

Personal Reflection on Emotional and Social Burdens Inspired by The Things They Carried

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Introduction

In this journal, I will discuss the physical items, emotions, and thoughts that I carry with me in my routine.

Discussion

My emotions are always changing with time as a teenage boy. One time I am attracted to a thing, and after a while, that is not attractive to me. However, I think this is the charm of youth; these dynamic toughs keep me running and motivate me to try new things. It is my developing age, and I guess this period is different for everyone. It cannot be predicted how much time I will take to become a fully-grown mature individual. From my perspective, I have already been through many changes, and my emotional state is somewhat stable. Sometimes I am uncertain about things, and it became difficult for me to decide what is right. I believe that this change in my physical and emotional state has made me more moody, conscious and sensitive. It brings me some of the problems in my routine life to adjust with my peers because everyone is at the same stage, and the state of mind is somewhat similar. At one point, I also demand more freedom from my parents in respect of my routine life. It is because I do not like to ask for permission, and it gives me more autonomy and independence when I do my things in my way. In doing so, I have gone through some of the problems because this behavior leads to mistakes and that is how I learn about life.

I keep thinking about the random things that come in front of me in my routine. Most of all, the arguments and communication with my parents are at the top of the list of my thoughts. I sometimes feel that they do not get my point. It is not as if they are not supportive or rigid about rules, but the way I want to make them understand my situation is difficult for them to comprehend. I like experiencing new things, and sometimes I get late than my curfew time at home, they are not comfortable with these terms. They are reluctant to permit me on night trips. I know it is for my safety but sometimes this is the thing that I want badly. Sometimes, I think that my thoughts are on a roller coaster. I am always on something new. Also, one thing does not satisfy me for long. The feelings of anger and sadness overcome me at times, and I do things that have serious consequences afterward. I feel that I should control this thing to develop a better bonding and understanding with my peers and family members. (O'Brien, T., 1990)

If I talk about the physical things that I normally carry with me, many things are dear to me. Some of

those things are precious to me, and I think that they bring me luck or, in fact, keep me satisfied. My grandfather gave me a pendant a few years back. I like it because of its beautiful color. That is always with me as a gesture of his good wishes. It is the only thing that I am emotionally attached to, and I do not want to leave it behind no matter where I am going. Other than this, I have a cell phone that I keep to myself. On the one hand, it is a necessity because I have to contact my parents whenever I am away or they are not at home. On the other, everyone follows a trend. It keeps me connected with my friends and social media. Another important physical item that is always with me is my watch. It is not that it is a special watch or someone gave it to me. It is just that I like wearing a watch. Also, it gives a more sophisticated and classy look to my appearance. I like playing video games, so I have a PlayStation that I like to keep with me. However, it is not possible to carry it around always.

Journal 2: Love

Introduction

Here I will describe the people that are close to me and feelings I have for them.

Discussion

I have always had a good emotional bonding with my family, except for some occasions when there is a conflict. Honestly, I like my family because our bonding is stronger as compared to when I see others in our community and peers. I need constant support and encouragement to do things in my life. I have always made decisions with the consent of my parents. They are supportive and make me understand what is good and not good for me, and then let me decide by myself. It gives me certain autonomy and independence that I like. During the past years, I have experienced some changes in our relationship. I have a strong attachment to my mother as compared to my father, and she always supports me in my decisions. Even she understands the facts that I cannot communicate. I like spending time with my family, and we arrange regular meals over which we discuss our routines and chat. It is part of our family tradition that we go on outings and celebrate in case of any big achievement. When I encounter any problem in my life, I feel free to share it will include my family members. They are always helpful in this regard.

I am not expressive, so it is difficult for me to show my feelings, and I even like being with people who are not flooded with emotions and get excessively obvious about their feelings. My friend's circle is like this because I have always been very precise about who I choose for friendship. My strong bonding is created with very few people, and I make sure to make a good long-term relationship with the people I have contact with. My friends always support me in my decisions, and I develop good experiences with them. We experiment with new things and ideas. I sometimes have conflicts with my friends, and mostly, it is because we have diverse thinking patterns and we do not agree on a point. We trust each other with our secrets, and this makes our friendship strong. I have many friends on

social media, and there is a great level of understanding among us. We have healthy conversations, and this helps me have some better insights about areas that are far away. Some of them are from other countries, while few are even from other parts of the world. This diverse range of friends enables me to experiment with new things. We share information about our cultures and values, and this thing brings us closer.

Other than friends and family, I have other people in my life that I care about and love. Most of them are from the places that I visit and spend my time. I go to the park often, and there is an uncle who visits that park daily. We gossip for some time, and he shares valuable experiences with me. I like him because I can talk about the things that I cannot share with my friends. He does not judge me and offers meaningful advice. Other than him, there is an aunt in my neighborhood, and I have developed a friendly relationship with her. Her son is my friend, and I often go to her home to play. She shows a lot of concern for me and cares for me like her son. We make tasty pies.

Journal 3: Spin

Introduction

The conflict I face about how I see myself and how others feel about me is discussed in this section.

Discussion

Everyone has a certain idea of himself, and sometimes people see him in an entirely different frame. At times, it becomes difficult for me to make others understand my point of view. As a student, I focus on understanding things on a deeper level. It has never been easy for me to cram things. I just read the material and try to develop a clear understanding of it. Then, I reproduce that material in exams and class activities. However, people around me sometimes do not understand this. As for my parents, they think that I spend less time studying than I should. Even sometimes, my teachers do not get what I try to convey through my writing. According to me, it is the best way of studying. It is time-saving, and the retention level is more because study material stays in my mind for a long time. However, for others, it is not as effective as it may seem to me. I think this happens because people do not try to understand the background of a situation and judge others according to predetermined standards. Even sometimes, it becomes difficult for me to make my parents understand my point unless we get into a serious conversation.

As a son, I always try to be up to the expectations of my parents. I participate in house chores and take some responsibility as a son of the house. However, whenever I do anything wrong, or something does not go as planned, all the odds turn against me. Suddenly, I turn from the ideal child to a disobedient son. The autonomy they give to me in my routine is affected in such situations. According to my perception, I do everything I can for the best, but my parents do not perceive it alike. This

conflict in thoughts mostly refrains me from doing things that I like to do. When I have a feeling that something can go wrong, I try to find safe ways of doing it so that others will not get a chance to blame it on me. It makes me question myself sometimes why I have to change my attitude just to get approval from others. The society around me creates anxiety in the responses I have to deliver, and this thing depresses me sometimes.

When I am around my friends, I am more of myself than ever. They have the same mental level as me, and they understand my situation. They listen to my problems and do not judge me for my actions. Even if they feel like I am not doing anything right, they convey their point of view to me, and I make a decision accordingly. When I first meet people, they see me as a distant and uncaring person who has just interest in his own life. When they get to know me on a deeper level, their opinions change. It makes me think that the opinion can be changed when some more time is spent with others. However, it is not possible for everyone to understand you on the same level as you do. My thinking pattern of everyone is different, and people around me have their perception according to which they understand me.

Journal 4: On The Rainy River

Introduction

In this section, I will describe an event from my life when I felt shame and my emotional state at that moment.

Discussion

Okay, now I am going to admit one of the most shameful events of my life. I am a teenager, and we all do something that is the source of embarrassment later on. When I was in 5th grade, my science activity did not go well. It happened because, on the day of its preparation, my parents were not in the home and instead of studying, I spent my whole day playing. At night, when my mom asked me about the preparation for the test, I told her that I had prepared for it. The next day, I did not do a thing on the test and afterward told my friends that it went well in case any of them would run into my parents and tell them.

I was worried about the results, but they were not significant as it was not part of my final examination. The thing that concerned me most was that I told a lie to my parents. They have always placed great trust in me, and I was so afraid of breaking it. When the results came out, my grades were low on that test. I tried hard to keep it away from my friends and parents, but somehow, a cousin of mine got that result from my bag. He did not like me, so he showed it to my parents in front of the whole family. It was a moment of great guilt for me, as my parents were embarrassed because of me. My emotions at that time were disturbed. I never wanted my parents to find out that I had

covered something from them. My parents scolded me after that but it was not about the shame I felt, it was about the level of trust that I lost because of one small mistake.

My mind was not working right to make up for the damage I had done. My mind was constantly assuring me that it was not my mistake because mom did not help me that day to prepare for the test. I was constantly giving justifications for my behavior. However, somewhere deep down, I knew that it was my fault. Even my mom was disappointed in me because she was hurt about me telling a lie to her. She has always been very kind and maintained good relationships with me by being open about everything. She talked to me about this later on and told me that it was all right if I would have told her that my test was not prepared. It is always better to tell the truth at first than to face embarrassment later on. It was the level of assurance that I needed to strengthen my character as I was growing age. She motivated me that there is no good in feeling bad, but making sure not to repeat it will be helpful. She boosted my confidence level and told me about her childhood stories so that I would not feel bad anymore. Her love and understanding nature made me overcome the feeling of guilt. Since then, I have always tried to share my secrets with my parents to save myself from guilt in case they find it from any other source. Still, I satisfied myself by thinking that it was not on purpose and I was just a child who wanted to play when his parents were not around.

However, this incident is shameful for me to remember, but it gave me a great lesson in life. It has also helped me a lot in developing a better understanding of my mother. Now, I am comfortable sharing my secrets with my mother. It made me realize that doing wrong could never make it right just because I did it. I should always admit the mistakes committed by me and perform better in the future to improve in life.

Journal 5: Enemies And Friends

Introduction

I will describe the things I consider in people who are my friends, enemies, and frenemies.

Discussion

I have a dynamic temperament, so I have all kinds of friends. A few of them are just acquaintances, while with a few, I have great bonding. The level of friendship differs with everyone. Most of my friends are from my school class and neighborhood. I have a few friends on social media that I came across from different channels, and I like spending my time talking to them because they make me feel comfortable, and I can share my thoughts with them securely. I develop a friendly relation with people who mostly have things in common with me. It can be our habits, likings, dislikes, and even the type of music we like. It depends on the instances because practically we do not choose whom to be friends with, this bond develops over time. I mostly connect with random people at a different

level, and this thing makes me have a large friend circle. However, very few people are close to me. I take time to open up in front of others. (National Endowment for the Arts, n.d.)

If I talk about people with whom I have a difficult time getting along, there are very few such individuals. I have a pleasant personality, and I do not get into trouble with random people. However, I cannot get along with mean people. When people act superficially, and in reality, they are mean to others, it disgusts me. I am very optimistic and usually perceive that others are also the same. For me, integrity and honesty are the most important components of any relationship, and when people say something and do not comply with what they deliver, this makes me upset. I am not too rigid and demanding, but for me to trust others means that they also deliver the same level of dedication to me. Therefore, I try to assess the honesty of a person at first and then make friends with them. Few people do not connect with me. There is no particular reason, but I do not feel comfortable; I guess it is natural. There is every type of personality, and it is not possible to develop the same link with all of them.

Then, there comes the category of frenemies. I cannot decide whether they are my friends or enemies. Sometimes I have a good time with them while at times they act weird that I do not tolerate them. It also depends on mood swings and emotional changes. Like, I have a friend in my neighborhood, but sometimes we get into arguments. It normally happens when he pushes me too far or to the point about which I am sensitive. Even once, he tried to make a dispute between my best friend and me, causing misunderstandings. It pissed me off, and I did not talk to him for a week. He is a nice boy, but these things he does make me conscious of him. I cannot directly hit on or confront him about these ulterior motives. He lives in my neighborhood, so doing anything hard will involve our parents, which will make this matter even more difficult. Therefore, I decided to take the mid-way and be in a normal relationship with him to protect myself.

Journal 6: How To Tell A True War Story

Introduction

In this section, I reflected on an event from my life and what are the moral lessons that I got from that story.

Discussion

I do not like to enter into fights because they are not appealing to me. However, this is common for children of my age. I am more afraid of loud and scary teachers. Few people scare you off, and you try to avoid their presence. I had a mathematics teacher who always panicked me. Well, I was not the only one to be afraid of her. Many students in our class used to shake when they knew she was coming. There was a reason behind her terror. When she came to our class on her first day, she threw

a list of restrictions on us. First, if we submit an assignment after the due date, she would deduct five marks from it. She said that if she found anyone using any device like a cell phone in class, she would take it and never return it. Chewing gum was a crime for her, and the committer of this crime would treat the whole class. There were many other things too that she asked us to do and in case of non-compliance with her rules, we were given the same penalty she promised on the first day.

We used to put extra effort into her course to get good grades, and to our surprise, she passed us all on our result day. It was a moment of joy when she also threw a party for our class. She was pleased with our class performance. To be honest, it was hard to believe that she had a human inside her. I may seem a little exaggerating, but it is true. We were so terrified because of her restrictions, and all of our efforts were for that single course. Eventually, we were pleased to see her human side, and it was for our benefit. She made us realize that it is not easy for us to handle everyone easily. Few people give us a tough time, and we have to face their challenges with determination and hard work.

She just gave us a glimpse of what practical life is and how the situation is not always in our favor. She told us how we make the situation even more complicated by running away from it. The best way is to accomplish a thing by true means and then move forward. Success only comes by facing difficulties. I learned from this experience that the level of strength could only be determined when a person gets in any such situation. The real strength cannot be identified unless a person goes through it and survives it. I am glad that such a great life lesson came to me through this experience. I am very grateful to her that she made us realize that getting everything you want is not easy in life. There are multiple challenges that a person should have to face to make a strong self.

Journal 7: The Dentist

Introduction

Here I will talk about the difficulties I face as a teenager and the ways I overcome those issues.

Discussion

As a teenager in this digital world, I have to face a variety of difficulties that were not there for the previous generation. Meeting the body shape standards of this modern world is the thing that worries me the most. The pressure of maintaining a sound body shape and dressing up in a socially acceptable way is a great challenge. Then comes the challenge of providing satisfactory work performance. My parents have a lot of expectations from me, and while preparing for the exams, I am always under the pressure of scheduling in a way that I meet their standards. Maintaining a balance between playing and studying is hard because the study schedule, courses, and assignments are tough to handle. I also feel it is difficult to manage my emotional health because I do not get enough time to rest and relax. I need someone close to whom I can discuss the routine issues that I face. The

most important dilemma is how parents provide us exposure and still expect us to be within boundaries. Creating a balance between deciding the right thing to do and avoiding problem-creating issues is the main issue. Having exposure to this huge stream of material is a constant battle.

Bullying is also a tricky issue in our society that should be handled with great care. As a teenager, I am the most likely victim of this ethical dilemma. However, I do not think that it can have an enormous effect on me. At first, when I encountered this issue in my school, I was new to this, and all this was indigestible for me to handle. My mother proved to be a great support in this regard. She always encouraged me to be confident and face all these issues without any fear. Then, I realized that staying at home out of fear is more crushing as compared to the physical pain experienced during bullying. Being weak only makes the other party more powerful, so I decided to face it with courage. I am very happy that I made the right decision, and now I live a happy life without any complexity.

I once faced the issue of dealing with a situation at home. My father asked me to go with my mother to the grocery, but I did not want to go. Instead of helping my mother with groceries, I went to my friend's place to play. When my father came back from the office in the evening, he was angry with me, and he scolded me. He was doing this to make me more responsible towards my home obligations. I was angry with my father when my cousin came to my place and asked me to play with him. When he saw that I was not in a good mood, he started asking my mother about what had happened to me. In that feeling of anger, I started fighting with him verbally. I did this to get away from the problem. I felt bad after fighting with him that it was not his fault, but it was my way of getting away from the problem.

There are many fears that I have to face in my daily life. Some of them are routine fears like being caught for a thing that I want to hide. Fear of exams is common because I try hard to study and meet the expectations of my parents. Some of the fears are situation-specific and vary with time. I also get afraid when my parents threaten to ban me from social media in case I do not act as per their expectations.

Somehow, I think that being fearful is good. It gives me a pace of life where I can maintain a balance. Normally, when I am fearful, I try to categorize the situation by making a plan of action. That fear can be embarrassment or criticism. I try to extract something positive out of it. I consult it with my mother mostly and see what she advises me to do. (Spielman et al., 2020)

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