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Stress Management

Reflection of The Gifts of Imperfection

Through reading “The Gifts of Imperfection” by Brene Brown I have learned many new strategies to deal with stress. The two guidepost that resonated with me the most are the guideposts of cultivating play and rest, and cultivating calm and stillness.

The first guidepost I chose is the cultivating play and rest guidepost. I chose this guidepost because I believe that having play and rest in your life is a necessity towards lowering stress and living healthy. Brene Brown writes that play is as essential biologically as rest and to live a balanced stress free life one needs to have adequate play and rest in their life. Another thing that stuck with me from this guidepost was to get rid of the badge of honor associated with over exhaustion and achievement from over working. Our society has told us that over exhaustion is a good thing and forgetting about play and rest to work more is a good thing, however this is contrary to what Brown writes about. Play could lead to dealing with stress and difficulties, helps with your work, and promotes creativity, which are all positive effects. I feel like many times when I feel over stressed our over worked, setting some time aside for free time and pleasant activities help with dealing with the stressors at the moment. Some of my activities of play include playing basketball, exercising, watching a movie, hanging out with friends, reading a book for pleasure and many more. One thing I notice is that when I set a time aside for these activities I immediately feel better and less stressed after doing them. Having time for play clears my mind of all the things that are stressing me out at the moment and allows me to live in the now, and enjoy what is happening at the current moment.

The second guidepost I chose the cultivating calm and stillness. I chose this guidepost because many times when I feel over anxious I get caught in a trap of anxiety where I am unable to do anything at all. This guidepost of learning how to lessen anxiety through calmness and stillness, rather than learning to live with anxiety was very helpful for me. This guidepost has shown me many practices and skills I could use when I realize anxiety is building up and how to be calm and still in these situations. First off Brown wrote of the constant practices of calmness and stillness and how being persistent and purposeful on a daily basis of these practices is key to reducing anxiety. Brown wrote how living in anxiety only lead to more anxiety and acting in a calm matter leads to more calm and less anxiety. This idea that mindfulness of certain situations and how your reaction could either add or decrease anxiety is very interesting, especially for the fact that anxiety can really stop me from doing what I want to do. Brown writes that a good practice of calm is to focus on breathing and to think before reacting to particularly stressful situations. The idea of stillness is also very interesting because of the thought that if we keep moving we could escape all our stress and problems. However eventually all our problems catch up to us, so rather running from our anxiety it is better to react with stillness and deal with them when they appear, and prevent them from building up to a point that is unbearable. This is especially helpful with school work and other deadlines because if we run from them rather than act with stillness and deal with them we end up at a point where all the work is unmanageable and a point of extreme stress.

Brown writes about meaningful work and that labeling yourself to just one thing could add stress to your life. It is better to instead answer what you do with a variety of things that inspire you, or things you aspire to be. Brown writes about the slash model of describing what you do as a way to answer that question with multiple careers that inspire you. Personally my slash model of what I do would be data scientist/athlete/rapper/researcher/teacher.

“The Gifts of Imperfection” is a great book with many ideas and strategies on how to deal with and lower stress in your life. This book is very relevant to our class and goes hand in hand with many topics we have learned. From the book I have learned many strategies that I hope to implement in my everyday life.