



SNAP, CRACK, AND POT

Growing up as a child, you might remember the joy of adding milk to your Rice Krispies cereal and hearing the chorus begin: snap, crackle, and pop. Then the TV commercials made it even more fun by adding animated characters “Snap,” “Crackle,” and “Pop” to make breakfast a cartoon-like fun adventure. But as our lives progress and become more filled with stress, if children aren’t skipping breakfast, they are eating cereals that taste more like their favorite chocolate cookies or candy snacks instead of eating a breakfast with any nutritional value.

Last week I took my car into the shop because my mechanic wanted to replace my serpentine belt. Now being mechanically challenged, I told him that I didn’t even know I had a serpentine belt. When he showed it to me, I thought it looked fine. Once he took the belt off my car, he showed me that underneath the belt were hundreds of small cracks that weakened the strength of the belt that he replaced. The strange thing about me is that I rarely have people do preventative maintenance repairs on my vehicles. I usually wait until something snaps, and then I’m stuck without transportation.

As I moved into a challenging ministry week, I noticed that some people were snapping under the pressure of stress. Other people turned to chocolate, cigarettes, alcohol, skipping work, pot, loud music, yelling, cussing, hiding, venting, or just staying home. And I found myself reflecting on a disturbing question: **“Why do we have to snap before we seek out help with our stress-filled lives?”** Why don’t we make the time to seek out help and do the preventative maintenance so that our lives and relationships don’t snap? Then I remembered the lesson I learned from the mechanically challenged man I see in the mirror, **“You can’t fix something when you don’t know what it is, what it’s called, and how it’s supposed to work.”**

- Did you get more upset thinking about (a) children eating chocolate for breakfast, (b) people snapping under stress, or (c) the ways people self-medicate to avoid snapping?
- Why do we judge the way other people deal with stress, and we think our ways of handling stress are okay?
- When do you feel like you’re going to snap?
- What do you avoid dealing with that causes your life to become unmanageable?

Fortunately, if you are in a “health talk” group, you may discover that someone around you can relate with you and some of your struggles. You may share or learn some more positive ways to deal with your struggles that prevent you from snapping. **Although snapping may get people to leave us alone, snapping eventually contributes to losing more than we gain.** There are other ways to relax, unwind, and get some much needed space without alienating people around us. Sometimes what we need is having someone who cares about us who will listen, allow us to talk it out, give us some honest feedback, and point us in a new direction. In most areas of life there are experienced people who can quickly diagnose what is wrong, give it a name, and teach us what we need to do to make it work again.

- Will you allow your situation to worsen before you take action to make things better?
- What are you relying on to keep you going?
- If you remove that from your life, what would happen?
- Who do you identify with the most in our group today?
- Who do you believe is best equipped to help you handle what you’re going through?

“Health Talks” are designed to be part of a well-nourish community where people have the freedom to talk openly about their lives, gain valuable information, while supporting the growing health of one another.