

Week 1: Jan 23-29

Changing Behaviors: Reduce Vulnerabilities

As I process this weekly journal assignment and the ones to come I realize how incredibly useful they will be for me, as my first ever pregnancy comes into its 3rd trimester, and I am definitely experiencing some not-so-pleasant emotions. With the combination of full time graduate school, internship, ministry, doctor appointments, physical therapy and trying to work at least one day a week for gas money, I feel myself running thin, in every sense of the phrase (except the physical one, I am very round).

While HALT is a lovely and practical acronym that could be easily applied in pretty much every situation, I can predict myself having slightly different vulnerabilities within these next 2 ½ months. My acronym spells out SPENT.

Socialized- Being overly socialized (even though I am extroverted!) is actually leading to exhaustion right now. Too many people around me are either asking me a bunch of questions, OR they are telling me how hard it is going to be as a new mom, what I NEED to do, or buy. Unsolicited advice causes me to get kind of angry, especially since most of these ladies are church ladies, I would expect more encouragement and hope! And of course this ties into people who touch me too much!

Pain- I turn into a very unpleasant person when I am in physical pain, I tend to be very me-focused in these moments and I am not proud of it. Unfortunately this season comes with pain, so some days I already have this one checked off.

Extended- When I am taking on too much work with either internship, ministerial obligations, or familial/social obligations.

Nauseous- While being a part of a type of pain, it gets its own category because being nauseous makes time stand still and even causes me to become anxious! It can be a quick slippery slope to panic if I can't find a private place or bathroom fast.

Tired- I did keep the T for tired. During the 3rd trimester I am starting to check this off again as well. If I don't sleep well the night before (which is 70% of the time), I become very lethargic and forgetful!

Week 2: Jan 30-Feb 5

Dialectics:Build Mastery Vs Build Positive Experience

Saying that "keeping with my priorities is hard for me" is an understatement. I have been working with my individual therapist for a while now on creating lists of "have to do" and "want to do". It's safe to say, I don't fully feel on top of things. I purposely make myself do several "have tos" before I get to reward myself with a "want to do". The biggest thing for me right now is learning to keep a balance between diligence / consistency and grace for myself while I am pregnant with my first baby and have a full schedule.

All in all it isn't something I'm 100% better at, I still have a good distance to go in order to feel like I have a balance between Mastery and Positive Experience. Understanding that certain aspects of my home and belongings represent extensions of myself helps me see that in building mastery I am actually practicing self care as well.

Week 3: Feb 6-12

Mindfulness: Simply Watch

I have noticed myself reacting more quickly within the last few months and it's had some less than desirable results so I decided to give this card a try. Some context to this journal entry: I have a person in my life who has been considered a best friend for about the past 3 years. However she has a pattern of over stepping my boundaries, at times being verbally abusive, and having massive downward spirals that consist of drug/alcohol abuse, sexual encounters and self harming tendencies. She is also in a very high leadership position at our church and masks her struggles very well. My favorite part of our relationship has been celebrating our accomplishments and spending time together belly-hurt laughing. She recently however said some incredibly hurtful things to me after I couldn't attend an event she was hosting, it was one of the worst series of text messages she has sent to me. As I stepped away from the phone, I had a reaction I haven't had since I was much younger. My blood started to boil, my temperature started to rise, and I actually "grayed out". I started hysterically crying and became even more angry as I remembered my baby growing inside of me could be feeling what I am feeling. This was a huge wake up call to me that I needed to take extra care during pregnancy to be mindful of my triggers. As I see her during the week at church I remember this card and remind myself to slow down, and simply watch what's going on and have no attachment to it. I know this process of mindfulness will help me as I consider the next steps in our relationship as well. I understand it would be hard to not react in this situation and it would even be appropriate to have some anger around this, however the reaction I had was a result of not paying attention to the build up of emotion surrounding this person in particular, and allowing her feelings to control mine. I enjoyed practicing this card.

Week 4: Feb 13-19

Mindfulness: Gratefulness Minute

During the week I took time to make a list of a few things I am grateful for and it immediately brought peace and joy. We are told to think about what is right, pure, lovely and praiseworthy and the God of peace will be with us!

Big Gratefulness:

- My husband, he has been nothing but the most supportive and encouraging partner during this time in our life! He reminds me he is with me every step of the way and buys me whatever food I am craving that day with (pretty much) zero complaint! No amount of “hey babe can you grab me a glass of water” annoys him, and I am so appreciative of his heart.
- Our Living Situation, we currently are living in a home paying only utilities because of a long-term house sitting gig. The owners live in Singapore and are like a second family to us. Since I am not working and have no money to contribute, this is a HUGE blessing.
- Food Pantry at our Church, they have been more than generous with supplies for the baby, we have been given a crib, high chair, baby bath, pack and play, diapers and other essentials.
- Our God. He has been providing every single step of the way knowing we can't. He gave me and my husband a name for our future son and it's Jireh. As I questioned it, more and more provisions were made for us and I gladly stand behind this name and I am ready to share its meaning with anyone who asks!

Week 5: Feb 20-26

Mindfulness: Gratefulness Minute

I decided to do this exercise twice because I loved it so much! I focused on the little things this week. I find that doing this in the morning is the best as it sets my day up for a gratefulness mindset and it gets me started on a joyful note!

Small Gratitude:

- My Brother Visiting for the next 2 weeks! It's been a hard adjustment to have my brother in california instead of down the street, so having him here and being a part of some of my pregnancy activities is a real treat.
- Visiting my Grandparents. Having the chance for my grandparents to be a part of my pregnancy journey with me is also such a treat. They live about an hour away and I see them as much as I can at least once or twice a month, but just being able to have my grandparents still here with us on earth is SUCH a blessing!
- My Brother Extended his Stay to another week because he is in a transition with his job.
- Refund. My husband and I got word back that we may be able to get our covid wedding venue refunded! We deposited over 9 grand and were promised to receive it back, but after 2 year haven't heard anything. My husband bumped into the guy who handles the finances at the venue while getting his car fixed, and now they are looking into it again!

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Week 6: Feb 27- March 3

Interpersonal Effectiveness: Interpersonal Bill of Rights

There was a book I read a while ago called *The Color of Grace*. In it the author, Bethany Williams who is a Christian Art Therapist travels to Africa to work with former child soldiers through their extreme traumatic experiences. She talks about her own trauma experiences and pursuit of healing, that leads her to this land and to these children. The author has her own type of "Bill of Rights" she creates and documents in the book. This exercise reminds me of what Bethany wrote and I've decided to make some of my own statements that relate to both, this card and her "Bill of Rights"

1. I have the right to view my self-worth only through the lens of my Creator remembering that my value is not dictated by the approval, love or actions of another human.
2. I have the right to not allow the actions of another person to steal my joy or "crush my spirit".
3. I have the right to say no.
4. I have the right to not have to constantly explain myself when I do say no.
5. I have the right to express disappointment with a loved one.
6. I have the right to take however long I want to respond to a text, or not to respond.
7. I have the right to outgrow my environment, friendships and point of view.
8. I have the right to be healthier than those around me.