

Hello Friend,

Is your mental wellness a priority? If I saw your planner or looked at your daily schedule, would I be able to find spaces where you are dedicating time to your mental health?

Being proactive when it comes mental wellness is important. There are steps we can take to better equip ourselves to handle the highs and lows. But be careful, these aren't linear steps that if taken in order mental wellness is guaranteed...I have lived too much life to know that is not always the case. But there are things we can do to give ourselves the best chance possible at wellness.

1. It's OK if You Need a Counselor.

I have seen a counselor for years. Some seasons, I see a counselor weekly-some seasons monthly-and some seasons not at all. If you find yourself in a space where you aren't sleeping well, you are eating like you normally do, you find yourself trying to self-medicate in one form or another-maybe you should check in with a counselor. Instead of waiting for it to get so bad that you feel the bottom dropping out on you, seek wise counsel-ask for help-get resourced so that you can be the healthiest version of you this season. I share a few tips on what steps you can take to find a counselor here:

2. Create a Rhythm

College can be a lot of fun. Like A LOT of fun! Late nights, parties, friends, family visits, sports, all the things! Having fun is a part of life. And having fun is something to be embraced. I find when I create a rhythm of rest, exercise, prayer, celebrating with family and friends, solitude, worship, and gratitude, I find myself in a healthy place more times than not. In Chapter 6 of my book, Not Yet, I talk in length about the unforced rhythms of grace. This is a practice that has captured my heart and I am looking forward to spending more time on this with you during this semester.

3. It's Not All About You

When I get to an unhealthy place, I turn my focus inward. I begin to see my problems, my issues, my world through my lens. It's human nature to do that and it is important to guard against that. You see, when we start to slip to unhealthy places, we think it is all about us. One thing we can do to fight that tendency is to help someone else. Maybe you know someone that is struggling this semester. One thing you can do to help someone else is by sharing this community with them. At Goby, we believe that helping one another along the way is an important piece of our mental wellness. I encourage you to share this community with someone that needs to hear that they are not alone, that with God's help-they can do hard things.

Let's seek help.

Let's find a rhythm.

Let's help one another along the way.

Swimming upstream with you,

Toby

Hello Friend,

One thing that can put extra strain on our already taxed mental health is comparing your reality to the perceived reality of someone else. We know in our head that Facebook and Instagram aren't true, but we have a hard time not believing what we see-like it can hurt our hearts.

If you find yourself slipping into the comparison trap this semester, try a few of these ideas that have worked for me.

1. You Are His

In the hustle and bustle of your life, fix your eyes on Jesus. Remember, you are who He says you are. And if you need a reminder, a great place to stay in His presence is to spend time each day-just a few minutes -focusing on the Forty I Ams. Read one a day. Write them out on notecards. Write one out on your mirror or make it your screensaver on your phone.

2. You Are Enough

We all feel like we don't measure up at some point in our lives. It's hard to be in the world and not have the feeling of "am I enough?" College can be a literal comparison trap. You have class pressures and maybe pressures for the social circle you are in. Maybe too, you feel inadequate because of the social circles you are not in! You may feel the pressure to be the top in the class. Go easy on yourself. Fight the tendency to be distracted by keeping up and be certain that you are enough.

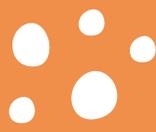
3. You Have No Comparison

In a nutshell, this is the best advice I can give you, for you in your college life and your seasons to come. You were created on purpose and for a purpose. There is no one like you in this world. You have a story all your own. You have destiny that only you can live out. When you start to doubt who's you are, if you are enough, or wonder if you don't measure up-remember...

nothing compares to you.

Swimming Upstream With You,
Toby

P.S. Here's the link to the 40 I Ams. Print a copy for yourself. And you can also click this link for a few screen savers we had made. You can share them with a friend as well. Gobies help each other along the way!



Hey Friend,

How is your semester going? Is it going like you planned for it to go? Are you feeling like it's not as ideal as you had planned?

I have to guard against wanting everything to be perfect. The start of the new year or a new semester can sometimes make us feel the pressure to be perfect. I have found that a long term plan to keep my mental wellness in check is a good thing. But I also need to make sure I don't get derailed because of the pressure to have a perfect plan. It's a rhythm—a delicate ebb and flow between where I authentically am and where I aspire to be.

You know what drives me? I always try to keep the role I play in the lives of the people I love at the front of my mind. For me, it's my wife Mika, my kids, and my grandkids. You see, the people we love and care about need us to be as emotionally healthy as we can be. They don't need us to be perfect. They need us to be well.

What can you do to be the very best version of you for the people that you love?

Our social feeds are full of suggestions right now!

...take this—write that—drink this—give up that—run this—buy that. Through the years, I have found that when I focus on progress in a few areas, my mental health benefits. I have a few things that I keep in front of me as part of my rhythm to stay in as healthy a space as possible. These steps benefit me and they benefit my family just as much!

Rest

Get enough sleep. Turn your electronics off at night. If you have a tendency to get sucked up in the culture of hustle, be intentional about pausing.

Breath Deep

Sounds simple. But when is the last time you took mindful breaths? Breathe deep. Let your lungs fill with air—hold it—and then exhale. Do this several times a day. I promise, you will be surprised how this small step will impact your mental health.

Drink Water

Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Be intentional about the number of ounces you consume in a day. Make a plan to stay hydrated. Don't wait until the end of the day to guzzle a gallon of water!

Go Outside

Step outside. Take a glass of water with you. Breathe in. Maybe take a walk if the weather is nice. Stare at the sky and thank God for the air you breathe.

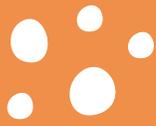
Exercise

Whatever that looks like for you—move your body everyday. Maybe you are a runner. Maybe you like to walk or jog. Do you have a gym membership? GREAT! Use it! It's good to get your heart rate up. Exercise helps my all around disposition. Some days I do more than others—but I know it is important to get up and move.

These five steps will have a positive impact on your mental wellness. Our loved ones will benefit from our wellness almost as much as we do! These practices are also good models for your friends and peers to see—so invite them to join along with you! When our people see us model ways to improve our mental wellness, that's a win in my book!

Remember, it's about progress not perfection.

And I am here to swim upstream with you,
Toby



Hi Friend,

Approximately 18% of people ages 18- 54 have an anxiety disorder in a given year. Anxiety disorders include panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), and phobias (social phobia, agoraphobia, and specific phobia).

-Johns Hopkins University, Johns Hopkins Hospital 2021

It seems like our social media feeds and our headlines are filled with one really gloomy statistic after another. We are seeing more and more statistics like this one each day. Athletes, artists, chefs, fashion designers, moms, dads, kids, and me, a Pastor, are all real stories behind these numbers.

We may argue about a lot of things these days, but we can almost certainly agree that our world looks very different than it did in 2019. Things just aren't the same as they used to be. Lots has changed-we have had so much go on in our world, it seems very logical that these numbers are high.

With so many people struggling, do you find yourself asking the question...

So, how can I help someone in my home that is struggling with panic and/or anxiety?

Here's a few things you can try:

Listen.

Sometimes we jump to offering solutions before we really listen to what our spouse or our kid is trying to tell us. Be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Be present.

Turn the tv off, put your phone down, look your person in the eyes. Sometimes your loved one just needs your attention. That may not be all they need, but it is a good start in showing them that they are known, heard, and loved.

Offer reassurance.

Verbally communicate your commitment to your person. Let them know you are with them, that you are going to walk alongside them. Let them know you are praying for them and believing for them even if they can't.

If you feel like you need to reach out for professional help, please don't let shame keep you from taking that step.

I know what it is like to feel alone, silenced, scared, and like no one gets me. We are building a community to help each other along the way. We are dedicated to helping you as you help someone else!

Swimming upstream with you,
Toby