

Reflection

- a) Of the two stories (Jessie and Manvir, Mel and Matt), which one did you find more **relatable**? Or, did you find aspects of both of them relatable? Explain.
(Note: You can discuss aspects of the stories that are familiar to you and/or familiar to people you know.)
 - b) Which aspects of these stories did you find **unrelatable** or more difficult to relate to?
2. What is **one important lesson** you learned from **Jessie and Manvir's** story?
3. What is **one important lesson** you learned from **Mel and Matt's** story?

Transcript: Jessie & Manvir – “You were continuously checking in”

JESSIE: Hi, my name's Jessie.

MANVIR: My name is Mani, and we actually met at Queen's University in second year.

JESSIE: We've been friends for a while, and we've always kind of been there for each other, I would say. But 2018 was a really tough year for myself. Little things that built up and caused a lot of stress in my life.

MANVIR: I guess that's when you started telling me about everything that was going on in your life. I just wanted to sit and listen. My job as a friend was to just sit and absorb and just see what's going on and take it all in. It wasn't even like I thought something was wrong. I just thought you were busy. I wasn't sure what was going on. I just wanted to say, “Hey, you're my friend. Let's hang out. What's up?”

JESSIE: He was there, and he was listening to me. He was asking me those questions and validating how I was feeling. It may not seem like a lot to you, but I went home that day and I felt so much better. And it was so nice to have that space to talk to you about it.

MANVIR: I think that's part of active listening as well, actually trying to understand what you're going through. I knew there was something about the breakup. How are you feeling about that? How are you dealing with it? Little things like that, kind of more, smaller, follow-up questions. As a friend, I want to know what's going on, right? And I think that's where that comes from. Just listening can be hard sometimes. One of the things I was actively focusing on was just let the person talk and just try to actually understand how they're feeling, what they're going through, what's happening in their mind. Because the way I might have perceived something earlier in my past might be different than how they see it

right now. To me, it was really important to see what Jessie was going through and how she was feeling and I didn't want to make assumptions. The easiest way to find out is to just ask.

JESSIE: Yeah, and I've always been resistant. When someone asks me the first time, I'm like, “No, I'm fine,” is always my answer. But just being open and you always ask open ended questions. You never cut the conversation off like, “Are you ok?” “Yes”. You did a great job as well of continuously checking in, like a couple weeks later sending a text, “Hey, I care about you. What's going on?” When you are struggling I guess it's hard to take that initiative, and having you do that for me made it so much easier for me to have that conversation with you really.

Transcript: Mel & Matt – “I truly thought I was alone”

MEL: Hi, I’m Mel.

MATT: I’m Matt.

MEL: And we’ve been friends for as long as I can remember. He’s basically the male version of me.

MATT: Yeah, long-lost twins.

MEL: So we went to the same high school, we had the same summer jobs.

MATT: Same dentist.

MEL: Same birthday. Just a bunch of weird coincidences. And we’ve been friends since, yeah, the day we met when I was training you at our summer job.

MATT: Ah, good times. Growing up in a small town meant feeling isolated in having mental health struggles a lot. There was just no communication about it, and part of that was because there were not many resources. I don’t think our town had a psychiatrist. When you have that atmosphere, where having mental health struggles isn’t really okay, it makes it really hard to find someone that you feel comfortable talking to about that.

MEL: I remember there was one day when we were carpooling on our way back home from work and you had opened up to me about your mental health struggles, and I just remember that being the first time that I learned that about you, or I’d learned that about anyone else really, and I just remember thinking, you know, like, “Me too” and that was a really impactful moment for me.

MATT: Yeah, I think that was the first time I’ve ever told anyone that I don’t really want to be alive sometimes, so it was hard, but I felt comfortable being able to talk to you about that.

MEL: I didn’t know anyone else who had gone through the same thing. I truly thought I was alone in it, and I remember thinking, yeah like, “I’m the only one. I’m the only one.” And then that day in the car was just like, “Okay, there’s one more.” A lot of the time the way that I’ve learned to support you is even just asking, “Hey, what can I do to help? Is there anything that I can do right now that will make things easier?” You know, “Do you need a friend? Do you need a coffee date? Do you need something else?”

MATT: It was the atmosphere that we created and the fact that I knew Mel cared. I was confident that there was no judgement being made, that I could share how I was feeling without Mel looking at me any differently or any worse because of that. And that was just in the dynamic of our friendship. Being there for someone means actively listening, having the conversation with mindfulness, and asking questions and validating how they feel. I felt heard. I felt like what I was saying was actually getting through to someone.

MEL: Yeah, and knowing that, it doesn’t mean that you’re never gonna have a bad day again, but it does mean that you’re never gonna have to face that bad day alone, and that’s a really meaningful moment to me.

MATT: Yeah, it makes a world of a difference.