

STOP CHASING SILVER LININGS

BY KAITLYN VITTOZZI

How many times have you had this conversation in the last year?

“How are you?”

“As good as can be. Everyone is healthy.”

Perhaps even a shadow of guilt arises in your throat – for not being at the very worst end of this catastrophic pandemic.

There is something to be said for being grateful for the small things. If you follow any of Brene’s Brown research, you know that gratitude can be instrumental to our well-being.

Many people were crushed to see everything they loved taken away from them in March 2020 with the first quarantine. I felt incredibly fortunate, and even a little bit of relief that I could take a little break from life. As a proud Irish American, I felt pardoned from having to stand outside in the cold at the parade. My income was still steady. More time at home with the dog, longer walks.

After being on a constant cycle of push, push, push – I got to sleep in on the weekends. For the first time since college, I felt no pressure to drag my butt to the gym before or after work. It was a better pace for me. I had been taking two or three lavish vacations every year for a decade; my bank account was really happy that those took a break. This is the list I clung to.

I was actually quite productive in 2020. Never once did I stop to appreciate

or celebrate my accomplishments. It felt shameful to do so, when so many other people were suffering.

Flash forward to New Year’s Eve, 2020. My mom and I picked up a fantastic bottle of wine and some takeout appetizers from Marty’s on Park. I sat on the couch, ready to watch some TV. Thinking to myself that this was the first time in years I had seen TV on New Year’s Eve. Exotic travels and glitzy parties had gotten in the way of a simple American pleasure.

Most of network television featured reflections on 2020. I proceeded to cry for three hours.

The memories were gut wrenching. Body bags, medical workers without PPE, police violence, police attacks. Parents losing children, children losing parents. Orphans. So many, dying alone. Explosions. Fires. This was not the first time I had seen any of these pictures, but it was everything I didn’t take time to mourn. It poured out of my eyes. After 10 months of “as good as can be” I sobbed out loud to myself “this was a really hard year.”

Throughout 2020, I replaced empathy for world events with “well at least I have...”

My feelings rushed in all at once. Friends I missed. Friends who had babies I haven’t met yet. Family reunions that couldn’t happen. Jobs lost – some forever, like my cozy yoga class at the Monroe Y. Goodbyes that didn’t get to be said. Coffees not

shared. Dances not danced. No live music. Couples separated by a glass window. Weddings canceled. Marriages buckling under the pressure. And I know some of you reading this have an entirely different, longer list of pain. Know that your experiences are just valuable if not more valuable than mine, even if they aren’t noted here.

I had been so busy looking for silver linings, that I didn’t take into consideration what I missed.

According to Dictionary.com, “A silver lining is a sign of hope or a positive aspect in an otherwise negative situation. The phrase is often seen as part of the proverb Every cloud has a silver lining, meaning that there’s hope or something good to be found in every bad situation. In real life, when a cloud looks like its edges are shining and silvery, it’s because the sun is behind it. That’s the metaphor: things are cloudy (bad), but they will get sunny (positive) again—or you can least enjoy the one shiny (positive) part in all the gloominess.”

We are in a full year of pandemic. We are in a shit sandwich. Mourn and grieve. It’s ok to hurt. The sun will shine again, but you don’t have to pretend like it is right now.

As a yoga therapist, I am aware of the ugliness of spiritual bypassing. While well intentioned, it can run a bit rampant in the yoga world.

Now – you may be thinking, “We’re just trying to feel better over here



“What if you want more than just getting out of bed in the morning? What if you want to do more than just survive?”



get through the day best we can, what do you want from us?”

Chasing a silver lining is simply putting a bandaid, or some rose colored glasses, over a bad situation. Sometimes, we need that; it might be what gets us out of bed in the morning.

What if you want more than just getting out of bed in the morning? What if you want to do more than just survive? Do you want to take this and turn it into a meaningful action over time?

Let yourself feel all of the feelings – the neutral, the positive, the negative. Accept them all. Let them be here. Almost like you’re sitting down at a reunion – you don’t have to like everyone, but you can acknowledge them. Maybe even befriend them.

Rarely can anyone move to their truth if they do not accept where they’re at. Even if you have never been to an AA meeting, you more than likely know the first step.

The rest of the steps – warrant their own novel, but you may be surprised by how much relief you feel by letting yourself feel, instead of stuffing everything down. Drop the “well at least” and live in the at once. Even if it hurts.

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