



A Reader *Writes*

by Rachael Kaiser

How one reader learned
asking for help is OK

One of the greatest things I have done for myself in the last year has been to see a therapist. My mom has always said, “Everyone should see a therapist at some point in their life! It can only help you learn more about yourself.” Like I say with so many other things, she was right.

I have always been a Type A personality (overly organized, a perfectionist, want to be the best at everything). If I sign on to do something, I am going to dedicate all my time and energy into doing it, and doing it right. While I enjoy the rewards of working hard for something and seeing it all done, it is also extremely stressful. It’s stressful to wonder what everyone else will think about me and the project I completed; it’s stressful to worry over getting every little thing right; it’s stressful to think of nothing else until it is done.

My therapist has taught me to let all these stresses and worries go. I practice this each day through 10 minutes of meditation, breathing in and out, clearing my mind of anything that enters it to focus only on my breath. When she first explained the premise of this exercise, I have to admit, I was a bit skeptical. She explained that while I was meditating

and letting thoughts and feelings go, my brain would actually develop new neural pathways that make this task easier each time I practice.

This translates into real life when I come across something that I would normally obsess over. I didn’t get something completed on time; someone complained about something I did at work; I overheard someone talking about me or my kids, but instead, I can take a deep breath and let these things go. After several months of practicing meditation (though I admit, I don’t get to it every single day), I find myself letting things go all day long!

Deep breath when I realize the laundry isn’t done. (I used to actually swear at the washing machine.) Deep breath when I read an inflammatory post on Facebook. Deep breath when someone cuts me off on the highway. Deep breath when I hear something someone else said about me. This has made an enormous change in how I feel about myself and the world.

I have learned a lot about myself and my relationships with others in these meetings with my therapist, and I’m so grateful that I finally took my mom’s advice. I would recommend therapy to ANYONE who is struggling, whether you are feeling overwhelmed with everything you have to get done in a day, struggling in your marriage or other relationships, or feeling unappreciated

at work or at home. Our society is not one to talk a lot about mental health (though a lot of changes have been made on that front and I hope that continues to happen), yet it is an extremely important part of well-being. We don’t hesitate to go to the doctor when something affects us physically, yet there is still a stigma attached to seeking help for our mental health.

I know this is a lot of personal information to write about, but I also know that there are a lot of other people out there who struggle with the same things I do. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves in America: to do the best, to have the best, to be the best. While we can limit our exposure to some of that by canceling our cable subscriptions and surrounding ourselves with people who value the same things we value, it is impossible to avoid all the pressures of daily life. I’m hoping that my experience might encourage someone else to take the steps needed to improve their own mental health. Whether it is through prayer or meditation or meeting a therapist, talking with a good friend, or just eliminating some of the unnecessary stresses in life... ‘cause as the old saying goes, “if Momma ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.” I only wish my family hadn’t had to find that out the hard way! 

Rachael Kaiser has been a regular reader of CPC for years, and happens to be a distributor of the magazine as well for the last few years.