

GIVING MY WORRIES TO GOD

When I found out my friend was having serious struggles, I struggled to find peace.

By Ninoska Nawrath

When my friend Fernanda (not her real name) didn't show up to class one Friday, I wondered what was wrong. "Is Fer feeling sick? Is she OK?" I asked as I ran over to some friends at the end of the day. "She isn't sick," another friend answered, "she just had to go to a psychologist." When I asked why, she told me that Fernanda was suffering from depression and had been hurting herself. Shortly after I found out, Fernanda was admitted to the hospital for treatment, and we didn't see her for a few weeks.

Even though we were friends, she hadn't shared that part of her life with me. She had been hiding it from everyone because she was ashamed.



She later told me that she didn't want others to pity her or her situation. But I didn't pity her—I just felt compassion.

That first day, I lay on my bed after school, my face buried in a pillow. I was emotionally exhausted but too anxious to sleep. My world was in chaos. I felt like I was in the middle of a storm, and so many thoughts and feelings whirled in the wind. I felt confused, lonely, and, most of all, so powerless to help.

How Could I Help?

What could I do or say to help her? How could we as friends pull together and lend our support? I couldn't find any sort of solution to comfort my friends or myself. I prayed for inspiration but felt like my prayers just weren't getting answered.

But the next week I had an epiphany. I was sitting in my early-morning seminary class when my teacher reminded us of the First Vision and how Joseph Smith asked Heavenly Father directly for help with his difficulties and concerns. My teacher then said, "If we seek out the Father and ask

Him, He will answer us. We will never be alone."

I realized that in my sadness, I had closed my heart off to my Heavenly Father. Even though I was trying to pray often, it wasn't enough—I still had too much fear to find peace. I knew that He understood exactly how I felt and that He could help me. But I needed to open myself up to Him and truly trust that He could do it—I needed to exercise faith.

So I did. Over time, as I continued to pray and read my scriptures, striving to let the Savior take my burdens, I came to understand that eventually my friend's depression would end. Despite the fact that the external chaos continued, I felt calm, balanced, in harmony. My mother kept encouraging me to seek out peace, saying, "Your friend will be OK and so will you. Stay strong in the gospel, and it will all work out."

Supporting My Friend

When Fernanda finally came back to school, I was able to provide strong

support for her, but only because I had sought out and found peace through Jesus Christ myself. I tried my best to be a good listener, to be positive, and to share the gospel. I felt confident when I explained the plan of happiness and when I told her that our Father wants us to find joy, despite our challenges. It may take time, but it is possible for every one of His children.

There have been many situations in my life in which I have felt anguish and sadness, but because of the gospel I always remember where I come from. I know that I am a daughter of God and that He has a plan for me—and for Fernanda. We all walk distinct paths, but each is for our good because He loves us. Each path, each trial, has a purpose. And if we can find peace in those trials, we can share the peace we gain with others. ■

The author lives in Maule, Chile.



DEPRESSION: HOW TO RESPOND

If you have a friend who suffers from depression, make a special effort to listen to and be supportive of them in their trials. They need your love. Ask your parents for advice. Make sure your friend's parents are aware (even if your friend doesn't want them to be) and ask for their advice on how you can help. If the situation is severe (like hurting themselves), and their parents are aware but doing nothing, tell a schoolteacher, school counselor, or Church leader.