

Live Well Be Well

“Oh what a year it has been!”

Welcome to Live Well, Be Well! A podcast where we speak candidly about all things health and well-being! My name is Renee Dell'Acqua, and I'm a Health Educator in Health Promotion Services here at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, we take a moment to recognize how far we've come and the growth we experienced as a result of this life-changing year.

So we hope you get inspired, we hope you feel connected, and we hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

Oh 2020, what can I say about you? As a community and as individuals, we have gone through turbulent times. And if you haven't heard what I'm about to say or haven't heard it in a while, I am here to remind you of a few things. It is VALID and NORMAL to feel angry and frustrated, to feel anxious of the unknown and the constant state of uncertainty our world has come to know. It is VALID and NORMAL to mourn the lack of normality in daily life and be disappointed by events and monumental occasions that missed their celebrations. It is VALID and NORMAL to miss those that you haven't seen for months on end or miss the ability to freely connect with others. It is VALID and NORMAL to grieve for the lives, including you and your loved ones, that have been deeply impacted by this global pandemic - whether that impact be physical, financial, social, mental, and the list goes on and on. And with empathetic, and humane hearts, it is VALID and NORMAL to grieve the lives that have been lost as a result of this all, whether you were personally connected with them or not.

And given these trying times marked by uncertainty, fear, frustration, and a myriad of other emotions and feelings, I consistently heard phrases like, "this year needs to end already!" "2020, you're done." "2020 has officially been cancelled." Understandably so.

But with that, what I've come to realize is that it has become far too easy to fixate solely on the negative aspects of 2020 while neglecting to recognize the positive attributes this year also had to offer. Most of which relates to our growth, individually and as a community. Times such as these, challenging times, times marked by hardships, bring about opportunities for strength, for growth, for resilience, for wisdom, and for the building of community -- All of which is nearly impossible to cultivate when hardships and obstacles are non-existent.

So, I recently saw a post on Instagram written by Faith Broussard Cade (@fleurdelisspeaks) that sparked a moment of self-reflection. The post stated:

FACT: As of this very moment, you have made it through 100% of the hard things you thought you'd never survive. You are strong. You are resilient. You CAN do this. #fleurdelisspeaks

The reason this post was powerful and memorable to me was because it shifted my perspective of 2020. When I said earlier that I heard phrases like "this year needs to end already," it wasn't that I simply heard these phrases, but I myself said these phrases. This post brought to light that yes, 2020 was an extremely hard year - one of discomfort and grief, of pain and loss. It was also a year that exposed our individual, societal, and structural vulnerabilities, inequities, and entitlements. I know I'm not alone when I say that there have been and continue to be days where it feels like it takes every ounce of energy to survive...but we do. This is not meant to invalidate the difficulty or your

experiences and feelings attached to them but to praise you for being a phoenix that arises from the ashes.

This year we were hit with major life challenges, ones that shook us to our core and brought us to our knees. But with these hardships came opportunities for growth, for change, for wisdom, and for resilience. We may not realize it when we're in the thick of it all, like we are right now, but times like these do make us stronger and more resilient.

There were many moments in 2020 that surely did push us to the ground and left us with a few bumps, bruises, and maybe even a few scars of a lifetime. But let us never forget that we as individuals and as communities continue to rise up each and every day. We dust ourselves off, we straighten our crowns, and we continue to show up for ourselves and for others. And that, in and of itself, is empowering, it's inspiring, and it brings to light that we are stronger and more resilient than we often feel, we are braver than we believe, and we are far more connected with one another than we previously realized. As we push forward into 2021, let us harness the strength, wisdom, connection, courage, and resilience we gained in 2020 to conquer any and all of the challenges and obstacles that await us in this new year.

So as this year comes to an end, reflect on how far you've come, how much you've grown, and just like Faith Broussard Cade said, recognize that at this very moment, you have made it through 100% of the hard things you thought you'd never survive. You are strong. You are resilient. You CAN do this.

And with that, I wish you all endless love, peace, and gratitude to you all.

So that concludes Season 3 of Live Well, Be Well! We will be taking a short break over the next few weeks. During this time we'll be brainstorming new and timely episodes to help you along in your health and well-being journey in 2021.

In the meantime, if you're in need of support, always remember that the Student Health and Well-Being Cluster, which comprises of CAPS, Student Health Services, and Health Promotion Services, is here for you. Check out our website wellness.ucsd.edu and follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @UCSDSHWB.

And don't forget to follow Health Promotion Services' Instagram and Facebook under @UCSDHPS.

Stay tuned for Season 4 of Live Well, Be Well. Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.