



SpeakOnIt Podcast Season 2: Secrets of Well-being
Episode 5: Intellectual Well-being

Dannie 0:00

Hi there! You're listening to The Steve Fund's SpeakOnIt Podcast. The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed by our hosts and guest panelists are their own and do not represent the views, thoughts, and opinions of The Steve Fund.

Kaelyn 0:12

Before we begin our conversation, it is important to note that the information shared on this podcast cannot and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a health or mental health care professional.

Jay 0:24

If you or a loved one need help, please reach out to a health or mental health provider, or The Steve Fund Crisis Text Line, which you can access by texting STEVE to 741741. Thank you and enjoy!

Dannie 0:46

Hi everyone! Welcome back to SpeakOnIt Season 2: Secrets of Well-being. In today's episode we will be discussing intellectual well-being and how to be a lifelong learner.

Jay 0:54

Joining us today is Dr. Chris Rose. Chris is a professor of Engineering and Associate Provost at Brown University. He is to receive the 2022 Undergraduate Teaching Award from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers for innovating teaching and support for students. Thank you for being here today, Chris.

Dr. Rose 1:14

Thanks for having me.

[Rose-Bud-Thorn Theme Song]

Dr. Rose 1:27

I can start off with a thorn. As administrators and college people we have been dealing with COVID for the past couple of years now. We've had a spike in the undergraduate COVID positivity rate. This is not unexpected as you bring everybody back to campus, so we're trying to deal with that. It's a little bit of a thorn. I don't want to over blow it, but we're watching it really



closely and hopefully we can resolve it. I don't know whether they are three things, but the "rose-bud" - I'll do a "rose-bud" - [something] that I'm happy and hopeful about. Brown has this wraparound advising system, which is unique in my experience. I have six frosh that are assigned to me and I make sure that they go through their paces and select courses, but also, I'm there to make sure that everything is going well. I have a wonderful new set of frosh. This happens every year, but these guys are raring to go. They're just a happy bunch and I'm really hopeful that they're going to do well, despite these challenges. As college students, you guys are really in the lurch here. You had a whole year where you weren't at college. That's not the college experience and now all the socialization, which is what college is all about, has really been kind of put on lockdown. So you have to be really careful. Yet and still, I'm really hopeful about what's going to happen modular the thorn of the increased COVID cases.

Jay 3:09

In terms of your wraparound advising, does that mean that they also have an academic advisor and then are matched with a faculty member to help advise them?

Dr. Rose 3:18

There's the general advising system of Deans that take care of things that are maybe a little bit above and beyond, then there's two advisors. There's me as a faculty advisor, the old head that can rumble and say calming sort of things, but not really help them with what buttons to push. Then there's this thing called a Meiklejohn, which is a sophomore or junior who wants to advise other students. So together, we kind of get all up in the student stuff. As the old guy, I can look and see problems developing early and it's not just the academic sort of stuff. I make it a point to meet with everybody face to face, or zoom to zoom as it had mostly been in the past year, but now we're back to face to face. The core of it is the faculty advisement and this undergraduate advisor, and we are a team. This year, Gideon and I are a team to help the frosh move through the system. That's a new thing for me.

Jay 4:26

My thorn for this week, kind of similarly related to what Chris was sharing, is tied to COVID. I'm here in Houston. We had the hurricane come through, or supposedly come through, as a result there is a lot of staying at home and trying to stay productive. I don't know how other people are facing this, but I'm kind of getting into a fatigued state. I can't work at home much longer without being too focused or coming in and out of focus. I've been really reliant on being able to go to coffee shops, with my mask on and everything, just to be able to have that stimulation while also studying and whatnot.



Dr. Rose 5:12

It's social, right? I mean, it's all about [being] social. We could do this remotely, you could get the content remotely, that's not what college is about.

Jay 5:21

Definitely. It's definitely about networking and being able to make friends beyond everything else. I think my rose for this week, however, is some of my readings...I'm taking a Working in Diverse Communities class and we're currently talking about racism and the intersections regarding health care. I think a lot of it has been resonating with me because we're discussing racism outside of the white-black construct and adding in other races, like Asian Americans, Indigenous populations, etc. [We are discussing] the general history within the states and why certain racial groups have hesitations trusting certain systems. It's been very affinity-driven and it's really helping me stay stabilized, centered, and grounded in this work.

Dannie 6:21

My thorn would be some of the social drawbacks of the COVID-19 safety precautions. Some small events have already been canceled, so I guess that's kind of a drag. My bud will be getting to have some in-person meetings. Meetings last year were on zoom, so that's pretty exciting. The rose is having socials and things like that coming up, like rooftop events or things outside that we can have pretty safely. So yes, that would be my rose. Thank you, everyone, for sharing your roses, buds, and thorns for this week. Let's go ahead and define intellectual well-being. As described by the National Wellness Institute, intellectual well-being can be described as how one remains creative and engages in mentally stimulating activities throughout their life. It is also how one expands their knowledge and skills while also discovering the potential for sharing their gifts with others. Southeastern Oklahoma State University Student Wellness Center also highlights that intellectual health isn't just about academic knowledge, but also entails creativity, general knowledge, and common sense.

Dr. Rose 7:17

Definitions are definitions are definitions. What I've seen - I've been in academia for a long time. When did I start? 1990. So 31 years? How did that happen? I've taught at different academic institutions. As a graduate student I tutored, so I've been on the teaching end of things and interacting with students and helping folks learn. Being a professor is all about generating new knowledge. All I can say there is that nothing really good happens in a vacuum. Right? The whole mental well-being business is not just about you being happy, sitting in your chair and meditating. It is a social enterprise. We are social creatures, and it's a social enterprise. Gathering and gaining knowledge in your college experience or in your first work experience and throughout your life is one thing, but it's really the social interactions that float everybody's boats and should float everybody's boats. It provides cohesion. It provides outlets. It provides



different ways of looking at things. I don't want to go back and dissect the definition and parse it, but the piece is part of creativity, connectivity, and lifelong learning. I was working on things right now, just before we got on this call. I'm playing with something that nobody's ever done before, and maybe nobody will care about it but me, but I'm going to put it together and show it to colleagues. We'll bounce it back and forth, and we'll have fun with it. I'd say that sort of basic outlook is really important at all stages of your development. No isolation, you should be around people, you should gain your knowledge. There are some times that you have to be by yourself to consolidate things, but it really is the punchline of all of this for me. Again, I'm not being a mental health professional, I'm just a lowly engineering professor. Everything that we do is a social enterprise. Even what I do is a social enterprise with all the math and stuff, because if I just do it, and nobody reads it, and nobody takes it to another level, what's the point?

Dannie 9:58

I completely agree. I think we've always known that we need individual time to work on things and study things and really learn them deeply for ourselves. Other times we need someone to be able to bounce that information off of to really solidify it in our minds. I think nowadays we understand even more how much we need social interactions. Human beings are social creatures and therefore we have to emotionally regulate each other's emotional systems in a way. Even just saying something to someone can completely change how they feel, so another human being is probably one of the most powerful emotional catalysts for another human being. I think we definitely operate better together than apart, and I think that's something really important to remember. We continue to find ways to do that with technology. We are able to transfer content from the classroom to wherever people are in the world, but can we really get that connection across if we need to use technology more now to achieve learning goals? We should also keep in mind how we are going to keep the social aspect of the classroom strong. I think some of my professors have been really thinking about that and working hard to make that possible. So that way, nothing really disrupts their learning. Although it's definitely hard to achieve that, I think people are working towards that. I think that's important to keep in mind nowadays.

Dr. Rose 11:16

I'd say what's interesting there - and Jay if I cut across you please pull out the newspaper and swat me. Being on the delivery end of this, I've had to teach courses over zoom. Even it's not as optimal, Zoom actually having faces has been a godsend. Without that we would have literally lost a year or we would have had a lot more sick people and possibly deaths, even among the young and vigorous. What you said Dannie, the lead in was that we're social creatures and we regulate each other. You have to have that piece part of it. We had a faculty meeting, an actual in-person faculty meeting. It was just so wonderful to see everybody, but here's the interesting thing. Having been in Zoom meetings with everybody, it was not quite as



weird as coming back after a year and a half after not having seen anybody and maybe only talked on the phone. Segwaying to your technology piece, maybe there are things that we can do that can make it a little bit better. Right now I'm watching Jay and not you because your video's off. There are visual cues and there are oral cues. Another thing that you said that really resonated is that one off thing can really set your day off in a different sort of direction. I think we've all experienced that - having one little silly thing or one little happy thing that just has you smiling or frowning for the rest of the day. We are powerful influencers of each other. We haven't talked about good community, I've just said we've got to have community, but there's good and bad to the community aspects and we all have to be aware of those.

Jay 13:20

To resonate with Dannie before going into what you were saying, Chris, I really do think that the whole Zoom or virtual aspect of it has been helping with the connection piece - at least with the social interactions. I would be curious to see what happens when everything transfers back to full physical interactions because I feel like people may kind of forget social cues they haven't used in a while. It might be a little awkward for a little bit. There'll be a little learning curve when people start interacting back in person again.

Dr. Rose 14:06

Well touching, Jay, touching! Right? I mean, I'm a hugger, and we can't do that yet. It's gonna be a little weird. So I agree.

Jay 14:16

In terms of the educational portion of it, I found that some professors will do their best with the virtual aspects of it and add voice threads in the PowerPoints etc. There are also the things of being able to stay after class a little bit and be like, "Hey, Dr. Rose, I had a question regarding this. I was a little anxious to be able to tell it to like the 50+ other students in the classroom and say it out loud, because I didn't want to look silly, or maybe it was like a dumb question and I don't want to be perceived like that." Making room for that virtually has been a bit difficult, in my opinion. With what Chris was saying, regarding the - oh shoot, I completely forgot where you left off, Chris.

Dr. Rose 15:10

I thought I was riffing on what Dannie was saying about community and that there's the pluses and minuses to things that can push you in different directions. There's the kind word and then there's the snipe that can completely change your day. We're strongly a social community, so we have to be aware of that. That was the big takeaway.

Jay 15:31



Oh yes, I was gonna go into the good community and the bad community aspect of it. Certain community members will boost up your desire to branch out and discover and explore a bit more, whereas others may kind of put you down and make you a little more tentative to doing so. I think that's really important to consider. To kind of circle back to BIPOC experiences - and for those that are listening who aren't familiar with the term BIPOC, it stands for Black, Indigenous, People of Color - what are some of your experiences or experiences that you've heard or seen as related to intellectual well-being with BIPOC students?

Dr. Rose 16:17

Since I'm a dinosaur, I'll start off with the dinosaur stories. When my sister and I were very young, we both grew up in Harlem, in New York City, our parents were very much about education. They knew that because we were black kids - even in New York, which is a liberated northern city - there would be questions. They went and had us tested at Columbia University. They had a testing service for kids. They had us tested and the results came back decent. I'll never forget this, my mother told me this when I was an adult. The tester said - and this was a liberal, forward thinking sort of individual - they said, "Don't get their hopes up, because of the way that society is." Trisha and I are now professors, both at Brown. Oddly enough, we both ended up here. That sort of thing is a strong indicator. What this person was saying, and they weren't an evil being sort of person, they were incorporating what they saw about society and trying to prevent harm to us as little children. Now think about expanding that out. Coming up through school I had two black teachers, and one was male, throughout my whole college experience and school days experience. What does that say about the sorts of pressures or messages that society is sending you. That's the terrible part of things and I'd love your - actually the thorn and rose-bud thing is really good here. Now, what BIPOC people have classically done - and I'll speak for black and Latinx [people] because since that was my milieu coming up - is we banded together for warmth. We understood that, at least in these academic environments, there were things that were expected of us but not expected of us. We were not expected to succeed. Basically, we said, "Rats to that." I usually use more colorful language, but I'm not gonna. There was a cohesion. Remember, this was in the 60s when my sister and I were young. In 1968, I was admitted to - after pushing and after my parents looked around for stuff - to prep school. That was 1968, which was a momentous time, at least as momentous as the past year and a half have been for BIPOC people in terms of things that have happened. So that cohesion made for groups. I know most of those people from that time and through my college years now. I guess what I'm putting to that is that there's the negative social things that happened, but then on top of that, we formed a community, and supported each other. We pulled together. We were on a mission, essentially. There was a slight generation that came before me and I went to MIT. The generation before me, such as Shirley Jackson who's the current president of RPI, they put in place structures that help us. We put in place structures that help the next students. That's how we dealt with it. It's funny, my wife is at Harvard, Dannie's



aunt, Stephanie - we almost feel like we went to HBCUs, because we had such a strong BIPOC community. Those are the people that we know to this day. This may not fit exactly into what it was, but I did want to put the dinosaur in there saying that today, it's a lot less obvious. I have friends who in college, professors explicitly told them, "You shouldn't take this course. You're not ready. You shouldn't be here," because they were black. It's rare that you're going to get exactly that these days. It's not impossible, I'm sure it happens, but professors don't feel as comfortable showing their racism that way. Maybe it's almost worse because - Dannie, remember you talked about the little things that happen to people that can change the way their days go. It's a lot more subtle, right Dannie?

Dannie 21:25

I wasn't even thinking of that, but yeah, it could come out as microaggressions. I don't think professors would necessarily be that comfortable being racist. This has nothing to do with intellectual wellness, but -

Dr. Rose 21:40

I think it does have everything to do with intellectual wellness. There's this image of the tortured artist. You crush the coal and eventually it becomes a diamond - you have to have pain to be really creative. I don't buy that at all. I think -

Dannie 21:58

No?

Dr. Rose 21:58

No!! Look, you can't go through life without having some ups and downs. That's what life is about, right? Being happy about things, having the spirit that things are going to get better, and being an agent in making it get better. You're going to have people around you that you can operate with and be agents in making things get better with. I think creativity really springs from that process. I feel I am much more creative when I'm a happier person than when I'm a bummed out person. I think that these constant messages of, "You can't. You can't. You can't," either overt - overt turn on the orneriness in people and that might not be a bad thing. Again, witnessing my experience in the late 60s, 70s, and through the 80s in college and graduate school, where you band together and do something, the subtle things where it's almost like a breeze you don't really know it's there, but it's there, can be so damaging to your intellectual well-being. When I think about intellectual well-being, I think of somebody exploring an area, running around looking at this and that flower. "Oh, there's a mountain over there. Let's go over here!" With these various headwinds, I'll call them, it may choose what you decide to do and what not to do. I know students that because of the environment of a particularly hot area - meaning that it will gain them employment, it's intellectually stimulating, and interesting - are



pushed away from that area by the social element of it even though they're perfectly capable of excelling or dominating a field. I think that all of these things really do come back to the intellectual wellness theme of what we're talking about here. Not to be an old angry uncle Dannie, it's just, as I said, I'm a dinosaur.

Jay 24:05

I would resonate with all of what you're saying, Chris. I was taking notes on what you were saying and the earlier portions in terms of that professor from Columbia or whatnot. The researcher telling your mother, "I wouldn't get their hopes up," kind of made me think of my cousin who is currently a teacher. She shared experiences where currently, with the increased rate of standardized testing for elementary school students, there are times where predominantly Black and Latinx kids may not be at certain standardized levels for their grade levels. Instead of wanting to work with those students, realize the socio-economic reasons and pressures, or learn why they're not studying or can't study as much as other students, these teachers are like, "I don't want to deal with it. We're just going to go ahead and pass them off to the next grade." Unfortunately, it creates a cycle where the students are not in a situation where they can learn properly, because other students are deemed more advanced than they are. As a result of which, it can also impact efficacy, self esteem, and eventually the desire to be intellectually well in terms of wanting to continue to learn. Going back to what you were saying about the hotspots with careers - it also kind of creates a situation where students are like, "I can never do that, because I've been consistently told that I'm not as smart or intelligent, or I'm not able to do so." Although I agree that some pressure, at times, motivates some people to be like, "You know what, I'm gonna throw this back at your face and prove you wrong," but that also depends on luck and the circumstances for them to be able to do so. I think that plays a huge part in terms of intellectual well-being, but it also plays into mental well-being in terms of, "How do I process this? How do I see myself in a world where already there are so many isms and hatreds going on?" In addition to, "How do I make myself secure in the future," like with finances, and other things that we depend on to be able to live life as we grow older?

Dr. Rose 26:24

Dannie, we've talked about this actually, which is kind of interesting. Full disclosure, Dannie's my wonder-neice. I don't have any daughters, I have three sons. My claim to fame is taking Dannie to a father-daughter dance. It ended up being an uncle-daughter dance. That was my claim to fame, having taken Dannie to the father-daughter dance as the uncle. Because we're family, we've talked about these sorts of things. What you said, Jay, is really like a javelin right into the middle of this thing. There is the issue of sometimes the pressure and sometimes the antagonism makes for melding of community and pushing forward, but you don't want to build policy on the outlier. Right? What ends up happening is that you got this - and I believe this is true in the Black community. It was very cohesive, socio-economically, in the 50s and 60s, and



there was progress being made, but now we've got this tremendous divide even among Blacks - between the haves and the have-nots. Now the Blacks have nothing relative to white folk, but even within the Black community, there's this great divide. What a majority of policymakers do is they'll point to successes and say, "Oh, look at that person, they succeeded. Oh, look at that person, they succeeded," and that's bullsh*t. You can't design policy on the outliers, because what you're ignoring is the lived experience and the actual damage being done to a whole bunch of other folks.

Dr. Rose 28:11

One other thing that I'll riff on what you said is there's this issue of skills versus smarts. I'll put it that way. Again, I'm an education professional. What that means is they allow me to do this and not kill people over the past 30 odd years, but I was never trained professionally. What I'll say is, there's smarts and there's skill. Smart folks can pick up the skills. Okay? But then, let's say ability - you got all these layers on top of things, "You can't. You can't," and, "Sorry, your living situation is such that you can't actually spend the quiet alone time to cement the skills." There are all of these headwinds that combine to disproportionately affect BIPOC folk. I'll wrap that up by saying, pressure is great for some things. If everything's too easy then you just won't - I think we're human - we just don't want to do it. If it's too easy, you just don't do it. You want to do something that's kind of challenging and interesting. If you look at the grand scheme of things, especially if the pressures are faint, you can't really see them. What you described, Jay, was pretty overt. It made my blood boil, and I don't know what we can do about those things. For the non-overt things that you often experience at these elite schools, I want to say that it has an effect and I would try not to minimize that. Dannie, you, your dad, and all of us, we sat around the table and talked about these things. A little bit of burr in the saddle is kind of a good thing, but if it's a constant state of affairs, that's a bad thing. Again, disclaimer, I am not a mental health professional. Like they say on TV, "I'm not a doctor in real life." I'm not a mental health professional. Sorry to go on, and on and on. I'll stop now.

Jay 30:32

Before I continue, Dannie, do you have anything to add?

Dannie 30:39

Not really. Well, actually, I do have a question. So, Uncle Chris, you're in engineering. I was wondering, are there any situations that you can think of that are really specific to that field? Students of color not feeling like they can go into that area of study due to microaggressions or other things that might happen?

Dr. Rose 30:59



Oh, yes! Yes, yes, yes, yes. I mean, engineering has been one of those things. One of the reasons that I'm here is to diversify the faculty, specifically in STEM. That means Black, LatinX, and Indigenous - Native Indigenous folk. One of the reasons I'm here is this wonderful student, Jamel Watson Daniels. She was in physics. She was almost a statistic in some respects. She wanted to be a physicist and she was taking the physics course as her background wasn't perfect. Just like Jay was saying, there were skills issues that she had to develop. She was getting all these messages - essentially the messages can be your grades, feedback on exams, interactions with instructors, the whole thing as a melange - telling her, "You don't belong here." Here's the thing, though. Here's the thing though, Jamel was perceptive enough to look up and say, "Wait, this is not about me. This is about you." She wrote a white paper explaining her experiences and said, "We really need to diversify the faculty." The administration here took that seriously. So that is one of the primary reasons that I am here. I'd say that in STEM, I won't say specifically engineering - just STEM, there's lots of - Computer Science is the hot thing right now. There's pressure that turns people away. It's social. I'd say it's social pressure. It builds on those skills that Jay was talking about, but it ends up being social pressure. Folks go into different sorts of areas, even though they could just as easily revolutionize computer science, engineering, or physics. It's very real, but I don't know of any cases of a professor telling a student, "You shouldn't be here."

Dr. Rose 33:27

Here's an example of something that's a microaggression, but it speaks completely to how fundamental these things are. I had a student who has since graduated. This was a crackerjack computer science student. He just loved the stuff. He was a freshman taking this big course that all the computer science people took. There was one lecture he came out of and he was just lit up. The material just lit him up. We've all - as academics, as learners - had that experience, like, "Oh, my goodness," it's like an epiphany. So he just wanted to talk to somebody. As he's coming out of the lecture hall, he turns to this young white woman - he's black - and he says, "Wasn't that fantastic - what the guy just said?" and she turns and looks at him and says, "Who are you? Are you even in this class?" Now think about everything that's packed into that statement. Okay. That's the sort of thing that can derail people. In those three words she said, "Don't talk to me. You're unqualified." I mean, we could go on and on and on about what that one single interaction did. It stuck with ME these five years, right? It'll stick with me for the rest of my life, because it's an example of how your intellectual well-being is completely tied to the social environment. I shouldn't say completely, it's greatly affected by the social environment in which you sit. That was the long answer to your question. Most definitely. If you've got folks out there listening and you're thinking, "Mmm. I can't point to any one thing that has happened, but I don't feel comfortable," talk to other folk who look like you or share whatever your affinity is, and I think you'll find out that it's not all inside your head.



Jay 35:33

Thank you for sharing that you help diversify the STEM field at Brown University, because I think one of the takeaways or discourses that I've heard on social media - where students are sharing their lived experiences - is that more often than not, the BIPOC professors are typically in the cultural centers. They're not typically teaching STEM or liberal arts related fields. It's like, "Nope. They're just gonna be African American Studies, Asian American Studies, etc and that's where they're gonna stay."

Dr. Rose 36:11

Right, and graduate students. One of the things that you learn in college, as you guys learned, is that there's professors but then the folks that actually help you learn are often graduate students and postdocs. You need to diversify all those ranks. Unless you're coming from that 1968 siege mentality, where you're going to come through and you're going to be the first - which is not a happy thing because there's a lot of intellectual bloodshed that happens along the way - role models are essential. Looking at you two and looking at all of my students, I take the *in loco parentis* thing seriously - that means "in place parent." This is maybe a function of BIPOC communities, because when we take the family photo we have to make sure it's lit right because there's all sorts of different skin shades and tones and whatever else. We're used to having lots of different folks intimately within our own families. When I see kids in my large lecture course, each and every one of them from the palest to the darkest, could be kin. I see it that way, and hopefully that comes across. I'm not sure that the majority of profs feel the same way, necessarily. Now, I don't want to say that as a general rule, but I do want to say that I feel that each and every one of those kids could quite literally be my niece, nephew, son, daughter, whatever. That's another message that gets sent. Who gets invited to the research groups, Dannie? You're talking about engineering in the sense of STEM. There are all these little subtle messages that are being sent, and I see them and I do everything I can to combat them, but I'm one person. The main thing is to become a force multiplier and get more people who look like the folks on this call for example, here. Just like you said, Jay, not just in Africana Studies, but across the board. Though I'm trying to conquer the world, my particular area is STEM, the biological sciences, and all the physical sciences.

Dr. Rose 38:43

I never understood the lifelong learner thing, and I know that sounds blasphemous. Going through life, interesting stuff happens that you want to explain and you want to understand. Now here's a stupid example. My coffee machine broke, so I got a new coffee machine - a Ninja. I own no stock in Ninja, so I'm not trying to push Ninja. What was interesting about this Ninja coffee maker was that it had this little mixer on the side. You press a button and a little thing spins around so you can froth up your coffee. Oh my god, Starbucks just lost my business. Okay. By pressing the button on this, I noticed when I was mixing the coffee it would start out



with this high pitched wurr, and then go down to a kind of a "whhrrrr." Now I look at this and I couldn't figure out why. "Why do I have this high pitch starting out and then it drops down and goes to a low pitch? Is there some fluid dynamics thing that's happening there." I tried a bunch of different things. That could just be me, but I was curious. Lived experience. For example, there was this professor when I was at MIT, and this was kind of cute in some respects. This was an old guy. This guy had one foot in the grave. Now the funny thing is that he probably wasn't more than 10 years older than I am now. I don't know what that says, but he was an old guy. We happened to be in the cafeteria line together, and there was this set of plates that were sitting on ice. In reaching for something, he tapped one plate and it began to spin and it wouldn't stop. It was sitting on top of the ice, just melted, and it was a weird thing watching it spin around. We both looked at each other. I don't know why we both looked at each other. Then he spun it a little bit more, and it was that little thing. Curiosity about the world around you, that's what lifelong learning is about. Obviously I'm a proponent of lifelong learning, but what I'm saying is, I don't know how you can't be a proponent of lifelong learning if you're alive. If you think that you're not learning stuff, you may need to think about what it is you're doing because what you're doing may be soul deadening. That takes us in a whole nother different direction.

Jay 41:24

I think my connection to this would be ideas from my dad. My parents are first generation immigrants to the states. My dad is a chef and my mom's a waitress. One of the things that my dad really hammered into my family in general when they immigrated to the States was to always build your skill sets and always build your knowledge, even if it's not something that you want to do. I'm interested in healthcare and excetera, but my dad was a huge proponent of, "You need to learn how to do mechanics and filtration systems and blah, blah, blah, blah. These are all common things that you need to be able to do and learn and understand to be able to help build your knowledge base. The more you know, the more bargaining chips you have during interactions with other people." I think for him, it's a way for my brother and I to be able to have a stronger foundation in terms of holding our own while talking to others and just [having] experiences in general.

Dr. Rose 42:21

Oh goodness, Dannie, this is another thing that I know we've talked about. I don't want to put you on the spot, but that is definitely something within the black community in particular - having a base of things. I won't go into more detail because you kind of laid it out. Here's an interesting thing that I found in my area. If you look at the people that managed to run the gauntlet and become researchers, professors and whatever else, BIPOC folk - in particular, Black and Latinx folk - tend to be really creative because they had to. What they also have is the tendency to work at the interstices of fields. Meaning, where the breakthroughs happen. There's two reasons for this I think. You can quote me, but you know that and \$5 will buy you a cup of coffee at



Starbucks. Remember I said that sometimes you're sent all sorts of messages not to feel comfortable with the hot thing that everybody is doing. Talented people get the message, it's like, "I don't want to do this. It's too much of a pain in the butt," so they do other things. What they do is gravitate to those things where they can be most effective, and that lives in the space of this broad based sensibility of being able to do multiple things, as opposed to just one thing. I'm using that here and hope to export it to other places as a superpower. I think that BIPOC folk are the ground troops for fantastic innovations that have yet to happen, specifically because we tend to live at these interstices. Dannie, how many different things do you do? You are the most intellectually diverse person I've ever met - with hobbies and such. I'm saying that not just as a family member, you really do a lot of different stuff. This should resonate a lot with you.

Dannie 45:15

It definitely does. Like you said, now all of your hobbies need to [feed] into your career or be what you want to focus on in school. I think one of the things we wanted to highlight with this episode is some things you just do for yourself or because you enjoy it. [Like] hearing you talk about your coffee maker and having curiosity about the world around you in a less formal way. I think sometimes we forget that we can do that. I feel like kids will get excited about certain things. I once heard, "Everyone's born a scientist," and people want to make sense of the world around them. They ask, "Why?" and it's almost like we teach kids to stop asking, "Why?" because it's annoying. Then people don't want to get into science later because they don't know how to ask, "Why," anymore.

Dr. Rose 46:01

Oh God, well I hope that I have never done that to anybody. I love what I do. I love interacting with people. I love the light that lights up in students' eyes when you show them a concept that they were wondering about, or barely knew about, and then they suddenly make the connection. You know, that's a lifelong joy and why I do what I do. To bring it full circle about the whole lifelong learning thing - I don't even know how to answer that. I don't know how to live life any other way, is the point. If you find that you're not curious, that's a sign - just like lack of appetite - lack of interest in various things can be a sign that maybe you need to go talk to somebody and get therapy or talk to your friends or do whatever. In the BIPOC community, therapy is a bad word. I'm all over the therapy thing. If therapy is out there, use it! Certainly talk to your friends and folk. If you're not curious and you're not learning new things, that may be a sign that you need to change something for your mental well being.

Jay 47:25

I definitely agree. One last point related to what Dannie said about the, "Why?" thing. It made me think about what we were just reading about - quality improvement stuff. One of the things that we were learning about was a technique called "The Five Whys," and essentially you ask,



"Why?" five times in a row. After you get your answer, and that usually kind of helps you ground yourself in terms of what the problem is, what the issue is, then you move on from there. I thought that it was really interesting that you mentioned that. We tend to tell kids to stop asking, "Why?" I've definitely been that kid that's consistently like, "Why does that happen? Okay, but Why?" Right?

Dr. Rose 48:06

That's brilliant. "Five Whys." I didn't know about that, so I'm stealing it. I'll give it with proper attribution Jay, but I'm stealing it. Just letting you know.

Jay 48:15

I got that from Dr. Renee Canady from the Nacho Voice Series.

Dr. Rose 48:22

Okay, great. Again, imitation - no - theft is the sincerest form of flattery. So I'm stealing that. I think it's fantastic.

Jay 48:39

It looks like we're wrapping up for today's episode. Again, I want to thank Dr. Chris Rose for joining us. Before we go, let's share one final takeaway from today's conversation for our audience.

Dr. Rose 48:54

Oh, goodness. The big thing is that for students now, you are living through some incredible times. These are stories that you are going to tell your grandchildren and great grandchildren - if you're around for them. What I'd say is, despite the immediate hardships that you're dealing with right now, try to take yourself out of it a little bit and look at the grand scheme of things and experience it, because this is unique. If you're in college, you're in a privileged position to be able to do that. Look and see what's been working now. Look and see what's broken down now. This isn't just COVID that we're talking about. I'm talking about the whole - at least in the US - spectrum of things that have happened over the past two years. Look at this, incorporate it, be intellectually curious, try to make sense of it, and then try to pay it forward. [That way], your kids and the generations that come after can build on what you've experienced, because these have been interesting times. I'll put it that way - frighteningly interesting times. For me, that's the wrap up - see it, experience it, incorporate it, and build upon it.

Jay 50:18

I think for me, it's to lean into curiosity, lean into exploration, [and] also expand and think outside the box. Sometimes our careers or disciplines, especially for students that are in college - we're



very focused on our majors for obvious reasons. Like Chris was mentioning, there are other potential intersections that your major may have that maybe haven't been explored with other disciplines. I think that in itself creates a potential new field, potential new areas of interest, and I think that's worthwhile to look into.

Dr. Rose 50:57

Take us home, Dannie.

Dannie 51:01

Yeah, I guess when faced with difficult times you can maybe take something and learn from it and use it to become an even stronger version of yourself. Maybe it can inform what you're interested in studying or what you're interested in learning about. Maybe you can see what you can do to help make the world a better place. I guess it's kind of cheesy, but it's all you really can take away from it. Just one day at a time.

Dr. Rose 51:27

My brother in law is a philosopher, [his name is] Andre Willis. He has been promulgating this thing, first quietly among friends, but then more professionally. He's a Hume Scholar. I think it's David Hume. I hope I got the name right. He promulgates this thing called "deep hope." I think that informs everything that we're talking about. The notion that things may be bad, things may be horrible, but you persist. You do what you can with what you've been given, and move forward in whatever ways that you can. It's not that things are necessarily going to get better for you, but you're constantly looking and trying to figure out how to make things better. That's evolution and that's life. So, Dannie in the way that you said it, I think it I think you're a deep hope advocate and we're deeply hoping your audio eventually comes back.

Dannie 52:44

Me too! It looks like that's it for today's episode. I want to thank Uncle Chris/Dr. Chris Rose for joining us today. For our audience, please stay tuned as we dive into the other dimensions of well-being for this season.