

Emotional & Spiritual Health at Home: Experiencing Growth

As lockdown continued it was difficult to stay positive. The last couple of articles talked about how hard this time could be and to set realistic expectations for ourselves. When times are tough it's important to recognize our grief and process things through a lens of grace. But then it's time to focus on growth.

There's a reason I didn't start this series with ways to improve ourselves. If we don't grieve our losses and offer ourselves grace in the places we struggle, our growth can come from a place of perfectionism or shallow toxic positivity. And when we ultimately fail to make the goals we set for ourselves, then we will experience shame.

But, when we are honest with ourselves and the difficulties we face, we can truly use the opportunity for personal growth and seek to learn something new about ourselves and God. This is the deep honest place that strengthens our faith – it's not a shallow statement. It comes from one that says even when things are hard, even when plans fail, even when loss happens, God is good, faithful and worthy of our praise.

We can learn from last year's lockdown and put in healthy practices to find joy even in the hard times. You do not need to emerge from your home fluent in another language and an expert baker, but you can focus on small ways to improve your experience while in lockdown or isolation.

Don't focus on the growth but rather focus on the ways you can practice gratitude. What are the things that you can be thankful for and that provide you joy? Start or end each day recognizing the good in an otherwise hard situation and celebrate the small joys you find.

Here are some practical ways to bring joy to into lockdown or isolation and experience growth spiritually and emotionally:

- Maintain a routine and keep good boundaries while working at home
- Do something unexpected and fun each day no matter how silly or small
- Read something you've wanted to read but haven't had time
- Reach out and connect virtually to a friend each day
- Add to your exercise routine
- Increase your devotional time
- Practice Gratitude – list 5 things you're thankful for each day
- Incorporate prayer walks in your day

Or more importantly, find whatever works for you. The only goal is to help find the abundant life you are created to have, even in lockdown.