ADAA and Lancôme Launch Global “I’m Fine” Initiative to Break the Silence on Women’s Mental Health

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Resumes, Rejection, and Radical Anxiety

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The Lowest Month of My Life



It's 1 o'clock, and I've been waiting for a Lyft for 15 minutes. I just finished cleaning the club, and everyone is gone. I am crying behind a tree. If I needed a snapshot to perfectly mirror the lowest, most chaotic month of my life, this would be it.

Chasing Jobs to Outrun My Pain

I was 24 years old, and I wanted newness. I had already been fired from my big girl job in March. The emotionally abusive partner I had chased told me they had someone new. Options were few and far between.

My mom offered me a job working for her, but it just felt like I would be a liability. I called a job I had applied to randomly: a nightclub. They were astonished to hear from me, given that I had no real plans to work there. This new unemployment dilemma made our crossing paths a lot more plausible. I started working there; I was very new. It broke the monotony and made me feel like the things that were bothering me weren't coming back. (They did come back.) Things felt smooth, or maybe it was just the kale smoothies I was drinking. The club had a rigorous training process. I didn't really make it past round 2. I remember saying, “I should quit this job; I'm not good at it.” I was training at night and applying for jobs during the day.

I was hired for two jobs at the same time. One seemed more up my alley, but the other paid more. I didn't know which was best, but I tried to stay true to my word since one accepted me first, so I told them I could work for a week at their program, and then I went to the other job. The first job was a teaching artist position, and the other role (the one that paid more) was teaching kids how to ride bikes. With five years of experience and a love for teaching, I should have chosen my stronger discipline. I chose the job teaching kids how to ride bikes. Mind you, I didn't even know how to ride a bike. I was pretty good at teaching children, though. PEDAL, PEDAL, PEDAL! Well, all that pedaling led to the second place to let me go. They had a shortage of camp locations and discharged all the workers. I was a camp lead, and there weren't any more locations; I was fired. I was so mad at myself! I even wrote back to the other job to see if they needed other teaching artists, and their answer was fair. It was no. It made me think of that rap song where they say “back then they didn't want me and now they all up on me.” Sigh.

What I Was Really Hiding From

But, as I said, this was the second job to let me go. The third job was way out of my way, and I don't even know why I applied. At that time, getting a job was like collecting an infinity stone.

What I didn't realize was that I was using the perception of work to hide from my other wounds.

Wounds like being in a five-year emotionally abusive relationship. Like being assaulted the year before, while being so caught up in that person's head games that I didn't know my rights. Like being there for a family member who was in a legal battle, being in a financial slump, and also being heavily suicidal.

Back to the third job: it was in ticket services, which was like my first job in March. I was still pretty good. I was in financial “la la land,” and it created such deep anxiety for me. I worked at the ticket job for a little over a week before I was fired. My last shifts were for training, and I got tickets to see a show, which I used for my twenty-fifth birthday.

A family member asked me to be in New York as they fought a case against a conglomerate that tried to defame them. It created a conflict on the day I was scheduled for the ticket position. I took a bus home right after the hearing and made it back in a couple of hours, which is how long it would take to get there. I was getting ready, but I wasn't going to make it on time. I let them know, and they said, “Sure.” Hours later, by email, they told me I was let go. I felt hurt and embarrassed. I tried not to let it affect me. I still had my temp work! I also had the club...

When My Work Esteem Became My Self-Esteem



When I was terminated from the biking job and no longer had the ticket job, I panicked, because now I really needed the club. I knew I wasn't good at it. So did the club. I cried and felt nervous anytime someone wanted to talk to me. At any moment they could fire me. Then, poof, they fired me. I remember running so far away.

A week later, I felt “normalish” again. I was doing temp work, and I was getting back to me! I had just gotten a free facial with my homegirl, and when I got home, I received two emails from that partner and a message from a fake number. I took a nap and woke up, and this was still real. He wanted “me back,” and I just wanted a job and a normal life. I got so caught up reliving those experiences that I became even more unwell and was let go from the temp job. At this point, I was just straight up unwell. My work esteem had catapulted into my self-esteem. The only way out was through it. I was scared to work, and I went to college as a last resort. It pushed me to take therapy more seriously, and I went on antidepressants for a time. Through this experience, I used 988 as my haven, plus prayer. I have become a more appreciative, transparent person since this workload was silently trying to kill me.

Finding My Way Back Through Therapy



I sought out therapy because I felt unheard and like a burden to the people in my life. I also knew I was unwell. I first started therapy after the end of that tumultuous relationship with my previous partner. As I felt better, I came less. It was interesting, because I believed my work life was “fixed,” and I thought my mental health was too. As I started getting fired rapidly, I begged to speak to my therapist again. I was actively depressed throughout the time I had these work failures, the assault, and the ups and downs of the emotionally abusive relationship. I had a lot of feelings of body dysmorphia, and I just wanted to be liked and loved. I frequently cried on my way home, feeling like a loser. I remember vividly one day on my way home from the nightclub; I was playing “Breathe Deeper” by Tame Impala with tears in my eyes. My cab driver was kind and asked, “Would you like me to play the song for you?” and it coddled me through the 2 a.m. ride.

Why I'm Sharing My Story

I wanted to share my story with ADAA because I used to be extremely embarrassed by it. I realized the embarrassment was the remnants of the previous anxiety. As I have moved into the latter half of healing from being assaulted, I have made a pact to share the cornerstones of what crippled me, for advocacy. When I was alone, I felt like no one understood what I was going through. Even when I did hear someone who sounded like they knew what I was feeling, it always felt shielded through the lens of stigma and sanitized pain. I hope this story shows that even parts of your life like your resume can be part of the dialogue about anxiety. It is worth addressing and healing from!

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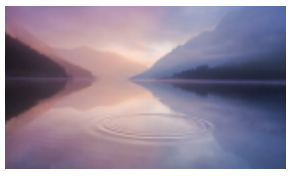
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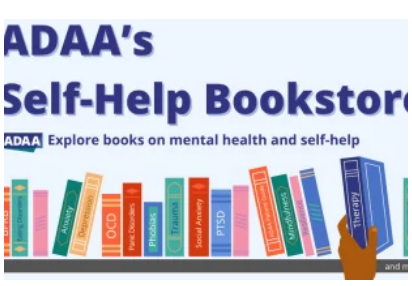
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