

Reflection Handout

List of internal battles people are carrying that most people won't say out loud.

Internal Struggles Heightened Since COVID

- Chronic anxiety and a constant sense of unease
 - Fear of the future / fear of instability
 - Social anxiety and difficulty reconnecting with people
 - Isolation and loneliness (even in crowds)
 - Emotional numbness or detachment
 - Loss of motivation and purpose
 - Burnout and exhaustion (mental, emotional, spiritual)
 - Increased irritability or anger
 - Distrust of institutions, leaders, or people
 - Grief over lost time, lost relationships, lost “normal”
 - Trauma from illness, death, or prolonged uncertainty
 - Compulsive media consumption / doom scrolling
 - Financial insecurity and survival stress
 - Fear of getting sick or losing loved ones
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Childhood Trauma That Still Shapes Adult Lives

- Abandonment wounds (physical or emotional absence of a parent)
- Neglect (needs unmet, emotions dismissed)
- Feeling unseen, unheard, or unimportant
- Hyper-independence (“I can only rely on myself”)
- People-pleasing rooted in fear of rejection
- Deep insecurity and low self-worth
- Shame and internalized guilt
- Fear of authority figures
- Difficulty trusting others
- Attachment issues (avoidant or anxious)
- Replaying childhood roles (caretaker, peacemaker, invisible one)
- Fear of conflict or explosive reactions to conflict

Mental and Emotional Health Struggles

- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Panic attacks
- Depression (sadness, emptiness, hopelessness)
- Seasonal depression
- Mood swings
- Intrusive thoughts
- Overthinking and rumination
- Perfectionism
- Imposter syndrome
- Suicidal ideation (often hidden)
- Self-criticism and harsh inner dialogue
- Feeling “broken” or “behind” in life

Internal Pressure from Life’s Disappointments

- Unfulfilled dreams and unmet expectations
- Career stagnation or job loss
- Financial stress and debt
- Feeling stuck or trapped
- Comparison with others’ success
- Regret over past decisions
- Midlife or identity crises
- Loss of confidence after failure
- Fear of starting again
- Questioning purpose and calling

Heartache, Loss, and Grief

- Death of loved ones (recent or unresolved)
- Miscarriage or infertility grief
- Divorce or broken relationships
- Estrangement from family
- Loss of friendships
- Grief over the person they used to be
- Anticipatory grief (fearing future loss)
- Unprocessed grief manifesting as anger or numbness

Spiritual and Existential Struggles

- Feeling distant from God
- Doubting faith after suffering
- Shame over past sins or failures
- Feeling unworthy of God's love
- Spiritual dryness
- Fear of God's judgment
- Disillusionment with church
- Confusion about God's will
- Guilt for not "being strong enough spiritually"

Hidden Battles People Rarely Admit

- "I'm tired of being strong."
- "I don't know who I am anymore."
- "I feel like I'm just surviving, not living."
- "I'm afraid to slow down because I'll fall apart."
- "I feel behind everyone else."
- "I don't feel safe emotionally."
- "I'm scared my best days are over."
- "I don't think anyone really sees me."

Common Coping Mechanisms (Often Misunderstood)

- Emotional withdrawal
- Overworking
- Addictions (substances, pornography, food, gambling, screens)
- Humor as deflection
- Control and rigidity
- Busyness
- Spiritual performance instead of intimacy
- Anger masking pain

Core Emotions Underneath It All

- Fear
- Shame
- Grief
- Loneliness
- Powerlessness
- Sadness
- Anger
- Longing for safety, love, and peace