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Freshman

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Personal Health 243

Mind, Body, Strength

“A good peace, a solid peace, a peace in which communities can flourish, can only be built when we ask ourselves and each other to be more than just good, and better than just strong. And a good life, a meaningful life, a life in which we can enjoy the world and live with purpose, can only be built if we do more than live for ourselves” (Greitens 11). With every life comes conflict, with every conflict there comes a solution. From this solution we can continue to live our lives with meaning and purpose, but only if this solution is obtained in a flourishing manner. Fairly recently I experienced an internal conflict that not only affected me, but my family and friends as well. By overcoming this conflict I have learned what it means to have a flourishing life and how to live for other people. If I had handled this conflict differently and “was better than just strong” (Greitens 11) perhaps the outcome would have been different. Through evaluating a conflict in my life using Eric Greitens paradox of being strong to do good, and doing good to be strong, from The Heart and the Fist, I have learned how resolving difficult conflicts can create new meaning in ones life (Greitens 11).

About two years ago I began to develop an eating disorder and shortly after was diagnosed with anorexia. This internal conflict became the center of my life. I was not focused on living my life, and after a few months I felt that I no longer had a purpose to live. I did not have the energy to flourish as a human being and did not have the energy to focus on all of the important parts of my life and the world around me. I was living the opposite life of Eric

Greitens. Eric constantly was engaging in new experiences and pouring his whole heart into each experience. I was living the same experience every single day and could not bring myself to become enriched in new experiences. Not only was I not living for others, but I was not even living for myself. In order for one to branch out and create a meaningful life for others, one must learn how to create a meaningful life for oneself first. By learning the foundation of giving meaning to one's life, one can implement these ideas on other people and positively affect their communities.

In addition to this internal conflict taking over my life, it affected the lives of the people around me including my family, friends, and community. They spent a lot of their time worrying about my condition, which influenced the attitudes in their lives at the time. My family was fearful that I wouldn't make it, and my actions directly impacted them. They could not continue to fulfill their purpose in life because they were focused on my well-being. We were living in a community of conflict because of my own internal conflict. This shows how a community and an individual can inversely affect each other. The community influenced my eating disorder and my eating disorder influenced the community. In Eric Greitens life the different communities all over the world that he was a part of had a significant influence on his perceptions of the world. On the contrary, he helped to influence world communities through his humanitarian and SEAL work.

Because of the negative influence that my eating disorder had on the community around me, I was able to begin making small, but positive changes. My recovery was a struggle and after a year of tears, conflict, and numerous therapy sessions, I was able to turn my life around. As I found myself making huge steps to recovery I was able to reflect on the last year of my life and thought to myself "I am never going back." This was a time in my life that I was not going to dwell on and was going to move forward. I had the energy to participate in activities, sports,

hang out with my friends, experience new things, and have fun while doing it. I was physically capable of doing all the things that I loved to do and more, and more importantly I was happy. I had found an internal peace, “A good peace, a solid peace, a peace in which communities can flourish” (Greitens 11). By finding this internal peace and self-confidence I was able to create feelings of peace and ease in the others around me that had been affected by my anorexia. My family and friends could once again relax and not have to worry about me. I was able to start living a strong, healthy, peaceful life. I realized that I had a purpose to live and from that time on, made a promise to try and live everyday to the fullest and be happy to be here. Having this near death experience made me grateful for the chance to live and to live such a fortunate life. I no longer had to focus on myself. I could give my attention to others and listen to their problems and give advice based on my experiences. “I had a better idea of what it meant to live a good life and be a good man” (Greitens 87). I realized how valuable and fragile life is. We need to make the most of it while we can and make a good life for ourselves. To be good we need to focus on doing one thing at a time really well, and make sure that it is something we love. All of these things together will create meaning and make life purposeful. When I was dealing with anorexia life was boring, I was restricted from almost all activities, and I was depressed. When I recovered I knew that there was no reason for leading that meaningless of a life ever again and I made a conscious change. I completely changed my lifestyle for the better and looking back I am so glad that I had the strength to do so before it was too late.

I could have handled this situation differently to “be more than just good, and better than just strong” (Greitens 11). Even though I was able to overcome this difficult conflict in my life and make a full recovery there are a lot of things that I could have done to aid my own recovery. One of the biggest things that I could have done to be stronger would be to have better communication with my therapist and my family. I did not like to voice how I was feeling and

what I was going through, instead I would become frustrated and not talk to anyone. Through communication and correctly expressing ones feelings we can acquire more knowledge about the situation that a loved one is going through and perhaps know how to better help them. In Eric Greitens words communication was my “frontline.” It was the main source of recovery and what I had to fight for the most to stay on top. My recovery time might have been faster if I had been strong enough to express my feelings and was open-minded to getting help and trying new techniques.

Because of my struggle with anorexia I became a stronger person. I learned how to deal with difficult life situations and learned how one’s actions can affect a community. Now I too, like Eric Greitens, “can enjoy the world and live with a purpose” (Greitens 11). I am no longer focused on myself and my health, but the health of my surrounding community. I have a better sense of who I am and know from experience how the mind and body are connected. They affect each other and together play a huge role in ones physical and mental well being. Now I know how the heart, the mind and the fist truly symbolize the strength needed to have both good mental and physical health. The heart and the fist strongly influence each other and are essential to the way ones whole-body strength. If we can be strong for ourselves in every way, we can be strong for others.

Works Cited

Greitens, Eric. *The Heart and the Fist: The Education of a Humanitarian, the Making of a Navy*

SEAL. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011. Print.