

Episode 1 -Resilience v. Persistence

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people, resilient, guess, persevere, parents, terms, feel, grade, college, life, tests, high school, mental health, homework, study, fun, smart, starting, resiliency, school

SPEAKERS

Kaelyn, Dannie, Jay

[Intro]

Jay

Hi there! You're listening to the SpeakOnIt Podcast, a program facilitated by Youth Advisory Board members of The Steve Fund.

Dannie

The Steve Fund is one of the leading nonprofit organizations in the United States that promotes the emotional and mental health of students of color.

Kaelyn

The goal of this podcast is to create a space for students and professionals alike to come together to discuss a plethora of topics relating to mental health and the challenges that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color may face during their academic and professional careers.

Jay

Before we begin our conversation, we would like to leave a disclaimer that this podcast cannot and should not substitute a mental health provider. If you or a loved one need help, please reach out to your primary care provider or The Steve Fund Crisis Hotline, which you can access by texting STEVE to 741741.

Dannie

Thank you and enjoy.

Dannie 00:08

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for tuning in. Today on Speak On It, we're going to be talking about resilience. For this podcast, we have myself and two other YAB members. Let's start with some introductions.

Jay 00:24

Hi everyone, to start off our podcast, let's go ahead and do something called Rose-Bud-Thorn. A rose is something good that has happened this week. A bud is something that you're hopeful for. And a thorn was just a pain in the butt.

[Rose-Bud-Thorn Song]

Rose, bud and thorn
A rose is something beautiful
A thorn is a pain and
A bud is something you're looking forward to

Jay

So for me personally, a rose this week would be that I'm starting to get back on routine. For the past week and a half, I've been having kind of an on/off-like period with my headspace, but I'm finally getting to a more productive space. A bud would be that I'm starting classes next week for the first time in like a year and a half. So a little excited to kind of push my boundaries mentally, especially with the whole online learning and distance learning concept. And then finally a thorn, for me, would be the lack of face mask usage that I've been noticing, in terms of people, not social distancing properly. But yeah, that's it for me.

Kaelyn 01:33

For me, my name is Kaelyn, and I guess a rose this week would be that I've had more time to plant succulents in my garden. A bud, something that I'm hopeful for, is, I guess, spending time with my family after I'm done studying for tests. And then a thorn would be having to give my dog a bath. Because that takes a long time and a lot of effort.

Dannie 2:08

I'm Dannie and I am 19. I'm from New York, and my rose, bud, and thorn would be-- well, my rose will be recording this with you guys today, because this is a lot of fun and definitely a highlight in my day. And then a thorn would be going to bed a little bit too late and waking up this morning with kind of a sore throat, because sometimes I do that when I go to bed, not even that late like 12 or one or something. And I'll have a little bit of a sore throat, but luckily it went away. I drank some tea, and I'm going to try to go to bed more on time so I can kind of wake up and start my day off right, the way that I want to, so that'd be my bud, looking forward to that.

Jay 02:45

Awesome. So, I guess like as a general process of our topic for this episode is that, for me, I've had like a history in terms of like the word "resiliency," especially in higher education, because I've personally seen it used in a connotation where it kind of downplays struggles that a lot of marginalized communities go through, like a lot of the hardships and obstacles that you go through. And people kind of tend to go to this, like, definition or idea of what resiliency is, and they kind of like wave their hand or

shake you off, or wave you off. And they're like, "You need to be more resilient," like, "Buck up, you got this." And I think that in a way it can be-- it can be supportive, it can be like good, like a positive connotation. But on the flip side, like for individuals that may not necessarily be quote-unquote "resilient," I think it plays into the conversation of like, "There's something wrong with me if I'm not resilient?" So I thought it was like an interesting topic to have various youth bring in their perspectives. So what uh, what are y'all's thoughts?

Dannie

Well, when Jay first told me about this idea, I definitely, I didn't relate personally to it as much, because I haven't been to college yet, but I've noticed that different institutions tend to use this word, and I think it can-- I've definitely seen like different effects like, students feeling like, "Okay, it's great that I'm resilient." So I probably shouldn't go to therapy, I probably shouldn't ask for help or show weakness because that would just kind of take away from certain accomplishments, or feeling like they are like, I guess being like the ideal student. And then also resilient, used, I guess, to refer to people of color, implying that they should expect certain challenges like unique challenges, which is true, but almost like saying that that's an inherent thing and that should just be expected and, and not really challenged.

Kaelyn 5:18

Yeah, I think that also when people use the word resilient and like-- what Jay was saying how it has a negative connotation-- people say like, "Oh, you're not being resilient enough." So then it makes people think, "Oh, maybe I'm not trying hard enough." So like, "Maybe I just got to keep doing it, and maybe it'll get better," or "It will get better." But sometimes it just doesn't happen if you think that way.

Jay 05:33

Yeah, and I really like that you mentioned that, Kaelyn, cuz like, one of the other things that I see when people use the word resilient for students of color, especially if they're like living with a mental illness or they're starting to come to terms with whatever their diagnoses may be. There's already a stigma involved around mental health, and then this like concept of resiliency that then comes into play as well. I feel like it can potentially also be another shame factor. Because I know personally like when I was first diagnosed with like, depression/anxiety, like there was a lot of shame that was like, "Oh my gosh, like, there's something wrong with me," like, "I have depression, I have anxiety, I'm not strong," dah, dah, dah, dah. And then like, you have this other conversation of like, "Oh, if you're resilient enough, you'll be able to overcome your symptoms of like, anxiety or depression." And then that kind of brings on the flip side of like, "What happens if people aren't resilient enough? Or they don't have those resiliency factors?" And it kind of brings in another angle of weakness, I guess, that if you're not resilient, that's another factor in terms of your weakness and your struggles. And I think it can also play into learned helplessness as a result of which.

Kaelyn 07:10

I like what you said about how having some sort of mental illness is what is like a shame for some families. I know that when I asked to go see a psychologist because my teachers recommended it, my parents, they were like, "Why do you need to do that?" And I was like, "I don't know, they just recommended me." So I went to talk to them. And then on the car ride back, my dad had asked me-- or,

no, it was my mom. She was saying, "Oh, you know, there's gonna be a lot of struggles in life, but, you know, you're in America now," and "It's different from like, how I grew up," and I was like, "Yeah, it's different. It's the 21st century and it's America and like, technology is everywhere, and people are different." And my mom was like, "Oh, it's okay," like, you know, like, "Life is gonna get better. It's good." And she was like, "You have to be grateful for what you have," you know, just "Persevere," like, you know, "Your life isn't that bad." "Okay." But she's not really fond of the idea of being resilient-- she doesn't really know the term resilience because I guess it's not like in their vocabulary when they came to America, like you said, but perseverance is like one of the words that I've heard a lot to get through my life. And tough issues. Doesn't really help but it's there.

Jay 08:30

Yeah, I think, I don't know if this is like an Asian American thing, or like, it was just like a common thing in terms of like, POCs. But I like, like, I actually get irked when my parents are like, "You just need to persevere." Like, you kind of have to like, persist, like "You have to keep your head down." And just like, roll with the punches of like, everything that's coming at you. And I'm just kind of like, "No." I feel like it's one thing if it's like something like personally for me like if I'm not able to like reframe properly, reframe, like a certain context of that, and maybe it's just like me being something like to much of a negative connotation, like maybe that's the reason I'm like I need to reframe on that. But then there are other circumstances where it's like, no, these are like environmental, societal and institutional issues or concerns that are coming to play that need to be discussed. And like, I can't just roll with the punches. Because I don't know if this is like a toss, toss, like haha, like I'm attempting to be a social justice warrior or whatever. I'm just kind of like, if I'm going through this, like how many other people have to go through this as well? And then how many more people like after me, they're gonna have to go through this and it's like a story of like, how much we have to continuously like endure, persist and etc. as individuals, as opposed to working to change the institutions or change the environment to ensure that everyone as a community can be uplifted.

Kaelyn 10:10

Yeah, sometimes it's just too much. But like, even in general, like, when I was younger, I would have to go to like, okay, basic Asian things. I would have to go to like piano lessons, and then I would have to do some sport, and I would have to do homework and go to like, church and everything. And it was just a lot. And my dad would say, you know, "You got to make time. You just gotta go, you got to go through it, get your homework done, then study for this and then do that." And it got so much like, especially when I was young, I was like, in third grade. And then, in fourth grade, I was sort of like a rebel and kind of stubborn, and I would tell my parents, like, "I can't do this anymore." Like, I don't want to do it. I can't do it. I don't have enough time to like, do like my 100% best in like, every single thing that they're making me do. And so they sort of, like kind of find me as like a disappointment for not being resilient because I changed when I had to do. I changed my situation in order to make my life better. But there's like shame in doing so sometimes, especially with mental health.

Jay 11:15

I don't know if this has happened to you, but like, I've had, like some situations where like, I had tons of extracurriculars like growing up. And like, my parents would go off on this like thing of like-- they tell me

to persevere, but like, I think they really meant to be like, resilient and be able to deal with it and endure everything. And like, I stayed up late at night in elementary and middle school doing homework. I don't know if this was the same case for y'all. And then my parents would be nagging at me and they're like, "Why are you up at like, one in the morning?" And I'm like, "Because you made me do Taekwondo for like two hours every day and it cuts into school and it cuts into all these extracurriculars. Like I go to school from like, eight to three, and then from three to five I do extracurriculars, and five to seven I do Taekwondo. Like, when am I supposed to do homework?"

Kaelyn 12:02

Yeah, like, I would get back from soccer and then I would have to have dinner with like family and they take forever to eat. And I'm just like, I got a lot of homework, and then it'd be like 10 o'clock, and my dad would be like, "It's late," like, "Gotta wake up early." I was like, "I haven't even done anything yet. It's annoying but you know, life [muffled]."

Dannie 12:23

I grew up with a lot of extracurriculars to remember in middle school, we did swimming and piano were our two main things, my brothers and I all did it. And I guess that was like, the start of that for us. Like we all had the same things. And then in high school, we got a little bit more freedom to choose the different things that we wanted to do, which I'm happy about because I ended up finding different interests and passions. But it can definitely feel like a lot. And I think the hardest thing for me was just pushing through high school, especially having really bad social anxiety, and I went to different psychologists and they'd give me different strategies, and I'd leave feeling really empowered and like on top of the world, like "I can tackle this issue." Then going to school and then just feeling like, basically really anxious and isolated and not really thriving in that area. And I think, I think, my parents handled it like, pretty well, like I think they just kind of I think it came to a certain point where they were like, "Okay, we have to address this." But other than that, like, I think they just really understood their responsibility to just get me to kind of persevere through it, because I remember one day just pulling up to school and I just did not want to get out of the car. Like and then my mom was just like, "You can do it," and we just did a meditation together. And then that helped me. So I think things like that, and tools and and just like, I guess being with me through a lot of it is really what got me through a lot of it. So I think that's like a big thing. And I felt like I could speak up and like tell them because I just felt like they would understand or at least try to understand, so I was really grateful for that.

Kaelyn

I think it's really cool how you have such supportive parents.

Jay 14:07

Yeah, like I think I really love how you mentioned the how your parents, your own personal social network was able to help facilitate your persistence. Like I prefer to use that word--~~the~~ over resiliency. Your persistence in terms of like being able to go to school and etc. And I think idealistically, resiliency would encompass that. But like for me, again, the current connotations and the current use of it, it's more-- it kind of puts all the spotlight on the individual, whereas persistence is like everyone in your community and

Dannie 14:53

Yeah, working together.

Jay 14:55

Yeah, and I think that's really important in terms of these conversations, especially in higher education and in terms of like, in high school to like in terms of like graduation rates, especially for, like a lot of like marginalized populations is like, how do we ensure that they graduate? How do we ensure that if they if they want to, to be able to succeed in higher education or through technical school, vocational school, whatever their ambitions are. And I think it's the conversation of like, what can we do as a community to help these individuals persist? Like what are environmental factors or societal factors that we can kind of lower the lower the barrier for and allow them to be able to overcome those?

Dannie 15:45

Yeah, I love the idea of like working together and being able to feel like we can talk about these things, because when we're kind of putting labels or saying, like, "It's good to be resilient," that's-- we're kind of looking at like, I guess the task at hand and the individual and focusing on that. But I guess a more holistic approach would be like, "How can we support these people as they're going through it? How can we leverage community and our circle of friends and family and work through things that way?" Because then I think, in reality, I think that gets you a lot farther, for sure. And I think that a lot of stuff happens behind the scenes that people don't really talk about at school as much.

Kaelyn 16:20

Yeah you need to recognize the situation. Resiliency ties in with ego with like, the whole idea that, you know, if other people are doing it, then so can I. But to be resilient means to recognize your situation and make a change. And sometimes you have to be vulnerable to ask for help. And like sometimes people find difficulty in doing so. It's just like human nature, like you don't want to show people that you're failing.

Dannie

Yeah, it's like the ego thinks that if the ego thinks that certain things have to happen a certain way. It's just kind of like the pride I think coming from-- instead of being, just trying to get the task done. It's almost just like and I have to look a certain way while I'm doing it. And it has to be like 100% me, even though like almost nothing is like 100% you. We glorify people who are successful and self-made, but are not-- even maybe they are self-made, but like, what about the people who just worked with others? Or who co-founded something instead of founding something. Like how's that any less? It's almost just like the ego prizes individuality a lot. But a lot of the big things that have happened for humanity have been like a team effort.

Kaelyn

Yeah, even like with going down the same path. Sometimes the path isn't for everyone, like everyone has their own path, you have that whole idea. But like, for instance, um, when, like, okay, I want to become like a doctor, or like, I want to go somewhere down the medical field. And so for everyone else

who wants to do that, they all think the same path is like, "Okay, I'm going to go to like a four-year undergrad, and then graduate school, and then medical school" and blah blah blah. And, like, "My major has to be bio because, you know, bio is gonna get me into the medical field," but there's like so many other majors that medical schools like as well, aside from bio, but people just think like there's only one path to do something. And they think that's the correct one.

Jay 18:15

And I love how you mentioned that, because I think that's actually one of our later one of our later episodes that we have in terms of career goals or life goals.

Dannie 18:25

Yeah, life is not linear. Mm hmm.

Jay 18:28

I think that's like an interesting topic for anyone who's interested in following up on that, please look for that one. So, another thing I want to bring up in terms of resiliency, like at least from what I've seen: it kind of creates an atmosphere where it discourages people from alternating from the status quo, to a certain extent. Because you're enduring it, you're just putting up with it. And then you move on with it, and you kind of leave whatever it was that you're dealing with as is. So what are your thoughts on that?

Dannie 19:17

Yeah, it's it's being-- I think less mindful, like less conscious of certain things. And the complaining can kind of just keep going on and on without, like any real change happening. I remember in high school, like, people would say, "Ah, I have much work." Like so, and just talking about is not the same thing as doing it. Just the idea that it's just the general expectation and just going with that, and yeah, just not being mindful enough to kind of challenge that. I guess we're not advocating for people to just stop doing their work and like, go protest outside of school, but just the way that it happens, like I guess what I would suggest is, offer to invite somebody to be a homework buddy or like, do something together or just just be honest, like I was up all night studying for this thing. And I think people do that with their close friends. But I think they might be more guarded with other people in the grade. So yeah, there's a bunch of random thoughts.

Kaelyn 20:18

I'm not sure if this relates, but like when people say they tried and then people tell them to persevere, it's like you actually have to, like, try. You have to actually try to like achieve your goal. Because we grew up in a world of instant gratification where, when it comes to your cell phone, like if you want to someone, just got to click on it and that's it. You don't have to, like, go out drive somewhere just to talk to someone.

Kaelyn

If we failed when we were younger, our parents would like coddle us, like, you know, like, with science fair, they'll be like, "Oh, like you didn't get first place. That's okay." Like you get like, an honor, like

participation award, like a ribbon or whatever. And then like people I told, like, if you fail, just like try, try again and like, you know, eventually you'll get a gold medal.

Dannie 21:20

Yeah. It's like having a growth mentality instead of the other one, which is just kind of like thinking that you already have to have it made and you have to, like kind of being intelligent or being smart. It's just kind of like a trait that you're born with. And if you don't have it, you can't move up. But I think a growth mentality accepts failure as part of the way, part of the path to success. So yeah, just knowing that you actually have to try and stick with it to a certain extent. I think-- I think sometimes we think if we just don't have it instantly, then it's just not meant to be.

Kaelyn 21:55

Yeah. The idea of like nature versus nurture. Sometimes people say, "Oh, like when it comes to, like your intelligence level, it ties into the idea of nature versus nurture." It's like, "Oh, I'm just like, by nature kind of stupid. So like, there's nothing I can do about it." Like, I'm just like, "I don't think that's how it works."

Jay 22:29

I think I remember reading a couple papers that demonstrated like, it doesn't matter how intelligent you are. It matters in terms of how much effort and how much work you're able to put in, how much you're able to, like, persist and persevere through challenges and obstacles, because like, it doesn't matter if you're like, super smart, and like you're able to, like, I don't know, like, I don't know if this is like a smart thing, but like, do a Rubik's cube in like 10 seconds, or whatever the record for whatever that is. But it's a matter of how you're able to apply that, how you able to navigate through systems to be able to like, achieve, like, statuses, to like be able to utilize your intelligence or whatnot. And I think I remember reading somewhere where there's like a growing issue with telling people that you're smart, which is why you're able to get that grade, you're smart, and that's why you were able to like, get a 4.0 as opposed to like really discussing how much effort that someone puts into it. Because at the end of the day, that's a huge factor in terms of how well you're able to succeed through the systems, right? How you're able to persist and persevere and like, push through, as we were discussing.

Kaelyn 24:20

Yeah. I think that sometimes I don't-- correct me if I'm wrong, but like, your level of intelligence doesn't determine your success. Okay, so then people would always be like-- okay, this is gonna sound really sad, but at school, there were a couple of times when I would be alone with a teacher talking about a homework assignment or something. And whenever they would tell me like, you're really smart, like, compared to like, I'm gonna be honest with you, like, compared to like other people, like you're intelligent. And I would like, I would like cry. I don't know why I would cry, it's just like, it just feels like a lie. Because like, me being smart, it just doesn't. Maybe that's just me. I just don't feel it. Like, I don't think that I'm smart. And maybe that's just like some sort of issue I have, but it just makes me cry because just because I'm smart doesn't mean I'm gonna, like, get into college or something, you know, something as basic as that.

Dannie 25:21

It could be like, they were kind of crediting, like your hard work to something that you just have and they don't have it. So like they're almost like jealous, or they just they're just discrediting you and like, who you are, and like what you've been working for by saying, "Oh, you're just smart," or something, maybe that was why it was hurtful. That's just one idea.

Kaelyn

Or like, I would talk to a student and I was like, "Oh my gosh," like, you know how like every student or okay, high school, when you're in high school, you just think like, "Oh, like I'm worried. I'm not going to get into a good college," or whatever. But I would talk to some students who's like, "Girl, you don't even have to worry like, you're gonna do it. Everyone knows it." Just because everyone else knows it doesn't mean I know it. I don't know. I think it's weird.

Jay 26:05

Yeah, I think it comes into the idea of validation. And whether or not they're validating your concerns. And again, like I think it also comes into the idea of downplaying a lot of other factors that come into play, like, I think like it parallels with, like our conversation in terms of like resiliency versus persistence and like, intelligence versus like, effort in terms of like grades or whatever. Like, by telling someone you're intelligent, again, it downplays the amount of hours that you're studying, reading and catching up on material working, as opposed to-- yeah, like it just downplays it.

Kaelyn 29:25

Yeah, I know that my social life in high school last year for junior year, it wasn't the best. Like I would always stay in the library, like doing my homework because my parents would always get on me, like on my grades, and I'm just like, I literally moved schools, I have no friends and they're telling me to focus on my schoolwork. So I would just be in the library, like, pushing through, trying to make it through high school because that's what my parents want me to do. And it's like, you know, Persevere, do all the work. You'll do-- you'll be fine. You'll feel happy as soon as you're done." I was like, okay.

Dannie 29:57

Hmm, yeah. That's a big thing, I think. I'm taking this psychology course. I brought it up earlier, The Science of Well-Being. And it's the most popular course at Yale. And it's available for free on Coursera. So I definitely recommend it if you have some extra time, or to anyone listening, it's really interesting. And a big thing they talk about is the, I guess, misconceptions we have about what will make us happy. And like so for example, like a good job, we think if it just pays a certain amount, that's what's gonna make us happy, and I guess having a certain level of wealth, but what they found is what actually makes people happy about their jobs is they get to use their strengths. And they get to, like use their characteristic strengths, like the things that they actually feel they're really good at and feel like they're really productive at, and then being able to use that to like help others is like a big thing, also. And just being able to-- they get to be in a state of flow a lot where they feel like they are, they kind of lose track of time. Like it's something that it's just right in the right challenge and that feeling impossible, but not feeling like boring or mundane. So a lot of these things about jobs, and they talk about, that's a great goal to have. But maybe for like those reasons instead of just like, because it's prestigious or

something, gained a lot of respect for it, because that may not be truly fulfilling in the end. So they have all these different studies and surveys, to try to figure out what actually makes people happy about certain things. Because sometimes we just, we-- certain things motivate us but then when we arrive there, we might not be as happy. Then we have to go transfer jobs and like search for the meaning of life, because it's just like that. Maybe that wasn't true the whole time. [Laughter]

Kaelyn 31:34

Yeah. That's just because we live in a materialistic world.

Dannie

Yeah, I agree. Yeah.

Jay 31:41

Yeah. That's a whole different topic to get into.

Kaelyn 31:47

Like a little side, side trail detour.

Dannie 31:52

I think it connects back to resilience because it's almost like putting your head down and pushing through and getting to the end of it without questioning things. Sometimes, it is good to question things. But also, work hard. We're not advocating against working hard, guys. Work for your goals. But be mindful when you're setting your goals. Yeah. But just pay attention to the kinds of goals that you're setting for yourself is a big thing because like-- and then in life, like there are other goals too, besides just like grades. Or graduating, there are so many worthy goals.

Jay 32:20

Oh my God, yes.

Kaelyn

It's so hard to think of it though. Like, the only thing I can think of are, is like, okay, well, to get the title of a doctor is one. To have a family, I guess. And that's about it. School and family.

Jay 32:43

And then just also note, like, we're gonna touch on those in the other podcast too, but like your priorities change, like through different chapters of your life. And so like one priority, not trying to dissuade you Kaelyn, it's not about but I'm saying that like, your like desire, like priorities of being a doctor may, like go down as you like continue on on your like journey and as you're writing your story of your life and like something else might get prioritized. But like that's on saying that like you want to be a doctor is like gone, like it can go back up. It's just one of those back and forth dynamics.

Kaelyn 33:20

I know people tell me that, and so sometimes. I get scared because they're like, they're like telling me like, oh, everyone switches their major in college. I'm just like, I really don't want to switch my major. Like if I do, I'm gonna be like, really sad, but I don't know.

Jay 33:33

I had that mentality when I was in college, too. I was strictly a biology major, but then I discovered that I really loved field biology. And I could have switched majors last minute when and got the degree but I didn't. But I could also have done like a sociology major or public health major. Those would have been interesting.

But like I think in terms of like becoming a doctor because like I like I'm pre-med, I guess technically still. And so one of the things I've had to like kind of stop and like the reason why one of the reasons I'm taking a sabbatical is because I wasn't prioritizing, like my own mental health and emotional health. And like I kept really emphasizing on grades and performance and extracurriculars and like my physical health and mental health was like horrendous by the time I finished my master's program. I had like multiple panic and anxiety attacks that I've never had before and like so like I have had to unfortunately like becoming like a physician or going to med school like on the back burner of things and get my mental health to that state first. So like, I'm not saying that that's gonna happen to you. It's just an example of like, other things may come up. But like maybe not. So

Kaelyn 34:58

Yeah. Don't be late right straight through it, but I don't know. I kind of like the struggle sometimes like, or like for instance with schoolwork I kind of like getting dumped a lot because then I feel like really motivated to do it. It's weird. Like, I like having a lot of like dead. Okay, it's like, deadlines. I don't, I don't know. I know they're scary to some people, but I kind of like them. I don't know why, it's like it's fun. Some people are gonna be like, it's like fun, I guess kind of.

Jay 35:38

I think it's fun. Like it can be to like, it's fun to like, it can be maybe the satisfaction at least for me, it's a satisfaction of like,

Dannie 35:44

haha, like checking something please. Complete. Complete. Yeah. I kind of identify with that but also like procrastination was real for me some time. But then at the same time, like my thing I look forward to is tests, like I actually genuinely enjoyed tests, I was like, oh my gosh, starting in, like, I guess fourth grade, we have our state tests. And that was like a holiday for me. So I would come in, have all my pens and pencils, and I'd write my name like on the front cover, and like my best handwriting, and I was just, like, ready to go. And I think a lot of that had to do with being prepared and I'm just, and then it just continued, it never stopped. I remember preparing for my middle school independent school entrance exam with my dad, and he just made it really fun. And I guess I didn't really get penalized if I got a wrong answer or something. He would just make it fun and just focus on learning as much as possible. And I think having the focus on learning and not on grades always made tests fun for me, because I

think it was for me like something I could reflect on, like, "How well did I actually learn the material?" and it didn't feel like the end of the world if I didn't get the grade that I wanted.

Jay 37:02

I think that's so cool that you had that. I've recently learned in terms of like, the difference between learning and then the difference between like doing something because it's expected of me and then kind of juggling those, because like for me while going through school like I was performing to perform to get the grade as opposed to like actually learning the material and like retaining and and being able to utilize it, if that makes sense. (Kaelyn and Dannie: Yeah.) And coming to terms of like, what does it mean in terms of like succeeding in this course, does it mean like getting an A and then not learning anything out of it? Or does it mean like, really like getting everything that I can, and if I do happen to get an A as like a consequence of it, good for me. But like if I get a B, that's great as well, like, no big deal.

Kaelyn 38:12

Yeah, when it comes to assignments, sometimes teachers like assign so much that I tell myself like, "Okay, I'm just gonna finish their assignment and then whenever I'm done with that, I'm gonna do my own studying" to do it, because like, I don't know, I would always end up having to do like double the work because I just don't like how the teachers are making a study for a test. And so it would feel like a lot. But also Dannie, what you said like when you were younger, how like, learning was made fun for you. I'm a little bit jealous of you because whenever I would get something wrong, like multiple times my parents would hound on me for getting it wrong, especially when it came to a math problem, because typical Asian parents-- like it's so annoying! Like they would have, in their study room they would have-- like, like when I was in first grade, they would have the multiplication chart and the division chart and like, everything addition and subtraction things, and "They're like, you just got to memorize it." And I was like, "Okay. Sounds cool."

Dannie 39:09

But I would have to ask my brothers because there are three different kids and the same parents, I guess, like how it all kind of impacted us. It could have been different. But maybe it was just also my personality to kind of do the test. Like saying, I just focus on certain things, I guess. And I can understand like nervousness and like, I guess, with anticipation and like, I guess fear of failure. I remember like in cross country, like I would get nervous and maybe like, the 10 seconds before the start of the race, like we would all be jogging around, warming up, having fun, like seeing who else is there. And then we'd all line up with their teams. And then I would just get this sense of dread just in the 10 seconds before and I knew that if I could just push through that and then once I started running, I'd be using that energy and then I'd be in a lot of pain but not actually pain but just like actually pushing really hard. But I'm having fun and it would be more like, kinetic energy, like positive momentum and moving forward. And I think, just having a good balance with that. Because I think if we think too much about, like the result or the outcome, or like how we're performing, that can definitely start to weigh down, I think.

Kaelyn 40:20

Whenever I would start, like, like, it'd be like five minutes before, like, the marathon starts for us, like, the timer goes off, and we start, I would be like, so scared, like, my heartrate be so up high, because I was like, "Oh my gosh, like, what if I like, can't make it past the first mile. I have, like, 25 more miles to go." And then so the whole time during the five minutes, I would tell myself, okay, it doesn't really matter. Like, you know, it's not a grade, like, doesn't matter if I cross the finish line. I would just like, hammer down on myself saying like, it doesn't matter. So like, I can feel fine, which is like a weird way to do it. But that's usually what I do.

Dannie 41:55

Yeah, when things don't matter, it just takes all the pressure off and you're just doing it. Why else are you doing it? You're doing it because you enjoy it. And that's it. more fun than doing it because you feel like you have to,

Kaelyn

Yeah. This is totally off-topic, but like, um, when it comes to colleges, jokingly like-- my parents want me to like support myself. I'm like, "Yeah, like, I can do that and go to college." And I'm just like, always stressed. Whenever I tell them I'm stressed about like, getting into like a college, my aunt would jokingly say, like, "Oh, like, don't worry, like, you know, you can only just marry someone rich." [Dannie: Laughter] And I'm just like, I mean, if I was to have like, financial security in the future, I would still want to like go to college and learn and do something. But like, if I don't, if I don't have like that economic like financial security, then I guess I would be more stressed because I know that if I fail, there's gonna be consequences. But like, you know.

Jay 41:52

That made me think of like that Cher quote, that's like, her mom was like, "You know, sweetheart, one day you should settle down and marry a rich man." And she said, "Mom, I am a rich man." I think someone should be like, I am going to be the rich person."

Dannie 42:14

They're gonna want to marry me. Yeah.

Dannie 43:38

Alright, so to wrap up our episode today we talked about the word resilience and the different connotations that it may carry. The expectations that come along with it and the importance of challenging it and thinking about ways that we can work smarter, and not necessarily harder. And also, of course, being mindful of our mental health along the journey.

Kaelyn

And just like a last minute reminder, whenever you're faced with a challenge, just remember to take a step back, reevaluate the situation, and then see if there's anything else you can do to like, make the challenge a little bit easier. And I think you guys might find that it will help.

Outro:

Jay

And that's all folks! Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode.

Dannie

To continue the conversation, check out The Steve Fund website for blog posts and summaries of our podcasts. While you're there, feel free to also explore different programs, initiatives, and events that The Steve Fund has coming up!

Kaelyn

If you would like to leave any future topics or themes for us to discuss, or even a comment, feel free to email us at: yab@stevefund.org. Thanks, and until you tune in again, be safe and be well~