the signs and symptoms, we recommend the following article on www.Healthline.com and their article found here: https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/common-eating-disorders

Or visit HelpGuide.Org at https://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/eating-disorders.htm

What Is An Image Matter? - Video Discussion

Watch video

Link https://youtu.be/gT8DMsgr_gw

How Many Individuals Struggle?

- 30 million people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder in the U.S.[2]

- The most common eating disorder in the United States is binge eating disorder (BED). It is estimated that 3.5% of women, 2% of men, and 30% to 40% of those seeking weight loss treatments can be clinically diagnosed with binge eating disorder.[4]

- 40-60% of elementary school girls (ages 6-12) are concerned about their weight or about becoming too fat. This concern endures through life.[5]

- Eating Disorders Clinical and Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital, says that 40 to 60 percent of high school girls in the U.S. are dieting and 13 percent are purging.[6]

- 91% of women who were surveyed on a college campus had tried to control their weight by dieting, and 22% of them dieted “often” or all the time.[7]

- The Butterfly Foundation in Australia reported 40% of people experiencing Binge Eating Disorder are men.[8]

- Eating disorders statistics tell us that in order for treatment to be successful, it must be multifaceted. It must include medical care, mental health care, and nutritional education and counseling.[9] With treatment, 60% of eating disorder sufferers make a full recovery.[9]

What Are The Warning Signs?

The National Eating Disorders Association explains the signs and symptoms of several eating disorders in the below video:

https://youtu.be/nJMtReAg1DI

Due to the intricate nature of multiple Eatind Disorders, for a listing of warning signs and symptoms, please see:

https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/by-eating-disorder/anorexia/warning-signs-symptoms

Additionally, if you or someone you care about are seeking a tool in order to determine if it is time to reach out for professional help, consider utilizing the National Eating Disorder Association's Screening Tool, available here:

https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/screening-tool

Scan QR code to access tool

So God Allow Suffering For "Purpose?"

Let me be the first to say that simply believing in God, or seeking to follow Jesus does not mean traumatic life experiences disappear or the pain of current or past memories fades instantly.

I wish it did.

But, the truth is, understanding the fullness of our relationship with Him does not mean we are promised an absence or removal of past pain—as if it never happened.

I am not here to tell you your trauma has purpose, as if this would remove the trauma.

I believe you and God can talk about that if it is important to you. I believe God can do anything and show you meaning when you ask for it. But I do not believe that God allowed abuse, trauma, or suffering in your life at the cruel hands of others because He needed to teach you something or have you see a big picture of purpose.

To do so, in my mind, is against the nature of God.

He is not the author of confusion. He is not the father of lies. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, which means He desires for us to live in wholeness and to enjoy right, healthy relationships with Himself and others.

I refuse to believe He is the author of brokenness.

Therefore, I must also conclude that He did not write that script in a way which caused you pain so that He can somehow tell a bigger story and show how great He is.

He can accomplish all of that without sin and death being the ink on the pages of your life. He does not need pain and suffering in order to write a beautiful story.

Therefore, I believe we sell ourselves short when we succumb to simple pleasantries that God is going to teach us something, He wanted to draw us closer to Himself through it, or He has a ministry for you because of it.

He can teach without the backdrop of trauma. He draws us near without suffering, He can mold you for ministry without the sins of others as the prompt.

Therefore, I will not tell you that you must endure this arduous healing process because He needed to hurt you in order to heal you so you were ready.

I just don't believe He works that way.

But Can God Give You A Purpose To Your Pain?

I believe God can use anything, and if you would like to seek His voice to find out how He is going to redeem it, then I encourage you to do so. Because yes, God can redeem and restore anything. But just because He can fix something does not mean He was the One who broke it and allowed it to happen so He could show off.

We will go farther in our trust of Him if we first release ourselves from the mental torment of believing He broke us, when the effects of sin and death are the culprits for a great deal of our suffering—and He is not the author of either sin or death.

Are there EVER times when God brings pain to our lives?

I do believe there are times in which we will face natural consequences of our actions—our words, choices, and behaviors which align with sin or death. In essence, these are acts of rebellion against His ways. In these moments, we face discipline or consequences.

However, this is not to be confused with trauma which is induced at the hands of others who are acting in rebellion to His ways.

So how do you know which is which? By knowing who He is and getting to know His character. It is also good to get to know your own nature.

We need to understand our own normal desires to do things which are against God's order—times in which we are unkind, mean, arrogant, hateful, prideful, envious, jealous, rageful, harm others, and so on. These are things which God will correct us on. Yet, He is a good and loving Father who teaches us. It's His kindness which leads us to repentance. This means despite whatever experiences we had with being punished as kids, God does not do it in a way which is cruel. He wants us to come to Him and understand how great His love is to heal us and lead us to be more like Him—kind, compassionate, loving, giving, and generous.

We also need to understand that others are responsible for their own actions. This means that if someone sins against you—you cannot own it for them. Yes, it is our job to do the hard work to heal from it. But, we cannot own their sin or wrong choices.

This is good news, because it means we can be free of any guilt or shame we have attached to our identity based on their own choices against themselves and us. But, how do we deal with guilt and shame?

Does God Allow Suffering For "Purpose?" - Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/pm0XUapK7-Q

Guilt Versus Shame

I want to take a moment to share something personal. I believe that both guilt and shame can be triggers for negative head space and dark thoughts. Because of this, it is important for me to share how I see guilt and shame, and how we can work though them.

Guilt is the aftermath of an action. It can be healthy—as it lets us know *what we did* was wrong. Shame, on the other hand, is the cruel rebranding of our identity. It suggests that because of an action—we are somehow a different person. It seeks to stake a claim on *who we are*.

Guilt can be healthy. Our words, actions, and behaviors have consequences. Guilt helps us to take ownership, learn, and grow. Shame, however, doesn't offer a solution. It just grips our thoughts & emotions in a vice.

How do we escape the trap of shame? I want to continue this critical conversation in the video below.

Guilt Versus Shame - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/sRzXXuxH-XE

YOU'RE BRAVER
THAN YOU BELIEVE,
AND STRONGER
THAN YOU SEEM,
AND
SMARTER THAN
YOU THINK.
A.A. MILNE

Back To The Original Question:

"Where is God When I Am Struggling With An Image Matter?"

Thought it was necessary for us to discuss guilt and shame, purpose, and core principles, the question still remains, "Where is God when I am struggling?"

The first thing I want you to know is it is fair to ask. Being open enough to ask something so direct is not an offense or an assault to God. He is big enough to handle our doubt and He is not moved by our own confusions. He knows our nature and the fact we live inside of a broken world which leaves us grasping, wondering how these things have happened.

To answer the question, "Where is God?" we have to understand His nature.

This is a question which must be wrestled. It is not something found in the line of a book or in one conversation, it is something which takes time.

When we look for answers to suffering, it comes from an incredibly vulnerable place. Too often, when we search for the answer and read blanket statements in a book, we find disappointment from not having our specific needs, questions, or disappointments met in the answer in text.

I would like to avoid that.

However, this does not mean I will avoid the question. I simply want to frame it in a way which offers

you tools to wrestle through the question instead of just read one possible answer to it.

With that in mind, I would like to offer a variety of things to consider as you begin to seek where God is in the midst of any suffering you have experienced.

I promise I will share how all of these points became part of my own story, offering me a pathway towards wholeness. But, before I share my own story, I want to give you a chance to live yours.

On the next page, I have listed 10 tips which helped me to wrestle, and I hope they offer a guide map for you too.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. - 1 John 5:13

10 Tips To Help You Wrestle

#1 - Be Assured He Cares

#2 - Know He Has Shown Up To Others

#3 - Understand His Roles

#4 - Discover The “With” Factor

#4 - Recognize With Overrides Poof

#5 - Choose The Process

#6 - Seek Multiple Sources

#7 - Understand His Roles

#8 - Find Community

#9 - Seek Restoration

#10 - Permission Granted

#1 - Be Assured He Cares

The first place to wrestle is in determining whether or not each of us believes God cares. Admittedly, there are many times in which our own hurts, confusions, past or present pain, and questions that we have for God get in the way of us believing He is there and He cares.

This is okay.

Yet, I invite you to wrestle through the question, "Could it be true that He does care?" And then, we must follow it up by asking, "What does it mean that He cares?"

If we believe God caring means He eliminates the possibility of pain in our life, then I believe we short change the presence of God. Going back to the core principles of this book—pain, sin, brokenness, and other's actions against us are not within the desires God had for humanity when He created us.

And I believe He absolutely cares when we are negatively impacted. He cares that the dark feelings are there. He reaches out to us in ways many of us aren't aware of. I believe the fact you are reading this now is an indication that God is reaching out to you and wants to show you who He is and how much He cares.

On our end, we have to take a risk to let Him and allow ourselves to see His care—even if it means we have to wrestle through our confusions about God in the process.

And so, I invite you to wrestle. Because I believe if each of us are to begin our journey towards answering the

question, “Where is God when I struggle?” we must begin with an openness to believing that He does care.

So what does that look like? What does it mean to wrestle and do it well? We go back to what He has said and done in the past. We look to His character.

Where do we do that? How can we find out what He has said and done? We read about Him. Since this is your journey, I will not simply leave a bunch of verses here for you to read. Instead, I will leave the references and invite you to discover.

If you do not have a Bible, feel free to look up the references online. They correlate with each of the ten tips to wrestle. May your search give you confidence in His love.

Isaiah 43:1-3, Isaiah 55, Ephesians 3:14-19, Romans 5:5, Romans 8:38-39, Ephesians 2:4-5, Jeremiah 33:3, Isaiah 30:18-21

#1 - Be Assured He Cares - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/4Mo_OdYdc2c

#2 - Know He Has Shown Up To Others

When we are getting to know someone, or are trying to figure out their character and who they really are, we do this in two different ways. It is true, we gauge their trustworthiness by our own firsthand interactions with them. But, we also do it when hearing what others have to say about them and observing from a distance.

If you are asking the question, "Where is God when I am struggling?" it leads me to believe you may not have a lot of firsthand interactions with Him.

And this is okay.

That is why we are answering hard questions together, because sometimes we need to be able to build trust through observation and listening to other's stories.

While I would like to begin telling you about my own story, I will save that for later in our journey together. Instead, I want to point out several places in the Bible in which God didn't only talk about Himself and His character, but He demonstrated His care and concern for others through His interactions with them.

In this way, we have a chance to observe from a distance and get to know how He has shown up on behalf of those who were struggling.

Just like before, I am going to leave references to places in the Bible where God showed Himself as faithful to those who were wrestling their own tough

spots. I believe you have what it takes to keep wrestling and keep finding out who He really is. This process helps to set a foundation for you to be able to struggle through the deep questions of your heart.

How God showed up to Elijah. He met him in his depression and desire to die. He strengthened him, encouraged him, showed him His presence and gave him direction. 1 Kings 19:4-13

How God showed up to David. David did not hesitate to express his emotions to God. He shared his struggles openly in Psalms, of which he wrote the majority of. In Psalm 69, we see his desperate cry for help. And then, in Psalm 30, we see David's joy in God answering.

Sometimes, we just need reassurance that God is working in the lives of those around us. For that reason, you will also find a few links of stories of individuals alive today who have seen God show up in their life.

Lacey Sturm - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4VgMpk4KnU
Tedashii - Start at 31:32 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkIZZM72jZ0
Lecrae - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Bs6ctEFiGw

#2 - Know He Has Show Up To Others - Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/cewTKz4OIsg

#3 - Understand His Roles

Who is God? How we see Him determines our level of trust in Him. Our level of trust in Him determines how much access we grant Him into our lives and our pain. How much access we grant Him determines how much healing we are able to be walked towards discovering. How healed we are determines how whole we are.

But, it all begins in seeing God as He truly is.

To do so, we must recognize the fact He is not aloof. He is not distant. He is not somewhere out there. He is good. He is Father. He is Healer. He is Provider. He is the Great Physician. He is Teacher. He is Guide.

But again, these are just words and attributes until we discover how He is those things in our own life. I welcome you to find out how God is who these roles are as you continue to unpack where He was in others' lives and where He can be in your own.

Once more, I welcome you to understand His roles by seeing what He has said about Himself.

You can do so, by diving into these references:

He is the path to life – John 14:6
He is near–Psalm 34:18 &145:18, Joshua 1:9, John 14:16
He is compassionate - Psalm 116:5
He keeps His promises - 2 Peter 3:9
He sees your value – Matthew 6:26, Matthew 10:29-31
He is Healer – Exodus 15:26
He is Teacher - John 14:26

His love for you will never end – Psalm 86:15, Romans 8:38-39, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:18-19, Zephaniah 3:17, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 107:8-9

You can also get to know who He is by checking out these videos:

Who Is God?
Truth Project
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJb3vnyD3gY

What Are The Attributes Of God?
Got Questions Ministries
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJWn_c0n-3M

#3 - Understand His Roles - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/B97wWWA0urQ

4 - Discover The “With” Factor

Sometimes, when I imagine where God is when I am suffering or hurting, the picture I see is of a rescue worker who is walking someone through a building which is on fire. They can not magically whisk the individual away from the crisis—but they can walk with them and provide them a way out.

Sometimes the way out is quick. Other times, it is a dangerous and desperate fight to get out of there. But in it—there is a guide, a counselor, someone who is saying, “I am clearing a way for you, we are going to make it through this.” In those moments, the “with factor” is the most important thing.

Before Jesus came to earth, His birth was promised. Do you know what one of His names was? Emmanuel. Now, this may not mean much to us in English, but the root words mean, “God with us.”

You see, God did not simply care for us at a distance. He wasn’t and isn’t a rescue worker, calling from outside of a burning building, shouting, “Hey, get out of there.”

No. He is the One beside you, in the smoke, in the dark, helping you to take one step at a time through hellish spaces, out towards the light. Not only did God come near when He was born in Bethlehem, two millennia ago. He promises that through His Spirit, He will be near us. Now, this requires us to surrender to Him and make Him the Leader of our life because we understand that He is God and we cannot do life

without Him. As we do, we discover He is there as Emmanuel in our struggles—even the darkest ones such as suicidal thought. He is the Author of Life. He is the Way. He is Truth. These things mean He is light in our dark and clouded thoughts. It means He has never and will never leave us alone. There is a way for us to face the darkness and not be overcome by it.

In times in which I have felt the darkest in my own life, I constantly read and re-read Isaiah 43, in which God is speaking and He says, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” (Isaiah 43:1-3 NIV)

He is Emmanuel, He is with you. And as you discover the with factor, you will be able to continue to wrestle out the truth of where God is, even in your darkest struggles.

#4 - Discover The “With” Factor - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/cQa_yDJ6beE

#5 - Recognize With Overrides Poof

I admit. I like poofing problems away. I am American. I want fast answers. I want magical solutions. I loathe a process in which I have to undergo multiple rounds of micro-changes in order to reach a new outcome.

I just don't think God works in a lot of "poofs."

Can He do anything and create a pathway in a snap?

I think He is powerful enough to. But I think, at times, He is loving enough not to.

This does not mean He won't remove the weight of a burden or provide freedom in ways which are quick. I have experienced that many times and am grateful for the immediate release of pressure. I simply know there have been other times in which He has let me wrestle through a process of healing because I needed the time and space to explore the hurt or confusion.

And He was loving enough to give me that time and space.

Because here is the thing, inside of that space, I had Him. I have come to discover that "with" overrides "poof."

Even though I want to snap all of my struggles away, I find He gently brings me through a process of healing alongside of Him—for He has promised to Emmanuel with me, to be by my side through it all.

#5 - Recognize With Overrides Poof - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/BCZAZBzgbDs

#6 - Healing Is A Process

When I was in my early twenties, I had a friend who had a four-hundred-pound object crush her leg. She was fortunate it did not break. But, she did have a horrific bruise which was there a year later. Unsure what to do in order to have it heal, she consulted with a doctor who told her to see a massage therapist. The massage therapist let her know that the impact to her leg had crushed a number of her capillaries and there were numerous dead cells and dead tissue in her muscles—thus causing the sickly yellow and black bruise. The only way to get it out was to gently massage it for months in which she had to flush it out through therapy and by drinking a lot of water. It was painful. It was not quick. But, it was the only way to heal.

Many times, I believe 400 pounds of a devastating situation comes into our life and we too have areas which are bruised beyond normal repair. This can lead to mental health battles, dark thoughts, addictions, and numerous coping mechanisms which numb the impact of the situation—but do not heal it.

Eventually, we must connect with the right type of therapist and find a way to flush it out. This doesn't happen by denying the situation—but instead by tending to it.

Jesus has promised to be our Guide, Healer, Teacher, and Great Physician. But, we must allow God to work on those tender areas of our thoughts and emotions. Sometimes this happens through pastoral or professional counseling in which someone can help us to see where God was and how He can restore us to

wholeness. Other times, we discover it through our own pursuit of Him and by getting to know His goodness through His own words.

No matter how we come to see Him, I truly believe that He is with us—and in the end, with overrides poof, because when we are with our Healer, we unfold the depths of the healing.

Because healing is a process, not an event.

#6 - Healing Is A Process - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/uZjEMfpeMgg

#7 - Seek Multiple Sources

If you are asking the question, “Where is God when I am struggling?” it is due to the fact you have faced legitimate and valid situations which deserve to be acknowledged. It would be easy to simply say, “Oh He was right there all along.” and leave it at that. But, I would rather get into the thick of the question and unpack both the character of God and how we can journey to find Him in a way which helps us to discover the answer to “Where were You?” along the way.

With that being said, I do believe it is important to have spiritual guidance and counsel as you go through this process, but I also believe it is vital for you to seek multiple sources of help.

If you are struggling with suicidal thought, your first source for seeking help may not be from a faith-based source. And that is okay. I want you to know you have the freedom to seek help in whatever means necessary. I want you to know you have the right to seek multiple sources of skilled care. Faith-based care and trained professional care do not have to be at odds with one another. It is not a one or the other game.

While our upcoming discussion is going to be focused on wrestling the spiritual side of the question, “Where is God when I am struggling?” it does not negate the fact that you may need to seek immediate, professional help if you are ever in danger, threat, or harm.

Additionally, even if you are not in immediate danger, you are still welcome to seek skilled, professional care. While I do believe there are many

skilled, professionals who have a healthy, spiritual background and can offer you both—these individuals can take time to find. I would not want you to be unable to begin a process of seeking help because you cannot find someone who does both. I do not want you to ever feel desperate because you do not know where to turn when there are numerous resources available to you at this very minute.

If you, or someone you care for, need to talk immediately, please turn to the Resource Guide at the back of this book.

And as you continue, always remember that when you are wrestling out important questions, it is always okay to seek out multiple sources of that help.

We are rooting for you as you begin.

#7 - Seek Multiple Sources - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/tv5AB_u8gy4

#8 - Find Community

In order to walk a path towards wholeness, we need to grow in our relationship with God. But, we also need something else—community. Both are part of His plan of restoration.

This is normally the place within messages about God in which one is advised to get connected to a local church. I believe this is a good thing, as long as you can find a healthy one. Getting connected to a church does not mean simply sitting inside of a building and absorbing knowledge about God. Instead, it is friendship, accountability, guidance, counsel, a place in which to be honest about what you are going through. It is a place to listen and be listened to—to give and to take. It is a family.

If you haven't ever been able to find that—I want you to be able to find it. I would encourage you to search for church communities in your area who have small groups, micro churches, community groups, or other ways in which to be in relationships with people who can model what God is like to you.

With that being said, I want to take responsibility on behalf of the church and apologize if you have sought to find that type of community and found it to be painful or difficult. While I admit, the search can be a little bit awkward and trying simply because it is new—I also know there is a growing segment of individuals who have been part of the church or ministries, and have faced their own struggles—yet those struggles were not acknowledged, given space to heal, or were stigmatized.

I do not see that mirroring the character of God. I do not believe that is healthy. I believe we need faith communities which help one another to work through challenging circumstances in open, healthy, and honest ways.

As you search to find community, look for communities which have Celebrate Recovery, GriefShare, skilled counseling connections, and other mental health helps listed on their website. Additionally, do not hesitate to ask for a meeting with one of the leaders at the church. Ask what local resources they know of—both inside and outside of the church. If they cannot point you in the right direction, feel free to reach out to a new community.

At the end of the day, we all need at least one friend who can walk with us as we continue to find how God is part of our journey of wholeness and we can mutually support one another. It is a challenge to find at times—yet deep down in my heart, I truly believe this is vital for us to have as part of our story.

#8 - Find Community - Video Discussion

https://youtu.be/xFqin29CZbI

Watch video

#9 - Seek Restoration

When I learned about the meaning of the word "restoration" it changed a lot for me. I had previously believed restoration meant erasing my pain or making my challenges disappear. To me, restoration was a "poof" more than a process.

And then I began to study what it meant.

Restoration means to return to the original starting point. It also often implies that the process of returning increases the original value. But to be clear—it is a process.

So, when we ask the question, "Where is God?" and we ask inside the context of restoration, we have to also ask, "What was the original starting point? If God offers us restoration, then where is He taking us?

To answer that, we have to go back to the beginning, to the start of time when man enjoyed a perfectly whole and complete relationship with God. Sin and selfishness had not polluted the relationship. This meant inside of the original starting point man enjoyed a full understanding of how loved they were. They freely expressed that love back to God and enjoyed all of creation inside of perfection. There was no death. There were not painful childhoods or traumatic memories. Abuse was absent. Depression didn't exist. Darkness had not entered the world.

So does this mean we can enter into that world of perfection again? Yes and no. As long as we are part of a broken world, one in which sin and death are still part of

our every day, there will be suffering. But, that does not negate the original promise.

God promises to restore all things. Some of this is done once we enter eternity with Him. But, some of it begins here and now despite depression, dark thoughts, painful childhoods, and traumatic memories. He begins that process of wholeness in our present.

By knowing Him, having Him guide us through healing, and discovering truth about ourselves, we are able to take those steps towards the original starting point. It is relationship with Him which helps us to do that.

I believe, with all my heart, only because I have lived it biographically first, that God can restore the broken areas of our hearts, thoughts, and feelings by showing us His love, mercy, grace, and goodness. That part of restoration begins now.

We all are walking towards wholeness and healing—and as we invite Him into the process, we find we are able to find the hope we have been looking for.

#9 - Seek Restoration - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/nhds4F2WB8o

#10 - Permission Granted

“What do I do if I believe in God, love Him and want to be loved by Him—but I still feel the pull towards these thoughts and feelings?”

I don’t think we are always honest about this question. I don’t think a lot of places acknowledge that struggle. Yet, I think a lot of people feel that way. Today, I would like to bridge that gap.

Sometimes I think there is pressure to be “better” or “fixed by the end of a message. Inside of our culture, we assume a solution will appear quickly and be adhered to immediately. But, it simply isn’t true. Remember, healing is a process, not an event. This means we have to allow room for moments when we aren’t okay. This doesn’t mean we should sink in them—making them become our identity. But, it does mean it is okay to wrestle with them. My only advice is to wrestle well.

That was the point of this message. I cannot provide words which erase, eliminate, or diminish the story you have already lived. Restoration isn’t about denying the past—but returning to a place of wholeness after acknowledging it and discovering healing.

My hope is that our discussion, along with the tools and resources in the back of this booklet, would offer you just a little bit more courage and insight than you might have had before—making it possible for you to keep journeying towards wholeness.

Just remember: You have permission to be human.

While I do not want anyone to have suicidal thoughts, I also do not want you to feel shame for feeling them, as that shame often pushes us farther from help or hope.

There is a stigma within church world that we can not love God or be loved by Him if we also struggle with mental health. It is as if the two are not allowed to exist in the same space. When in fact, we are told that we will daily strive with our human nature and to hold onto the truth of who God is and how we are loved by Him. You are granted permission to struggle as you learn how to trust His love and learn His voice.

In addition to that, know you have permission to get professional help. That does not eliminate God's work in your life. I believe the two are not in competition, but can work in tandem. You have permission to be human, but you also have permission to get the guidance and help you need. God can and does work through both.

Our entire team believes in you, and is rooting for you to find the wholeness you deserve.

#10 - Permission Granted - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/SHWt7QZvHVc

I AM MOVING
FROM BROKEN TO WHOLE
FROM DARK TO LIGHT
FROM FORGOTTEN TO KNOWN

Where I Found God When I Was Struggling

My heart, for each of you, would be for us to sit down and have talked through each of these tips and things I have learned—together. I believe they are best learned in face-to-face settings in which someone is free to be able to express their own challenges, confusions, and hurts. We need the space to share honestly, without reprimand, in a way in which we then allow counsel and guidance into even the most broken places. This is how broken can become whole, dark can become light, and what was once broken—can become restored.

If we did have that chance, to talk somewhere in it all—I would share my story with you. I believe in the power of talking about our stories and highlighting what we have learned—not to pass on knowledge alone, but to pass on courage and hope.

I am so grateful for the journey I have been able to walk. I still feel old wounds surface in odd, unexpected moments. I still have times in which I have to remember His character, find community, and lean into the fact that God is my Healer, my Father, my Guide—even in the memories which surface in times I don't want them to.

But what I can say is: I have seen Him. I know His voice and I have heard Him say, "It's going to be okay." Sometimes, that was all I needed. Other times, I needed a week in inpatient counseling. But through it all, I knew He was with me.

I am grateful, because I know that His guidance and love in my life has given me the ability to not only talk about what it means to change my narrative, but also gave me the ability to say, “I changed it.”

Not only have I changed, but I know Him so much more than I did when I was a suicidal seventeen-year-old. I don’t think my seventeen-year-old self would have believed my thirty-something year old self when I say, I am so moved and grateful for the fact that despite the pain and difficult journey to wholeness, I have discovered such a sweet, tenderness to who Jesus is and knowing His goodness has changed my life.

We began this book with the question, “Where is God in my suicidal thoughts?” When I was seventeen, I admit the pain and confusion which was so entwined into my thoughts and feelings blinded me from how good He was, despite the fact many people in my life were not. I could not have seen how much He was pursuing me, brought people and messages of hope into my life, and began to reveal His voice to me in ways which would literally save my life.

These were all difficult for me to see and understand then—yet I can see it so clearly now. I believe the answer to “Where was God?” will always come down to, He was near. He did not stop situations in my life which brought me pain, because every person alive is given free will to act in accordance to His order and goodness or reject Him and act out of selfishness, thus putting pain into other’s lives. My teenage years were filled with pain brought on by other’s sin and selfishness. At times, my pain was also brought on by my own. But, in all of

it—God still pursued me, revealed His love to me, and kept speaking to me.

Where was God? He was near. He will always be near. He is always calling us to Himself—which is where healing and wholeness is found.

My hope for you, is that you would be able to find it—and it would be the thing which gives you the courage, strength, and hope—to change your narrative.

Where I Found God - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/XjxViJBVkH0

THE BATTLE IS
IN THE MIND.
THE VICTORY IS
IN ACTION.

CREATE A TRAINING PLACE AND STRATEGY SPACE

What Kind Of Help Exists?

Due to the intensive nature of ISSUE and the fact it speaks to deep internal struggles, finding help for an image matter usually begins by sharing with a skilled professional. This often happens after telling a trusted individual who can help connect you with a skilled professional.

Anything which is locked inside of your thoughts and feelings deserves a place to be processed in a safe environment which can give you actionable guidance and tools.

Additionally, there are a host of tools which can help you find steps to taking action. These include:

- Apps Which Offer Mental Health Support
- Communities With Offer Support
- Finding A Professional

What Kind Of Help Exists? - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/A7CNzHsrg0M

Apps Which Offer Support

TalkLife offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

Moodpath offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

Happify includes games and activities which elevate mood and build resilience through CBT, mindfulness and positivity.

What's Up aids individuals in discovering the cause of feelings and thoughts though guided questioning.

Self-Help For Anxiety Management (SAM) offers an anxiety toolkit which tracks thoughts and behaviors, while also offering tools to combat negativity.

Panic Relief provides coping strategies, exercise, and breathing techniques to help move through a moment of panic.

PTSD Coach provides ways to understand PTSD along with how to find additional help.

BeyondBlue App provides tools to build and implement a safety plan.

Communities Which Offer Support

NEDA's Network Of Support Groups
https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support/support-groups-research-studies

Regionally searchable, local support groups.

To Write Love On Her Arms -
https://twloha.com/find-help/

Extensive, geographically based options for free or low cost counseling, support groups, therapy options and more. Simply type in your zip code for access to options.

The Butterfly Foundation -
https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

Offers online support, education, and relatable stories for men battling eating disorders.

Catalog Of National & International Support

https://anad.org/education-and-awareness/online-resources/eatingdisorderorganizations/

Offers a global range of support pages, offering a diversity of resources for common and unique concerns.

Eating Disorder Support Center -
http://edrcsv.org/free-online-support-groups/

Offers community support for individuals who struggle and separate support groups for family members.

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Connection

Offers peer-led support groups for a range of mental health struggles.

Learning How To Share Your Story

When considering the possibility of sharing your story, it might feel overwhelming. Over the next few pages, we are going to spend time discussing ways to talk about your story, seek guidance, and begin to take actionable steps towards wholeness.

As we said earlier, it is healthy to seek multiple sources of help. God is near and wants to be with you. He also will help us find courage as we take uncomfortable steps to reach out to additional sources of help.

Sometimes those places of help will come from a spiritual background. Other times, they are simply professional services who are skilled in specific areas of guidance.

Over the next few pages, we are going to map out different avenues for you to begin sharing your story in healthy first steps.

Is It Okay To Talk About An Image Matter?

The fact you are asking, is a positive thing. The short answer is, “Yes.” And with that, I would also add it is important to find the right place to talk about it. This is not a matter of shame or an indication that your story is not worth listening to. Instead, what I want for you is for you to have every possible option of being heard.

Because of this, I want to take the next few pages and talk about how to share, who to share with, and small steps you can take as you work towards discussing the matter with someone who can help you take healthy, positive action. As always, however, if you are in danger or harm - call a professional immediately; or call 911.

Ways to reach out:

Covenant House- 1800-999-9999
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Youth Crisis Line – 1800 Hit Home
Hopeline 1800-442-5673
http://www.crisischat.org/chat

How To Talk About An Image Matter

It can be scary to think about opening up and explaining what you are thinking and feeling. But, your story is worth sharing. Since the conversation is important, there are a few things you can do which will help it to be heard.

Prepare

If you have the ability to, jot down a few bullet points—things you are thinking and feeling. It is okay to have those with you when you share. It can help you keep going and know what to say next.

Give Them A Heads Up

You do not have to immediately come out with your most vulnerable thoughts and feelings first. In important conversations it can be helpful to frame what you want to share by saying things like, “I need to talk about something important which might be difficult for me to say.” or “I want to share something but I am afraid you won’t understand—would you be willing to listen?”

Be Clear

It is vital for you to be extremely clear on the extent of your thoughts and feelings.

do not capture the gravity of what you are thinking and feeling. For someone who is listening, they may not understand what you truly mean by such statements.

Take A Healthy Action Step

Opening up about what you are thinking and feeling is the first step. If someone responds positively to you, ask them if you can take an action step together. This might mean talking to a loved one, finding professional guidance, calling a hotline together, or a range of other ways to seek wholeness.

The goal is to leave a conversation with a clear understanding of what you are going through, what your thoughts and feelings are and have been, and what healthy, next steps can be taken.

How To Talk About It - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/8yYr55aO0Lg

What To Share About An Image Matter

Just like the question, “How do share?” you might wonder exactly *what* to share. When there is a lot going on inside of the head and heart, it can feel overwhelming to quiet those enough to decide what to talk about.

Just as in the “When To Share” video, I have a full conversation which discusses “What to share?” below.

But for starters, let’s consider a few key points.

It is good to share:

- What you think and feel right now.
- What you have thought and felt recently.
- What the source might be.
- What you would like to do next.

What To Share? - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/H3Hrz6oZu-c

NOBODY TRIPS
over mountains.
IT IS THE SMALL
PEBBLE THAT
CAUSES YOU
TO STUMBLE.
Pass all the
PEBBLES IN
YOUR PATH AND
YOU WILL FIND YOU
HAVE CROSSED
THE MOUNTAIN.
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

4 Ways To Talk About It

If you are not in immediate danger or harm, and it is safe to take it a bit slower before opening up, consider these steps to begin walking towards reaching out to a loved one or professional support individual:

4 ways to practice taking about image matters:

- Practice telling yourself the story.
- Practice telling an anonymous advocate.
- Practice telling someone who cares about you.
- Practice telling someone who can be with you when you consult a professional.

Each step comes with opportunities for courage.

And yes, each step could face obstacles. So, let's explore those in more detail next.

4 Steps To Practice - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/23ju0VXirqk

Practice Telling Yourself The Story

Why this is good:

You are 100% in control of telling yourself the story, giving it room to surface however you want, with whatever words you want. No one's reactions are part of your story coming to the surface.

Why this might be hard:

- You may not know where to start.
- You might feel lonely afterwards.

For a more in-depth discussion about these points, check out the video below.

Practice Telling Yourself The Story - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/TbqAFnPpk6E

Practice Telling An Anonymous Advocate

Why this is good:

You are building your courage to let your story be heard by someone else. This can give you confidence to know your story is not invalidated. Through this experience, you are learning how to share your story.

Why this might be hard:

- You wish the connection could last.
- You wish they had given you more.
- Someone may not have been “in the game.”

For a more in-depth discussion about these points, check out the video below.

Practice Telling An Advocate - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/cciiuRCg2RI

Practice Telling Someone Who Cares About You

Why this is good:

Sharing your story with someone who knows you and cares about you allows you to have a conversation with someone who understands your history. This can help you feel the most amount of support and validation.

Why this might be hard:

Sometimes, those who care about us listen and hear us– while they are thinking about how it impacts them. The combination of their own thoughts and feelings might mean they do not react well, even though its important to share with them.

For more, check out the video below.

Practice Telling Someone Who Cares - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/t6mVirQhbh0

Practice Telling Someone Who Helps You Take A Step

Why this is good:

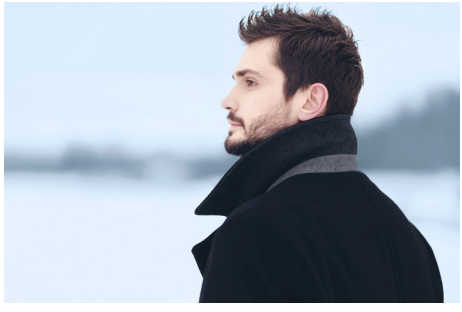
You might know it is time to take a step and get a professional involved. This might mean a doctor, therapist, coach, pastor, or another trained, skilled individual. But, you may not want to do that alone. Involving someone who can be with you might help you to be able to move forward.

Why this might be hard:

At times, it might feel as if they are pushing you past your comfort zone. Feel free to have a conversation with them letting them know how you feel.

For more, check out the video below.

Practice Telling Yourself The Story - Video Discussion



Watch video

https://youtu.be/shUSo1U1A2c

Building A Safety Plan

If you are taking a stand against image matters, you know it often fights back. Taking action each time is a battle which is not easy. Yet, we hope having a pathway to fight back helps you continue to seek wholeness.

Please note: Even with the best of plans, there are times in which a crisis is stronger than our plan. In those moments, seek immediate, professional help. The following ideas on how to fight back against eating disorders are not intended to take the place of professional help.

One such resource which has a fantastic list of tools and resources for creating a safety plan is *Challenge The Storm*: http://challengethestorm.org/safety-plans-mental-health/

Additionaly, HelpGuide.org has tips on how to create a plan to fight back when an image matter occurs. https://www.helpguide.org/articles/eating-disorders/eating-disorder-treatment-and-recovery.htm

Building A Safety Plan - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/sy1yM31mX3s

Safety Plan Resources

If you struggle beyond an image matter, and find yourself facing a range of additional struggles, know there are safety plan resources available for those too. Some of these include:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Safety Plan Template.
https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown_StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf

1 page safety plan print off with space to write in warning signs, coping strategies, and more.

Get Self-Help
https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf

Offers a second safety plan print off, with tools and resources from the UK.

Therapist Aid
https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/suicide/none

Offers free worksheets for building a self-harm safety plan, suicide assessment, and warning signs.

Nick's Experience With Using A Safety Plan
https://youtu.be/jW2Hvv_vN40

One young man's story of how he uses a safety plan in times which feel challenging.

The Goal Is Wholeness

Wholeness is about a state of contentment and peace in a life. It doesn't eliminate the past or any previous pain, instead it acknowledges how that pain has affected us—all while striving to form a new narrative.

Wholeness is about freedom—and I believe it is possible for each individual to discover for themselves.

Is it easy? Not at all. The pathway can be long and come with obstacles which may make us feel as if we may not make it.

But with the right support and tools—I intrinsically believe we can.

I welcome you to find it.

The Goal Is Wholeness - Video Discussion

Watch video

https://youtu.be/tG18UzeL26w

Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle

In the core of who I am—I am convinced none of us are defined by our struggles. Our identity goes far beyond what anyone stole from us, did to us, or how they disappointed us.

While it may be true you or someone you love has faced a deep struggle or have been treated in ways they did not deserve, I believe it does not have to be the key identifier of what makes an individual—them.

Wholeness is still available. Though it requires a journey, it's a pathway to be free of pain's influences—as if it was the only thing to define a life. I believe each of us still have life in front of us and it is filled with the ability for hope, the ability to make a difference in other's lives, and the ability to go out there and have positive and meaningful impact.

Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle- Video

Watch video

https://youtu.be/CnMJlc8PlRE

Your Invitation To Shift The Story

If you, or someone you care for, are looking for a way to walk a journey to shift an incomplete story towards truth, you are invited to change your narrative.

Come on a journey through twenty video-based pathway markers which offer guidance on how you or someone you care for can seek wholeness. Change Your Narrative believes everyone has the right to be able to take back the pen of your story.

Come On A Journey To Find Wholeness...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThTdIeKhc-CY&t=6s

Please Note:

All statements and views within this book, the **change your narrative** website, and the videos on our YouTube channel are strictly opinion based. They are not intended to be utilized as professional treatment or care. If you or someone you care for struggles with mental illness, depression, suicidal thought or destructive life choices, I highly recommend seeking out professional help.

If you are in immediate harm or danger call 911.

Additional Resources:

24/7/365 Crisis Call Center Hotline:
1 (1800) 273-8255

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1 (1800) 273-8255

Text “Answer” to 839863

Chat with a Soul Medic:
http://remedylive.com/soulmedics/

Resource Guide:

Apps Which Offer Support
Communities Which Offer Support

Resources For:
Parents
Families
Ministry Leaders
Teachers
Men
Teenagers Who Struggle
Teenagers Whose Friends Struggle

Apps Which Offer Support

TalkLife offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

Moodpath offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

Happify includes games and activities which elevate mood and build resilience through CBT, mindfulness and positivity.

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https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support/support-groups-research-studies

Regionally searchable, local support groups.

To Write Love On Her Arms -
https://twloha.com/find-help/

Extensive, geographically based options for free or low cost counseling, support groups, therapy options and more. Simply type in your zip code for access to options.

The Butterfly Foundation -
https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

Offers online support, education, and relatable stories for men battling eating disorders.

Catalog Of National & International Support

https://anad.org/education-and-awareness/online-resources/eatingdisorderorganizations/

Offers a global range of support pages, offering a diversity of resources for common and unique concerns.

Eating Disorder Support Center -
http://edrcsv.org/free-online-support-groups/

Offers community support for individuals who struggle and separate support groups for family members.

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group
https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Connection

Offers peer-led support groups for a range of mental health struggles.

Resources for Parents

How To Help Someone With An Eating Disorder
What Mia Did Next
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbIB2W2kZus

> Mia gives her firsthand advice on what did and did not help her during her recovery process—and how you can support someone you care for.

Promoting Health Body Image In Your Children
https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/healthy-lifestyle/body-image/body-image-teens

> Offers ways to influence your child's body image in a positive way, along with what signs to look for if you are concerned for your child.

Guys Get Eating Disorders Too
https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/understand-eating-disorders/guys-get-eating-disorders-too/

Provides education on how image matters present themselves for males—along with firsthand accounts.

5 Signs Your Teen Might Have An Eating Disorder
Mayo Clinic
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZpMT8dvqE0

Offers 5 signals to look for—in under a minute.

How I Survived Anorexia
BBC Three
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZpMT8dvqE0

Jodie, her mom, and her friend discuss Jodie's struggle and recovery from Anorexia—including how Jodie felt split into two person, and then I earned how to be whole.

National Eating Disorder Association Screening Tool

NEDA's website states this tool is, "appropriate for ages 13 and up — can help determine if it's time to seek professional help."

https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/screening-tool

Warning Signs And Symptoms
National Eating Disorders Association
https://youtu.be/nJMtReAg1DI

Explains the signs and symptoms of several eating disorders.

What's Eating You? A Workbook For Teens With Anorexia, Bulimia, And Other Eating Disorders by Tammy Nelson PhD
https://www.amazon.com/dp/1572246073

Provides insight combined with short, actionable prompts to build a circle of support, tools, and healing resources.

What Is My Identity?
Sadie Robertson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kL2bXmfquw

Sadie asks three questions to viewers to help them form the foundation of their identity, with a faith-based point of view.

Support For Families

NEDA's Network Of Support Groups

https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support/support-groups-research-studies

Regionally searchable, local support groups.

The National Alliance On Mental Illness has a directory of support groups for you and your family.

https://www.nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-family-support-group

The Society For Adolescent Heath And Medicine has a comprehensive listing of additional support options.

https://www.adolescenthealth.org/Resources/Clinical-Care-Resources/Mental-Health/Mental-Health-Resources-For-Parents-of-Adolescents.aspx

Family Caregiver Alliance provides a map of network help in your area.

https://www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator

Resources For Ministry Leaders

The Truth About Eating Disorders
Focus On The Family
https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/the-truth-about-eating-disorders/

Offers a comprehensive overview of firsthand accounts of survivors and their families. Includes Scripture and advice to move towards recovery.

6 Biblical Counseling Resources On Eating Disorders

https://www.rpmministries.org/2019/05/6-biblical-counseling-resources-on-eating-disorders/

A list of 6 books which offer educational insight and encouragement for those who struggle and those who care for them.

Combating Eating Disorders With The Gospel Of Grace
https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/eating-disorders-and-the-power-of-christ/

> One woman's story—and her discovery that grace and the Gospel offered the freedom she was searching for.

An Open Letter To Those Who Struggle—From A Preacher's Kid Who Struggled
https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/an-open-letter-to-my-friends-struggling-with-eating-disorders

> An honest account of wrestling between an eating disorder and finding faith. Includes specific Scripture which sparked the shift in the author, along with 5 keys for those who struggle today.

Deadly Eating Disorders: What Youth Leaders Need To Know

https://www.youthworker.com/articles/deadly-eating-disorders-what-youth-leaders-need-to-know/

> An overview of Eating Disorder Warning Signs and what you can do to be there for students.

Women's Ministry Toolbox
https://womensministrytoolbox.com/disordered-eating/

Provides a collection of resources for faith communities seeking to minister to girls and women who struggle with eating disorders.

Project Light Ministries
https://www.projectlightministries.com/sts-resources

Offers a sisterhood of community support for women who struggle.

How to Build Education, Understanding & Community Around Someone Who Is Struggling
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xF3kXLz2MQs
Life.Church

Offers a roundtable discussion of how to be supportive of someone who struggles.

Tips For Students – How To Talk About Mental Health
https://www.mhanational.org/time-talk-tips-talking-about-your-mental-health

Includes several prompts which help students get started with beginning an important conversation, including a letter template. Can be utilized as a means for helping young people frame the discussion.

Resources For Teachers

What's Eating You? A Workbook For Teens With Anorexia, Bulimia, And Other Eating Disorders by Tammy Nelson PhD
https://www.amazon.com/dp/1572246073

> Provides insight combined with short, actionable prompts to build a circle of support, tools, and healing resources.

Tips For Talking About Your Mental Health
https://www.mhanational.org/time-talk-tips-talking-about-your-mental-health

> Includes several prompts which help students get started with beginning an important conversation, including a letter template. Can be utilized as a means for helping young people frame the discussion.

Resources For Men

Guys Get Eating Disorders Too
https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/understand-eating-disorders/guys-get-eating-disorders-too/

Provides education on how image matters present themselves for males—along with firsthand accounts.

Braiden's Story—A Guy's Discussion On Bulimia
The Butterfly Foundation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmIgVXvw_VI&feature=youtu.be

Braiden shares his firsthand journey towards seeking recovery.

MLB Star Overcomes His Eating Disorder
Uninterrupted
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awlLNvTH6PA

Seattle Mariners Catcher shares his struggle and journey to wholeness—along with insights from the documentary, "Uninterrupted."

Millstone – Documentary About Eating Disorders In Men
Florence Pellacani
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRim224xFjE

A collaborative efforts of numerous survivors, sharing their stories and search for recovery.

Heads Up Guys
https://headsupguys.org/mens-depression/suicide/

Site offers male-specific action steps.

Man Therapy
https://mantherapy.org

Site uses humor to discuss difficult topics.

Face It Foundation
https://www.faceitfoundation.org

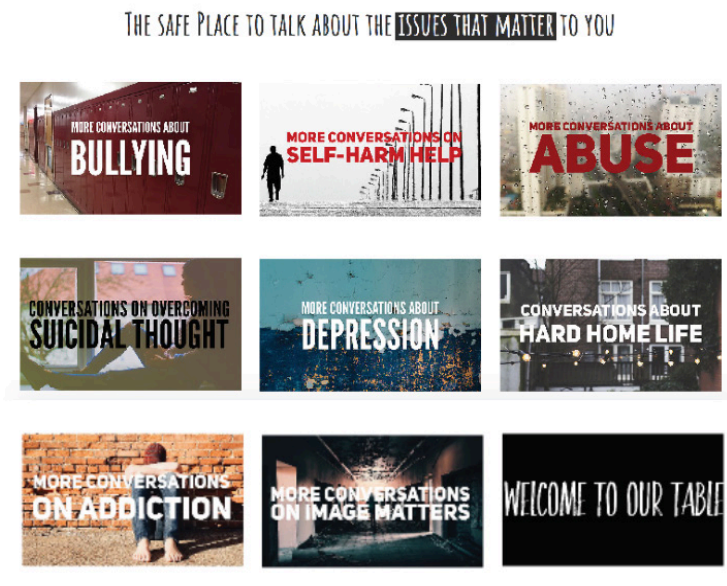
Provides guidance to overcome depression

Your Head: An Owner's Manual PDF Resource
https://up2sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ownersmanual-1.pdf

Printable PDF filled with resources and tools for those wanting to learn more about male mental health issues.

change your narrative

The Place Where The Discussion Continues...



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