

KALEB'S STORY

Hey, what's up guys! My name is Kaleb McKinney and I am also a senior at El Toro. I enjoy playing video games, and most of all, I love hanging out with the people in my life that matter to me. I'm like many of you reading this and I also struggle with depression.

For me, depression was something that crept up on me slowly, and I was not really aware of what I was dealing with until it got so bad that it began taking over my life. I began to notice more and more that I was not feeling "normal". I felt alone, isolated, and unconnected from others as well as the world around me. Even when I would see my friends, or hang out with my family, or do anything that I had typically enjoyed doing, I felt like there was a giant hole in my life that I was unable to fill. I began to look at my life and felt like I was living without a purpose, mindlessly going around completing tasks, and for what? What part of what I was doing really mattered? In the end, who really cared? All of a sudden, before I even knew what was happening, my life was a mess, and I didn't know what to do about it.

I withdrew from friends and family and felt like if they know that something was wrong, that I would become a burden to them. I withdrew from the people in my family as well, as my fall into apathy led to a lack of any positive interaction with my siblings, and the issues with my academic success seemed to take up much of any conversation I would have with my parents. All of these negative interactions with different family members led to me pulling away and ceasing to even attempt at any positive interaction.

At this point, I knew that I would have to take a serious look at myself to try and figure out what was making me feel this way and do these things. There were some major behaviors and mentalities that I was holding on to during this time that were hurting me severely. You see, growing up, I never really let my emotions have much of a hold over me. I was always really good at pushing away how I felt, especially when I was angry or sad, or facing any other negative emotion. This "strategy", for lack of a better term, was the main method that I used when dealing with my emotions for almost all of my life.

Now, in the midst of the chaos that I call my life, I have to learn how to properly deal with these feelings that I have always repressed. I say this in the present tense because this is still something that I am dealing with today, and it is not at all easy for me to deviate from this. A second harmful behavior/mentality that I have is one that I mentioned a little bit earlier. I find it really difficult to let other people know of any problems that I have in my life, big or small. I feel that by sharing these things with people, I am telling them that I am not good enough. This admission

of failure makes me feel like a burden to people, and it is really difficult for me to accept or move past this, even when people in my life have made it very clear that they want me to tell them if something is going on. The result of this is that I catch myself either avoiding telling other people about my life or just lying about my inadequacies and instead giving my own version of the story where I don't feel like a failure. This has plagued me in large parts of my life, but also in small, unimportant things where I look back and wonder why would I ever not tell the truth about something so dumb and unmeaningful.

This battle with depression and my own shortcomings is one that I still have to deal with every single day, but I know that Jesus is there with me in all of it. I haven't gone through a miraculous recovery, and I am nowhere near the end of my journey, but I have learned a lot about myself and my relationship with God during this process of recovery. Looking back, there is much that I wish I would have done differently or known about that would have helped me with my struggles with depression.