

Episode 9 Bonus Transcript: Self-Care

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>> Listen to this bonus episode with Gen and Jeremy, counsellors at GBC, as they talk to Luma and Olivia about self-care.

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[Jeremy Jacob:] So as a counsellor both Gen and I know that taking breaks, being able to exercise, your self-care, these things are crucial for wellness. And when your wellness is in check, this is also crucial for doing well in school. So there definitely is this interplay. I'm interested in hearing from you both around how do you prioritize self-care when there are so many demands placed on your time, especially during crunch time like at the end of the semester or at the end of your final semester, which both of you are in right now? So maybe Luma, could we start with you on this one?

[Luma Chaves:] Yeah, sure, of course. So for myself, I feel that just making sure that I dedicate time every day to focus on my self-care, or even if it's not every day, because again, that might not be realistic for some people. Sometimes it's not realistic for myself, depending on what happens during my day, but you know, trying to a lot a certain amount of time within my schedule to make sure I engage in self-care. And again this doesn't have to be 2 hours. Sometimes it's 10 minutes for me, sometimes it's 5, sometimes you know, it's doing a little meditation on my walk. Things like that. So just making sure that I dedicate time for it and allot it into my schedule really, really helps for me. And also I think for me, when I was really able to prioritize self-care is when I started viewing self-care as equally important to some of the other things in my life. So for example assignments. You know, like Olivia mentioned, assignments are really important and really pressing for students, especially you know, for us who are in our last semester, we're really trying to you know, grind and get those last assignments in so we can graduate. So I think for me, I have to you know, take some time to realize how does self-care make me feel? So self-care makes me feel really, really good. It helps lower my stress levels, and then I started to recognize you know, when I'm, when I'm engaging in this self-care and then I'm lowering my stress levels or feeling good, afterwards I'm able to you know, perform at my best. You know if I do an assignment after doing 5 minutes of meditation or 5 minutes of taking a walk outside, I realize that you know, I have a clear mind and I can focus. So just realizing how important self-care is for my own wellbeing and for my own performance as a student really helped as well. So I think just finding what self-care works for you specifically and then really trying to you know, get in touch with our mind and our body and recognize how does this self-care make me feel? And you know, if, if it does make you feel really, really good, then just try to prioritize it as equally as important as the other things that we place, you know so high up on our list of priorities. Also another thing I wanted to mention is I've also recently started using self-care apps. So I find you know, as students we're on technology a lot, we're, especially now in this virtual world, but I know for myself I spend quite a bit of screentime on

my phone specifically. So I've been looking, I've been using some self-care apps where you know, they send you reminders. You can set it so that they send you a certain amount of reminders. And that way it's right there, it's in your face, you can't avoid it. You know, you're seeing those reminders, and just having that little you know, like hey, I'm, I'm on my phone, I'm scrolling through social media or I'm looking up my emails and then I see this little reminder. I'm like ok, Luma, take 5 minutes, you know, do a couple of deep breathing exercises or maybe sit outside on your balcony and let the sun shine on you or give yourself a quick manicure. Things like that. So just having those reminders really helps for me.

[Jeremy Jacob:] God, that sounds, that sounds awesome. Gen, I'm wondering, do you got anything that you want to add to what Luma had to say?

[Genevieve Beaupre:] I just want to say, I like how you say that self-care doesn't have to take necessarily a long time, right, but just take a few minutes sometimes in recognizing that, that time that you take to take care of yourself will, you'll gain in productivity, right? Sometimes we think oh, I don't have time, I don't have time to take care of myself because I have too many assignments. So I like how you said that. But I'm also curious, are there any specific apps that you could recommend or suggest for our listeners for self-care?

[Luma Chaves:] Yeah, of course. So I use a specific app called Calm. It's just C, A, L, M, calm. And what it is, is it's, it's a meditation app primarily. So it, it sends you reminders to you know, take 2 or 3 minutes or 5 minutes or 10 minutes, you can customize it, to you know, meditate or just take a couple deep breaths or just you know, get in tune with your mind and your body. So that's one that I really like because it's one that you can do quickly. I find meditation can be done at, at, you know with various timeframes depending on what works. So that's one that I would definitely recommend for students. And you know, I, when it's through my work as a peer coach, the, the teach mindfulness and guided breathing exercises, and I find a lot of students feel that it's not something that they can do or they don't know how to do. And this app makes it really, really practical and really simple, so that I find it's really helpful. So that's one I, I like to suggest to students for sure.

[Genevieve Beaupre:] Thank you Luma. That's, that's a really good suggestion, I think, for folks to try, and I've wanted to know like if there was one that specifically that you like, so, for our listeners to maybe try, so thank you for that.

[Jeremy Jacob:] Yeah, and I really like Luma how you, how you said that self-care is equally important as everything else that you have to do. I can't tell you how many times I've heard from folks, not just students but even, even friends and family, when, when the crunch time happens, people are willing to sacrifice things that are actually really important. For example sleep. I would include sleep as a self-care thing, and I think oftentimes we try to, to fit more things into the day. We will take away from the hours that we can spend asleep. And I know that that's a bit of a setup, so I, I love that mantra of like the self-care is equally as important as everything else, and I'm just going to figure out a way to kind of put it all in. So that's, yeah, that's super awesome. Olivia, what about you? I'm curious how you sort of prioritize your self-care given all the demands that, that exist in life?

[Olivia Francis:] Well, I must admit, initially I struggled with self-care because I, I always thought it's important to get what needs to be done, done, and then everything else comes afterwards, but I've learnt you know, that it's very important to really recognize the value in caring for myself by just taking that me time. What I've also learnt is that the less we complicate the you know, what self-care is, the easier it is for us to actively practice self-care. Because you know, as Luma mentioned, it doesn't have to be anything that takes a lot of time. Self-care is really about, for me, taking that time out to listen to what my body's feeling in that moment. If I'm completing an assignment and I recognize that I am feeling overwhelmed, self-care for me is making that decision to just stop right now and go out, walk away, right, give it a couple minutes, a couple hours, even if I need to give it a day, right? Just to really get myself, my mind, regroup and then come back. Self-care, sometimes it's just also treating myself to something that I really like, right, and it doesn't have to be anything big, right, but just the smaller rewards leading up to the bigger moments at the end of completing whatever it is that I'm working on. So as I've really looked at it as these smaller pieces and not just this big thing, oh I need to do self-care, I need to practice self-care, it has really helped me to be more intentional about making that time to care for myself.

[Jeremy Jacob:] And I'm eager to know, so what are your top three self-care things that you engage in? What do you really like to do?

[Olivia Francis:] Ok, so I like to get my hair done. I like to do my nails, [laughter], right? I love to hang out with my friends and communicate with my family. I am an international student so I am not with my immediate family, so I love just making that time at different intervals throughout the day to talk to my family back home and as well as just you know, doing stuff with my family here in Canada, right. Those are things that really help me. I also have a very strong faith base, and so I, I, I am very, I'm a very highly motivated person. I'll try to just be positive. So I love to watch like a lot of faith-based movies with strong morals to really encourage and also just taking that one on one time to connect with my faith, you know, whether it's through reading or praying or for me, however it is in that moment, yeah.

[Jeremy Jacob:] Yeah, thanks for sharing that. I think that the self-care, we know that self-care is important. I mean the four of us totally agree on that. I think that for those of us who are still figuring out like what we can do to take care of ourselves, that takes a, that does take some time and effort. It's also not inherently obvious. I think that if you go online, there's a million, not literally a million, but there's many, many different ideas or suggestions about what people can do, and they don't always necessarily reflect what the individual finds important. So take, I would encourage people to take time to figure out the things that bring you joy, bring you pleasure, relaxation, and when you discover those things, then they become a piece of your self-care. So I don't want folks to think that it's just supposed to be inherently obvious. It does take time, but give yourself the time, because it's super important for sure.

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>> So this concludes today's episode. Thank you for joining us. If you have any questions, feedback on our episodes, suggestions for future topics, or wish to book an appointment with

our counsellors, please send us an email at letstalk@georgebrown.ca. Come by again and let's talk.

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