BRADY

My Noble Story…My early childhood was great, enjoying all the things most kids do with exposure to new experiences and protection from any worries. My parents got divorced when I was very young, and I didn't realize how it was affecting me, eating away at my confidence and dismantling the sense of security I was used to. When I entered middle school is when everything began to change. There was constant overstimulation between school, sports, and social activities. At this age competition and comparison with my peers was everywhere I turned. Trying to figure out my self-identity and how I fit in felt exhausting. When you are growing up you are always seeking the approval of others for validation whether it's your parents, teachers, coaches, or friends.

Moving on to high school was a stressful transition because I was outside of the safety net that middle school still provides. With less balance and structure and increasing pressure to fit in, I felt like my brain needed a break, an escape, or release of some sort. I turned to partying. As normal as it seemed at the time because everyone else was experimenting, I was really doing it to drown out the emotional and physical stresses in my life. Not being able to identify my feelings or recognize my emotions this avoidance led me down a destructive path that rapidly got worse. By my junior year in high school I already had multiple run ins with the police and eventually got a DUI. During that time, I was spiraling through every emotion in the book. Not knowing how to understand or process all of my feelings, I stuffed them down and told myself and everyone else I simply had bad luck.

As a teenager all I wanted was to be living my best life and enjoying memorable moments and new experiences with my friends.

Sadly, I was not, even though I was trying to put up a good front for anyone that was close to me. Looking back, I realize that going through the juvenile probation system slowed me down to the degree that it probably saved my life. I got through it but because I never got to the bottom of why I was making bad decisions it wasn't long after I returned to the same habitual patterns.

I went to college and the partying instantly ramped up again. I finally had the freedom of being away from home and continued with my attitude and belief that "everyone is doing it." This led to extremely unhealthy habits. I was partying almost every day which destroyed my direction in life, my motivation, and my brain chemistry. I made it to my junior year of college but was barely getting to classes and couldn't dig out of the hole I'd gotten into with my grades. I decided it would be best to move home. At first, I felt paralyzed, stuck, and lost on what I wanted to do with my life. This time spent alone turned out to be the necessary turning point I needed because I removed myself from destructive patterns and habits. I finally had time to get my brain right and gain clarity about my future. I recognized that I had signs and symptoms of depression and had been struggling to get my mental health on track. Stepping out of that downward spiral is what helped me realize I didn't have to be like everyone else and that I wanted to get back on my own true path.

I've always been creative and passionate about fashion. I started visualizing a streetwear brand that had potential to communicate an important message. You can strive to become the best version of yourself and always be kind and compassionate to others. Through my struggles growing up I always found happiness and fulfillment through helping other people.

Because I now recognize that my experiences were impacting my mental health, serving as a Noble One Youth Personal Development Coach is a platform to share what I have learned through my story and help kids that could be silently struggling like I did.

What I have come to realize is today's youth are living in a socially over-saturated world which can easily lead to mental health struggles. I believe that it's in our best interest globally to develop new programs and educate each other on how to be aware and accepting of our mental health, especially the youth.

Had I learned fundamental social and emotional awareness skills or felt safe to share my feelings as a younger boy growing up, it undoubtedly would have saved me a lot of time, heartache, and trouble. Everyone's mental health matters, and it's important we come together and create a community where youth can stop comparing and start sharing.

Brady Lash