

*First Aid for
Parents of
Children
with Emotional
Problems*

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Hurts.com](http://www.FirstAidforEmotionalHurts.com)



FIRST AID
for **YOUR** Emotional Hurts



Edward E. Moody, Jr., Ph.D.



++ HELPING CHILDREN
WITH EMOTIONAL
PROBLEMS

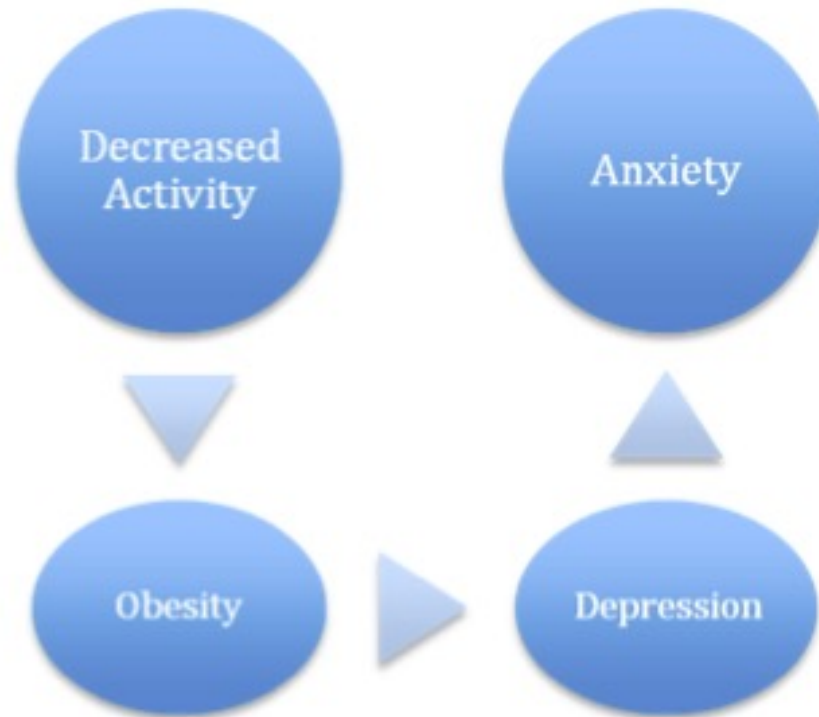
You are not alone!¹

10% to 20% of youths
(around 15 million in the
United States) meet the
criteria for a mental health
disorder.

- Half of depressed youth are believed to have two or more other diagnosable problems.²
- Children who are depressed are 30 times more likely to also have some type of anxiety disorder.³
- Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have been found to be more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and oppositional defiant disorder.⁴

One Thing Leads to Another

The goal is to equip parents to help their children
Educate parents regarding the scope of the problem



Left unaddressed, one problem leads to another

Rumination

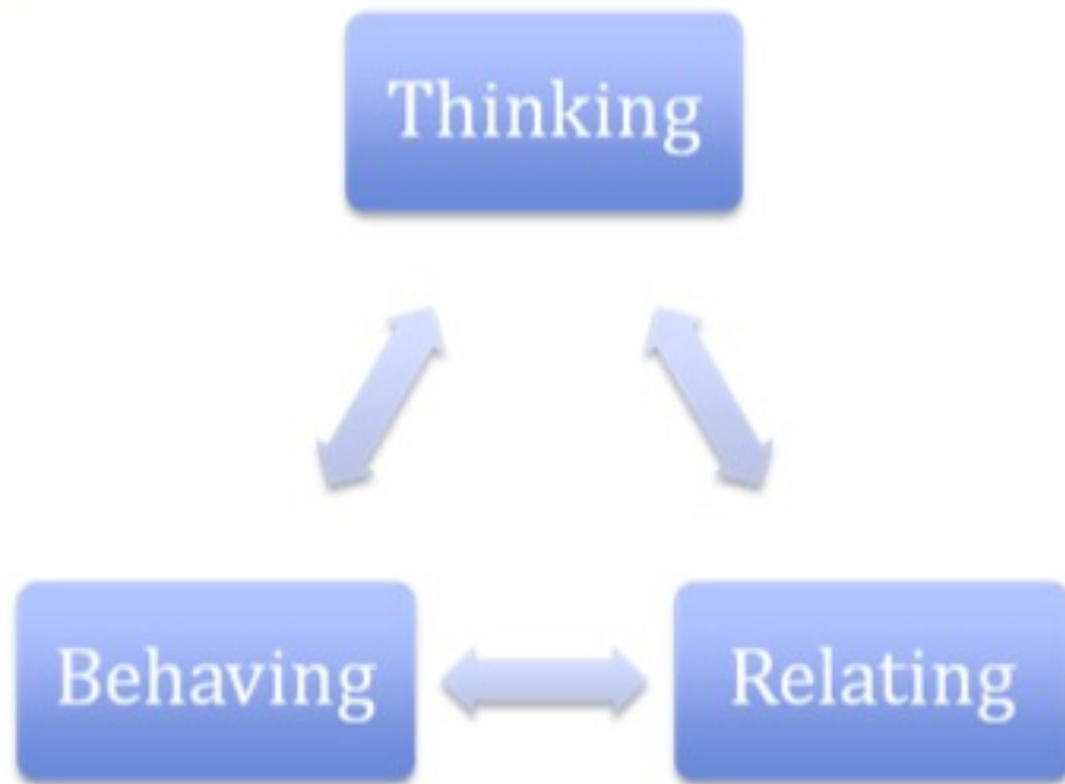


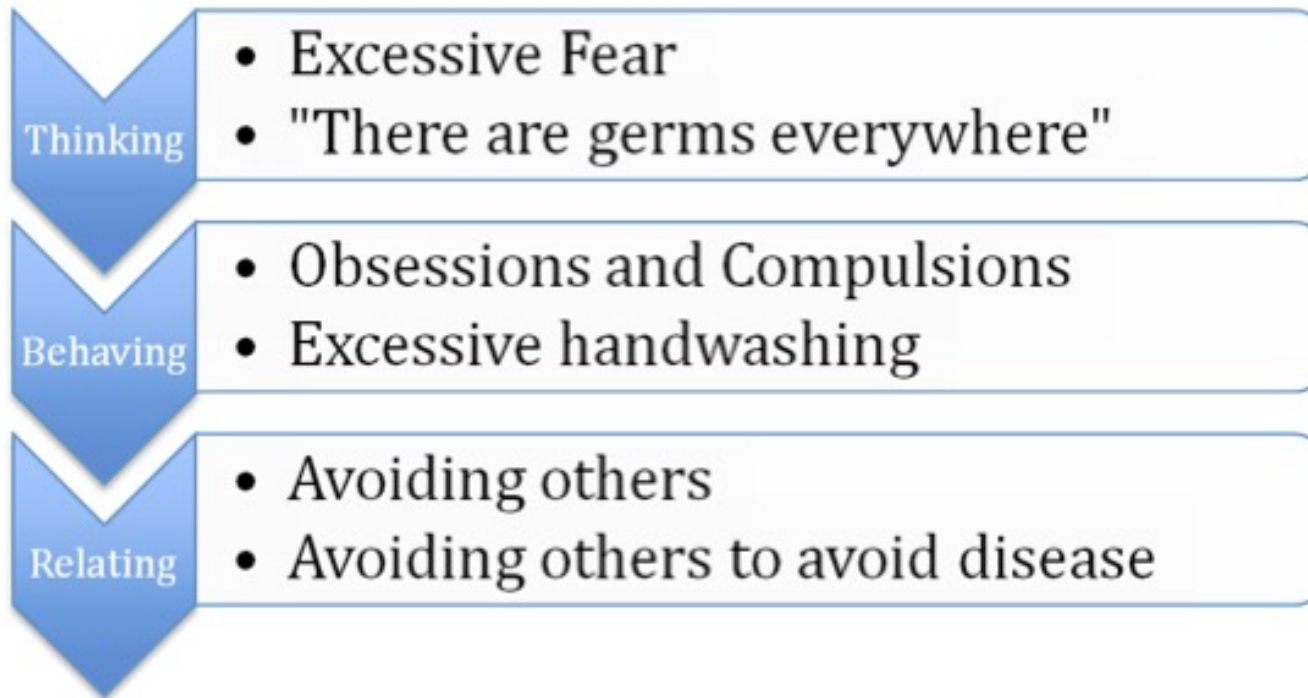
Depression/Eating
Disorder



Risk for Suicide







Intervene at every level

Nearly 10% of children meet the diagnostic criteria for an anxiety disorder.⁷

***Heaviness in the heart of man
maketh it stoop: but a good
word maketh it glad.***

Proverbs 12:25

Common Childhood Fears¹⁰

<i>Age</i>	<i>Fear Type</i>
8 months to 2 years	Separation from caregiver
2-4	Animals and the dark
4-6	Ghosts, monsters, unexplained sounds at night
6 and above	Fear of injury, death, natural catastrophe
Adolescence	Not being accepted by peers

Common Separation Anxiety Disorder Symptoms¹²

Age	Key SAD Symptoms
5-8	Frequent nightmares and worry
9-12	Excessive stress over separation from attachment figures
12-19	Physical symptoms and school refusal behaviors

Children with GAD

Tend to be overly conforming, unsure of themselves and dissatisfied with anything less than a perfect performance.¹⁴

**Most Frequently Reported Difficulties
of Children Suffering from OCD²⁰**

<i>Difficulty</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Washing rituals	85%
Repeating tasks	51%
Checking rituals	46%
Dirt and germ obsessions	46%

Key Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) Symptoms²⁴

- Distress when separated from home or a major attachment figure
 - Worry that an event will lead to separation from a major attachment figure
 - Reluctance or refusal to go to school
 - Reluctant to be alone
 - Refusal to go to sleep without being near a major attachment figure
 - Nightmares involving the theme of separation
 - Physical symptoms when separation from major attachment figures occurs
 - Worry about losing, or possible harm befalling major attachment figures
-

Common Responses of Children to Social and Performance Anxiety³⁰

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Thoughts/Feelings</i>	<i>Behavior</i>
Trembling/shaking	Scared	Seeking escape
Frequent urination	Inadequate	Temper tantrums/ crying
Nausea/vomiting	Incompetence	Shaky voice
Headache/ stomachache	Trouble Concentrating	Freezing/unable to move
Diarrhea	Loneliness	Withdrawal

A study conducted 10 months after Hurricane Andrew indicated that in one sample 44% of the school-age children met the criteria for PTSD. Another study of children who had been sexually abused indicated that 44% of those youth met the criteria for PTSD.³¹

Utilize professional helpers

Provide the evaluator with . . .

- A specific description of the concerning behavior.
- When does the behavior occur?
- Where does the behavior occur?
- How often does the behavior occur?
- What kind of impact does the behavior have on the child?

**Evidenced Based Treatments for
Children with Anxiety Disorders³⁸**

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Description</i>
Systematic desensitization:	Pairing of anxiety with relaxation until the anxiety is extinguished
Modeling:	Teaches a child a new behavior or to extinguish a fear by observing another
Reinforced Practice:	The child is exposed to a feared situation and receives encouragement and reinforcement as they learn to approach the feared situation
Cognitive behavior therapy:	Addresses the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of the child

What can you do?

If you spend much time with a child you will quickly learn about their patterns of thinking, behaving, and relating. There is much you can do to help them more effectively deal with anxiety. Begin by looking for the root.



Thinking

Excessive Fear



*Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the LORD!*

Psalm 31:24

Breaking the Chain

Psalm 46—The Worst Case Scenario Psalm

Read Psalm 46. What is God to us?

- A refuge and strength (verse 1)
- Help in trouble (verse 1)
- Immovable in times of crisis (verse 5)
- With us in times of crisis (verses 5, 7, 11)
- Our fortress (verses 7, 11)

At what times will God help us?

- When the mountains fall into the sea—the worst moments of our life (verse 2)
- During war and other crisis (verse 9)

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

Isaiah 41:10, 13

Personalize the Promise

Do not be afraid Joe, because I am with you. Joe do not be dismayed, for I am your God. Joe, I will strengthen you. Joe, I will help you. Joe, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Joe, I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Joe, do not be afraid, I am the one who helps you."

Isaiah 41:10, 13





Exploration



Confidence

Relating

The relationship a child has with their surroundings is often dominated by fear and worry. This can result in a child timidly relating to their environment. Jesus provided us with a model for relating properly with the environment in Matthew 6:25-34.

The Matthew Model for Relating with the Environment

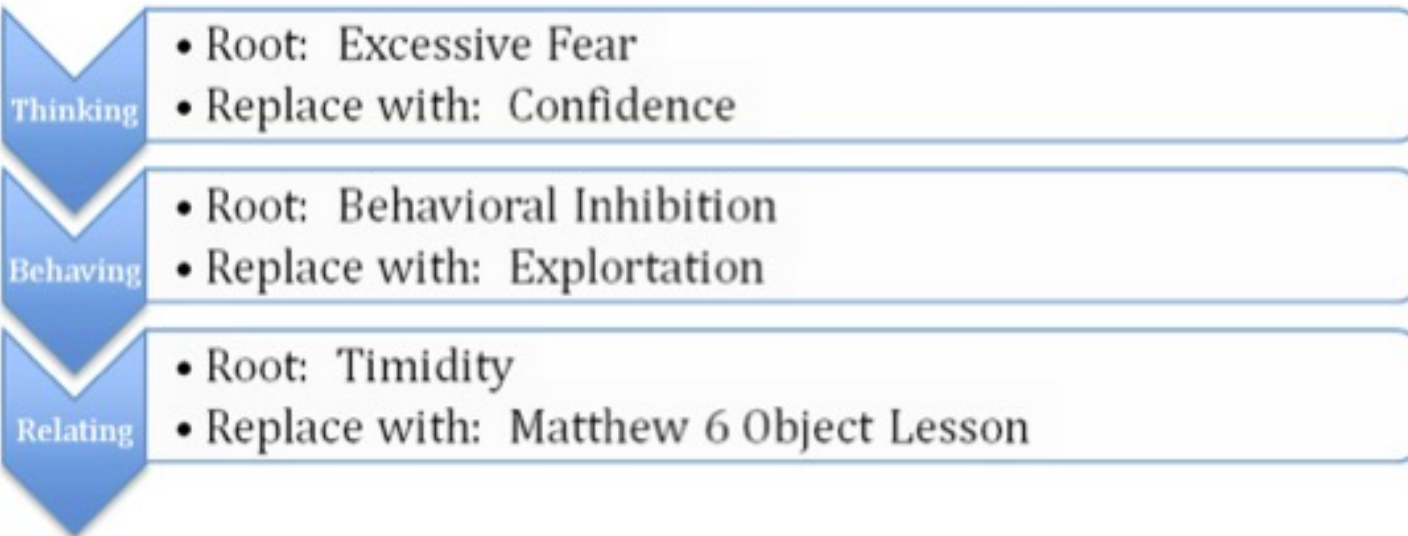
Don't be anxious (verses 25, 27)

Ask: "Isn't there more to life?" (verse 25)

Look (verse 26)

Take note of the environment around you. Notice how the birds do not seem to be worried (verse 26) yet their needs are met. Notice the beauty of the flowers (verse 28) even though they put forth no effort. The environment is an object lesson in God's care. If God cares for birds and flowers in this way, He certainly cares for us.

Seek (verse 33)



A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

- Nearly 20 percent of young people experience depression.⁴⁹
- 1.7 percent of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 attempt suicide.⁵⁰

Prevalence of Depression in Children⁵¹

<i>Age</i>	<i>Prevalence Rate</i>
Preschool children	1-2%
Middle childhood (ages 6 to 12)	2-3%
Adolescence	4-8%

Criteria for a Major Depressive Episode⁵³

To meet the criteria for a major depressive episode a child must have five (or more) of the symptoms listed below in the same 2-week period. At least one of the symptoms must be either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure.

- Depressed mood or irritability most of the day, nearly every day.
 - Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all or almost all activities most of the day nearly every day.
 - Significant weight loss (when not dieting) or weight gain (5% change in a month), or increase or decrease in appetite. In young children, failure to meet expected weight gains.
 - Unable to sleep or sleeping too much nearly every day.
 - Unintentional and purposeless motions or slowing of mental and physical activity nearly every day.
 - Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
 - Recurrent thoughts of death.
-

Why do adolescents attempt suicide?⁵⁶

These results are from 120 adolescents who had attempted suicide.

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Percent that Endorsed</i>
To get relief from a terrible state of mind	68
To die	67
To escape for a while from an impossible situation	66
To make people feel sorry for the way they've treated you; frighten or get someone back	35
To make people understand how desperate you are feeling	34
To find out whether someone really loved you or not	32

Provide the helping professional with . . .

- A specific description of the symptoms.
- How long has the child experienced these symptoms?
- When are the symptoms worst?
- History of manic symptoms or a manic episode.
- What kind of impact does the depression have on the child's interaction with others and academic performance?

**Evidenced Based Treatments for
Children with Depression⁶⁴**

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Description</i>
Cognitive behavior therapy:	Addresses the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of the child.
Coping with depression course:	Group psychoeducational treatment where a youth learns more about how their thoughts feelings and negative beliefs lead them to be depressed. The youth engages in many group activities and role-plays to learn to cope with problematic situations.
Interpersonal psychotherapy:	A brief and highly structured manual based psychotherapy that addresses interpersonal issues in depression.



Thinking

An Example of Ruminati

He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

1 Kings 19:10

He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

1 Kings 19:14

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

1 Kings 19:4

His delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 1:2



Breaking the Chain

Thought record⁶⁹

Date	Situation	Behavior	Emotion	Thoughts	Responses
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*Take every thought captive to obey Christ.
2 Corinthians 10:5*

Behaving

*When I remember you upon my bed, and
meditate on you in the watches of the night.*

Psalm 63:6

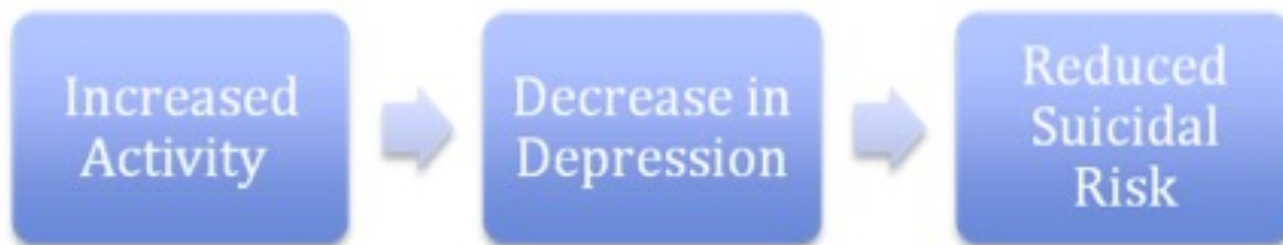
Sleeping

Elijah's Regimen

He lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." And he arose and ate and drank.

1 Kings 19:5-8

Eating



Relating

*Problem solving approach*⁷²

Identify the problem to be solved.

Examine the costs and benefits of solving the problem.

List all resources and information available.

Generate as many possible solutions, without evaluating these solutions.

Rank order the most desirable to least desirable solution.

Develop a plan of action based on the best solution.

Identify each step in the sequence.

Identify the resources needed for each step.

Schedule the first step.

Evaluate the outcome.

Revise the plan if necessary.

Reward yourself for carrying out the steps.



Thinking

- Root: Rumination
- Replace with: Meditation

Behaving

- Root: Sleep/Eating problems
- Replace with: Eating and Sleeping Regimen

Relating

- Root: Inactive
 - Replace with: Problem-solving approach
-

*If you have found honey, eat only enough for you,
lest you have your fill of it and vomit it.*

Proverbs 25:16

- Approximately 37% of children between the ages 6 and 11 are obese.⁷⁴
- 1 in every 200 school-age girls meet the criteria for anoxeria nervosa.⁷⁵

“We have worried for a while that the increased prevalence of obesity in children and young adults may take its toll in cardiovascular disease and stroke and that appears to be happening.”

Ralph Sacco, president of the American Heart Association and neurologist, University of Miami⁸⁰

Signs there may be a problem⁸³

- Preoccupation with food and weight
- Counting calories or fat grams
- Disappearing to the bathroom after meals
- Missing food/evidence of secret eating
- Excessive exercising
- Eating only diet or fat free foods
- Expressing guilt after eating
- Consuming large amounts of caffeine
- Use of diuretics, diet pills, and/or laxatives

What causes eating disorders?

Portion sizes have been found to be 25% smaller in Paris, France than in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where obesity is a problem.⁹¹

After television came to Fiji the cultural climate changed and many young women began to express concerns about their weight and dislike for their bodies.⁹³

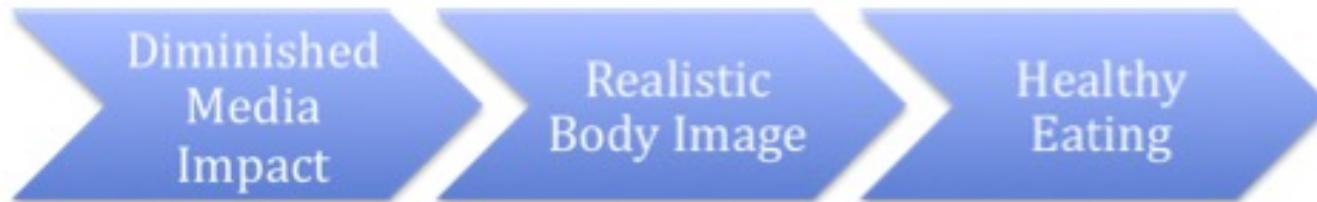
Strategies to Increase the Effectiveness of a Weight Loss Program⁹⁶

- ***Plan for the long haul:*** Although more weight is initially lost with participants of programs that begin intensely, there is a higher dropout rate for these programs and little effect for long-range progress.
- ***Extend the length of treatment:*** Longer periods of treatment are associated with greater weight loss, however weight is often regained after treatment ends. Treatment that extends beyond a year may be warranted to maintain long-term progress.
- ***Emphasize exercise as a treatment component:*** Individuals who participate in programs that include exercise appear to lose more weight and exercise appears to help extend long-term progress.
- ***Focus on Motivation:*** To maintain weight loss progress one will need to identify social support and other avenues of motivation.

Evidenced Based Treatments for Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Description</i>
Family Therapy:	All members of the family come together to jointly address the eating disorder
Cognitive-behavior therapy:	Addresses the thoughts feelings and behaviors of the child

What can you do?



Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2

Thinking

Media Impact



But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7

Healthy Body Image

Your body—According to Psalm 139

13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. **14** I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. **15** My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. **16** Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. **17** How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! **18** If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

Psalm 139:13-18

What are you like?

What is God's opinion of you?



Relating

*The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!"*

Proverbs 22:13

Get Active

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Relating

Isolation

Develop Solid Friendships

Family Meals

Spend 20 to 30 minutes together as a family sharing a meal, and you can reduce risk for all sorts of health problems, including obesity¹¹³

The 18-Minute Dinner

At least 4 times a week

- Turn off all electronic devices near the table (television, cell phone)
- Use your manners (saying “please” and “thank you”) when serving food
- Focus on conversation (Ask, “How was your day?”)¹¹⁵



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