

IT'S FINE.

PART 2: HEALTHY EMOTIONAL HABITS

INTRODUCTION

Most of us tend to neglect positive habits or behaviors that will strengthen our emotional health. That's because it's a lot easier—at least in the short-term—to pretend everything is okay than to make the effort to establish new, healthy habits. But when we avoid change, we're not the only ones who suffer. The unhealthy emotions and behaviors we sow now are eventually reaped by the people we love most.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has anyone ever told you to “man up” (or “woman up”) during a difficult situation or challenging season in life? If so, what long-term effect did that have on the way you deal with negative emotions?
2. In his book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero wrote, “The sad reality is that most of us will never go forward until the pain of staying where we are is unbearable.” Why is it so difficult for us to be proactive about pursuing growth and emotional health? What are some things that stand in the way of your growth?
3. Pretending we don't have a problem feels safer than honesty and vulnerability, but leaves us with a pretend version of ourselves. When have you pretended everything was okay even though you knew it wasn't? How did pretending influence the way you viewed yourself or presented yourself to others?
4. **Read John 4:31–38.**
Jesus sacrificed himself on our behalf. We get to reap the benefits of what he sowed. The same principle applies to our own lives. What are you currently sowing that the people who are most important to you will someday reap? Is what you're sowing good or bad? Are you creating healthy emotional habits so they will one day benefit? Why or why not?
5. Take a look at the list of healthy habits below. What is one thing you can do this week to begin to establish each habit in your life? How can this group support and encourage you?
 1. *Let your feelings into the car, but don't let them drive.*
Do you know specifically what you're feeling? Are you taking steps to prevent those feelings from controlling you?
 2. *Maintain an ongoing dialogue with healthy people.*
Who can you trust to tell you what you need to hear instead of what you want to hear? If you don't have that person in your life, who can you reach out to?
 3. *Prioritize feedback from others over your own assessment.*
How soon can you ask a trusted person or people, “What's it like to be on the other side of me?” Put it on your calendar.
 4. *Invite God into the process.*
You can't do this without your heavenly Father. What can you do to increase your connection to him?

MOVING FORWARD

Because we're all connected, your habits will affect the people you love most. Failing to establish healthy emotional habits will ultimately undermine the relationships you care most about. If you want to grow into a better spouse, parent, coworker, or neighbor, you have to pay attention to and address what's going on inside of you. It's the only way to ensure you'll leave a positive impact on the people who come behind you and reap what you've sown.