

Teaching Connections Podcast

Episode 11

Title: Perspectives on Mental Well-being in NUS:
A Panel Discussion (Part 2)

In this episode, we are pleased to have a panel comprising current NUS students and recent NUS alumni, all of whom are passionate about issues related to mental well-being:

- Tasneem Abdul Majeed, Year 3 Psychology/Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS), Autism Advocate, and “Beyond the Label” Mental Health Ambassador
- KHOO Yi Feng, Class of 2017, Southeast Asian Studies/FASS, Social Worker (Youth Mental Health) with [Limitless*](#)
- LIM Wei Jie, Class of 2017, Psychology/FASS, Founder of [Foreword Coffee](#)

During this conversation, they will share their personal mental well-being stories, how these have impacted their student experiences at NUS, and the ways in which one can maintain one’s mental well-being in order to have an enriched student learning experience.

This episode is chaired by Dr Lee Li Neng, Associate Director of the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning (CDTL).

* [Limitless](#) is a non-profit org which provides mental health support and therapy for youths aged 12-25, as well as public education and training for youths, parents, educators, and helping professionals.

** [Foreword Coffee](#) is a social enterprise that seeks to empower persons with intellectual disabilities through training + employment in specialty coffee industry)

Intro Music & Voiceover

“You are listening to the Teaching Connections podcast, brought to you by the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning, CDTL, National University of Singapore. Teaching Connections is an online teaching and learning space that aims to advance discussions and share effective practices and ideas related to higher education.”

In Part 2 of this episode, our guests talk about recognising and addressing burnout. They also discuss the importance of setting healthy boundaries and the wisdom of recognising and accepting one’s strengths and limits.

This episode is chaired by Dr Lee Li Neng, Associate Director of the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning (CDTL).

Part 2: On Recognising & Addressing Burnout

LLN (00:53): “When Wei Jie and Tas was sharing another theme that emerged, was this whole idea about the blurring of boundaries and how to set boundaries carefully, or well.

Like for Tasneem’s situation was when [the] pandemic happened, and you had to go back home, then these boundaries between a clear working space and resting space become much more blurred. Wei Jie was talking a little bit about, especially when you're living in Residential Colleges, sometimes trying to set boundaries, especially as an introvert, you need space. It's interesting that at least, Wei Jie said he was an introvert; Tas is an introvert, I'm more of an introvert than an extrovert. So we at least have three introverts sharing on a public platform here right now, the paradoxical things that we see!

But in this case, when it comes to setting boundaries, and it is very important, right, and helpful for healthy boundaries to take place, right to decide what you're going to let in and out. This, if not done well, burnout can be a very real issue, right? So maybe would anyone of you like to comment on this a little bit more in terms of boundaries? How do you go about setting those boundaries? Maybe Wei Jie, how do you manage that tension? You were trying to set up like, you know, your business at that moment of time—and social enterprise is complex to actually do that—while studying in Year Four. I don't know whether you're doing final-year project on top of that, as well.

So with all that in mind, plus you were still in hall trying to be active, how do you set healthy boundaries for yourself?”

(02:30)

WJ: “Yeah, I was actually doing my thesis back then, too! So I guess it’s about managing energy. You can’t really go by just time, but knowing how, knowing yourself, knowing what you can control, managing my energy, with things that are of value.

Even in my work right now, being the co-founder, you know, you’re kind of doing everything. You can’t say that, “Oh, I don’t want to do certain things because, you know, I can let my employees do it.” But that’s not the reality. We’re still very hands-on, very on the ground, you know, going into the cafes to check on our staff, you know, get to know how they are working and what challenges they might be facing, because I do that a lot with my interactions with staff with disabilities. And it’s part of the work.

But at the same time, you know, during the peak of COVID, as well. Orders were surging, but my staff were falling ill, you know, people are being absent, but yet we need to continue to push out the orders. That’s where we can, you know, earn the money to continue surviving the business, right? I remember there was one period, my co-founder was actually quarantined. Then my staff start to message me and say, “Wei Jie, tomorrow I cannot come.” Okay, never mind, I tried to re-schedule someone else to do it. Then the next moment, the next person also told me, “Oh, I also got COVID.” And I’m like, “Man, I can’t do this anymore.” It’s like, I’m trying to plug in a gap, and then another hole starts to appear, and I’m just one person, I cannot do everything. And I really just broke down and cried on the spot. I was making deliveries. I like, I [was] done with the day and I caught up with my godmother and said, I can’t do this anymore. That really dawned on me that I was too tired, that was a sign of burning out. And from there, I need to slowly recover, and recovery takes a lot of time.

Yeah, so all I could do was, you know, hope that when my co-founder comes back, you know, he takes on the load for me, we reduce the amount of orders that we take in, you know, if we really cannot do it, we would rather care for our well-being first, not just for myself, but for all my staff in the company also. We always check in on how much load can they take, you know, how can we better support them? If they’re not able to do more, we reduce what we take. Yeah, I think that’s important to still prioritise the people first. Otherwise, we’re not able to go for the long run.”

LLN: “I think that's very wise advice in terms of how to set healthy boundaries. So in terms of the context of students, right, so first of all, maybe I ask like, Tasneem and Yi Feng in terms of student interactions, how prevalent is burnout among students based on what you know?”

(05:15)

Tas: “I can't really speak for the entire student population, I think I'll leave that to Yi Feng. But I think burnout is a huge issue because of over-commitment.

I think we're, you know, [with] social media these days, we know what everybody is doing. And I think everybody presents the best of their lives on social media, which is why we are deceived into thinking people are more busy, or they're leading more fulfilling lives than they actually are. And as a result, we feel that we are wasting time or not optimising the limited time we have.

And because of the pandemic, I think a lot of—I'm not sure if maybe adults feel that way—but a lot of young people suddenly feel this great urgency to get everything done within a short period of time. Because now we know that time is limited, you never know when the whole world will shut down again, and you won't see your friends, won't get opportunities to travel, work, get cool experiences. So which is why I think a lot of students, especially freshmen, I see this a lot in freshmen. I think when you mature, you get better at it. But a lot of freshmen take on, like way too much. They'll sign up for all the clubs available. And I did that too. I was guilty of that.

And unfortunately for me, actually it took me burning out, like, three years in a row to figure out that I can't continue. It's interesting, you would think that I would've learned the first time but no, I did not. I think also being surrounded by peers who are very intense in their endeavours didn't make it any better. I think you really have to make the distinction between, “Okay, this may work for this person, but may not work for me.” So, I would say burnout is definitely a huge issue, Dr. Lee. I'm interested to hear what Yi Feng has to say since he works with other young people.”

LLN: “Yeah, so Yi Feng would you like to tell us more, like burnout and overcommitment. Like Tasneem said, burnout is really connected to overcommitment in this case, right? And Wei Jie also talked about that, the responsibility tends to be more, or the things that you're supposed to do tends to be more than what you can handle, right? Do you see these phenomena a little bit more?”

(07:25)

YF: “Certainly, Li Neng, and I think when we look at burnout, having burnout is real, let's just put it out there, right? And in fact, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD 10) actually classify [burnout] as an occupational phenomenon. It's a real thing. and I think we it will do us well to acknowledge that. Now even doctors, right, can actually issue MCs based on burnout, right? Yeah, and so it's real.”

It's a real thing, there's real experiences, [and] I've been through it myself as well. And especially in the mental health sector, I feel that helping professionals go through a little bit of that of what we call "compassion fatigue", that it becomes so much, so tired that, you know, whatever it is they're talking about, you're just cynical, "I'm just exhausted, right? I can't really perform anymore." And those are the three key signs to watch out for in terms of burnout as well.

Relating to that. I totally agree, I think burnout we're starting to see a little bit, we're starting to see more of that, I think. And I cannot exactly like, what Tasneem said, I can't speak for the whole NUS population, I can't speak for the whole Singaporean youth population. What I can say is that I do see a little bit of that, and also from personal experiences, I can attest a bit to that as an undergraduate student, I was a graduate student in NUS, and I definitely see that for many people. And as a graduate student, it was not just out of choice that I want to take on more, right, it's because at that point in time, I already have a lot on my plate. I have classmates then who are just newly married, and their wife actually asked him to choose carefully, right? "Do you want to continue your studies? Or do you want to continue [the] marriage?" It was a very real and painful experience, as I hear my friend share; I held space and just to hear him share, right? Yes, we all have seven days a week, [and] he was doing internship for three days, because [in] social work we do require a placement. And then he was working as the head of the Centre for four days. He can't skip work, right, because he's the head of the Centre, of the workplace itself. Seven days a week, will he not burn out? I think he will burn, and it's a real thing. So I just wanted to attest to that, [that] it's real.

One of the things I think relating to words, I think, for speaking to some of the youths who are listening to this podcast, or people who want to help as well, I wanted to just maybe put out a lesson that I learned the hard way. That is, **that we are responsible to another person, [and] not responsible for the other person**. And that's important to internalise, because we can only control so much. As what Wei Jie mentioned, there are only so much things that we can put on our plates as well. Our energy is limited, and that we can focus on managing our energies, not exactly our time, because time is a finite resource, right? But depending on what we choose to focus our energies on, we can make a difference with that. And in helping another peer, we have to also acknowledge that we have our limitations.

It's funny that I always say this—I learned my limits at Limitless, right? I'm a social worker at Limitless, and that's where I learned my limits. Because a person cannot be limitless unless they know that they have limits, really. We need to acknowledge our own bandwidth that is limited, and that it doesn't make us any lesser[sic]. When helping another person, we are responsible *to* the person, but not *for* the person. Not for what they do, in that sense, because each one of us will choose by what we do want to do as well. And so I think in this relation as well, because if we really want to be responsible for another person that will really burn us out faster than anything.

Let's put it into context, and let me put a trigger warning first as well [since it is] relating to suicide. If a person actually thinks about wanting to take their life, can you ever be responsible for the person's decision? We can never be responsible for them. But what we can do is to be responsible *to* the person to support and offer them what we can offer within our limits. And also trust that there are other systems around that would support that person.

And then talking about that as well, I wanted to also just make a quick note as well to say that it heartens me[sic] a lot to see how NUS has evolved as well, from where I first started a little bit of that ground-up initiative to push for greater well-being on campus among students. I'm definitely seeing more support for students right now. The question is always—what is enough, right? And that's again, another question to put out there for our listeners to think about.”

LLN: “So thank you so much Yi Feng for sharing. I think one of the things I really picked up on was the wisdom of learning to accept limits, that limits and recognising what those limits are, are not necessarily a bad thing. Learning what your limits are individually actually helps you to set healthy boundaries, so that you can actually work from a position of health rather than [to] keep scrambling for more. I think this is very pertinent, especially [as] I also recognise and I see this among students a lot more, that overcommitment seems to be an issue. But yet, it seems to be also a badge of honour, right? Like, you know, “I can do so many things, I'm feeling very tired all the time, being busy all the time”, seems to be an accepted norm, that if you're not busy and you're not tired, then something seems to be wrong with you. I don't know whether you get this sense. That's this observation again. Now, this comes back, I thought, let's sidetrack a little bit. I want to come back to this whole idea of boundary-setting and what we can do to actually help students manage a little bit more and maybe what your thoughts are on that.

But before I come to that, one interesting thing is I heard that from all of you here today. All of you have personally experienced burnout as an individual. Maybe I'll just like to hear from you all—what do you think are things that we can do to help people you think was most helpful. Number one, as an individual, how do you help yourself to recover from burnout? You talk about it being a process. The other thing is, for example, friends or peers in a social support [group], what do you think are helpful things we can do, when I recognise [and] I see this person being burnout? Okay, right. Maybe I hear from you all first. Wei Jie, would you like to go first?”

(13:47)

WJ: “Yeah, for myself, I take note of my own thoughts and to know, you know, when am I reaching a point where I'm feeling tired, feeling, you know, a breaking point? When I start to forget about things or forget about appointments or things I have to do, that's a warning sign, “Oh, my mental load is now reaching a certain capacity, perhaps I need to check back with how I'm feeling, how I should be maintaining myself. And

how I helped myself to, you know, relieve some of the stress will be to run. So yeah, I enjoy running at the nearby park connector, long run [around] 10km. And that kind of helped to reset, you know, myself. And I think exercise really helped me to feel better, both emotionally or physically. And that would help me to reset myself a little bit and prevent the burning out part.

And I will also say that, I wouldn't use the term [burnout] too lightly. If you are tired, you're tired. If you're burnt out, it's a lot more serious where, you know, you would feel that you are giving up on things. As what Yi Feng has said also, being cynical to your work, you do not enjoy [the] things that you enjoy doing anymore. So we do not want to reach that point, you know, we want to be able to identify signs first, and then manage ourselves, manage our energy, before we hit that point of you know, feeling burnt out."

LLN: "So prevention is better than cure at this moment, from what I hear, being very self-aware about where you are, and being in touch with yourself instead of just going on and on, and pushing yourself. And that is part of like a lot of people who think that, you know, we just tried to grow ourselves, not be weak. This may not be very helpful, and may put you at risk of burning out without knowing.

Now, what about Tasneem and Yi Feng? What would you say are things that was helpful for you, when you're going through [when] you experienced burnout. what was most helpful for you in terms of your recovery process?"

(15:48)

YF: "I think you can chime in on three things. I think there are 3As, just happened to be there. And I think the first is that the **antidote** to burnout is **rest**, right? The **antidote** to burnout is **rest**, and there are not just one kind of rest. Often, we might think that there is just okay, you know, a physical rest, I go and sleep and sleep it off and I'm okay. But sometimes we sleep it off, we still feel tired, right? Because there are different types of rest. In fact, there's about seven types of rest, right? Now one of the types of rest that I first learned in Dr. Li Neng's class, I think BPSS, right, bio, psychosocial, spiritual. Biologically, physical rest, mentally, socially spiritual, that are these kinds of rest. And there's also sensory rest, creative rest, the emotional rest.

But when we think about these seven types of rest, right—there's a TED talk on that, so feel free to check that out as well. So for me, myself, when I went through burnout, I made a lot of intentional efforts towards spending time in nature. During COVID-19, I started this initiative for myself. I went to this thing called "one park a week", so I visit one park a week in Singapore. And interestingly, you know, I went to the NParks website, and then I asked them, how many parks are there in Singapore, right, and there are actually more than 400 parks in Singapore, and four nature reserves. So I couldn't finish it, right? So every week, I'm going to a new one to discover new parks as well. And when I put it out on my socials, I put an [Instagram] story of it, a friend who tell me, "Eh, *bojio*", right, so I "*jio*" them. And then that became a social activity as

well as a lone activity, right? Even as we are going through nature. And in nature, you cannot help but just be mindfully present.

Dr Lee, you also asked about how friends could play a part. And I think that's the second A, right? **accountability**. Often times, we may not know exactly that we are going through a burnout, or that we might be doing some early signs. But friends around us who are aware of that can watch out, and also share that with us and say that, "Hey, you know, I noticed you're feeling a bit more down," and it's almost like a mirror. And if we can choose to listen to those feedback of our friends, right, and that will help us at that time. You could even take a step further beyond awareness to ask them to keep us accountable. It could be even be a game, right, at times on our energy meter—how's our dashboard like, how's our fuel dashboard like as well—check in on one another on that front.

The last but not least, I think is, precisely these kinds of conversations, Li Neng that we are having over here. If there's a dominant narrative, there must be an **alternative** narrative. If hustle culture is important, there must be an **alternative** to that as well. If we are stretching ourselves, there must be moments of slack as well. If we have fear of missing out (or FOMO), there must also be joy of missing out on certain things, to accepting that's what we have.

Ultimately, I think the question that we have to ask ourselves, again, is "What is enough for me?" And what is considered good enough that I can live with as well? And knowing this and [the] answer to this question, right, throughout, I wish that I had that question earlier on, right, and answered this question earlier on in my university life. And I think answering that, and knowing that, and being okay with what's good enough for me, will make a difference in how we pace ourselves, right, in this journey, in this academic journey, and this journey that we call life."

LLN: "Thank you so much for sharing. 3As, huh, that's why this person is an "A" student, right?"

Coming back...Tas, you shared about experiencing burnout and maybe now, looking back in hindsight, like in the lab module that you were taking, where you were working in a group. How could, in hindsight, how would you think your peers around you could have helped, especially when you see that you are burning out. What will be something that you will recommend that other people look out for? Because there's a lot of good work, and understandably, in NUS we have a lot of modules that are very intensive. And this is where I find it that as a student, we may not have as much latitude to decide on how much to do, right? Because the assignments are assigned to you, it's an assessment, right, and if you don't do it, especially the group work, then other people in your group have to take up the slack. And in that case, that can create other issues as well.

So again now, first question first. Maybe let's just focus a little bit more on the aspect of—as a peer, what do you think are things that will be very helpful to help someone who you think is going through burnout?

(20:35)

Tas: “Someone who is going to burnout, what will be helpful to a peer, Dr. Lee, if I noticed one of my peers going to burnout? Oh, that's a hard question. You know, that's something I'm still grappling with today. Like, this is such an important conversation and it's so prevalent, but I've never thought about it before.

I think interestingly enough, if I noticed a peer going through burnout, I think I would look for signs number one, that it's happening. I mean, if someone is exhausted, or they're not as energetic as they used to be compared to when you first met them in Week One, or they are not as responsive online—I think that's not just a matter of the lack of accountability, but it could be something serious—I think the first thing I would do is to perhaps speak to them individually, rather than calling them out in front of the whole group. Because when you call someone out in front of the whole group it may be interpreted as a “name and shame” thing. And trust me, in a certain CCA that I was part of, the IC had a tendency to like, call out people when they weren't performing their duties, and actually created a bit of a riff. Because although it was well-intentioned, you know, get people to be responsible [and] checking in on people, when you call someone out in a group of 30 people, nobody's is going to want to admit to anything in such a big group.

So I think what I would do is that I would talk to them, like one on one, and ask them if everything is alright. And then perhaps if they would be comfortable with it, I think, I know not everyone is at their comfort level of difference. But I think this is something that I tried out as a Peer Student Supporter and I thought that would work, you know, asking people just to have like, a cup of coffee near the classroom or just you know, get ice cream after class. I think it's a [small] gesture, but it shows the person that you are genuinely concerned for them and you want to reach out to them as a peer.

And then maybe, just don't start with like, “Oh, I think [or] I feel that you are going through this.” I feel that, you know, you can start off with, you know,

“I think sometimes this is a very stressful period for everyone. And you know, it's understandable that, you know, sometimes people have a lot on their plate and it can be very difficult for them to manage everything and that's completely valid. You know, do you feel that way? Because I feel that way sometimes.”

Because when you establish people, you know, on equal ground and you try to empathise with them, you know, as a friend rather than, “Okay, you have this problem, let me solve it for you.” I think it really encourages them to be more like, to open up about it and just being, they feel safe enough with you to admit that sometimes, not everyone is comfortable admitting that they're burnt out. Because everyone wants to

come across as they can handle everything. I think it's very Singaporean, if you ask me. So I think that's perhaps what I would do.

And that's what a senior that to me in Year One when I was so overwhelmed, because I was given the opportunity to organise this big mental health event. And it was my second week of school, like I knew nothing. And it was a senior from Tembusu. And actually two seniors from CAPT who actually helped me out, which I was very, very grateful for. And that's how they approached it—they took me out for coffee [and] they asked me, you know, “How's things at home? You know, this can be a bit overwhelming. Can we help you in any way?” And that actually took so much load off my shoulders and actually got me to, you know, it gave me the courage to ask them for help and without feeling, you know, embarrassed, or very vulnerable, or like incompetent. So I would definitely say that out. Dr. Lee, when it comes to peers.”

LLN: “So I think what you just offered is something that's very important, like giving them a safe space, whereby we don't want to...put it this way, we want to protect the person's dignity. Giving that space so that people can admit and have a safe space to ask for help. I think one of the things about learning to ask for help from other people may be something that not all of us are used to, especially, I think, an environment whereby everybody seems to be very competent. And you don't want to come across as the sole one that's incompetent as in comparison to everyone else, right? So that's one very, very real pressure that people operate under. right?”

So I think that's one, helping one another out. Yi Feng seems to have something to share also, in terms of some advice about how peers can actually help for people who are burning out?

(25:00)

YF: “Yeah, sure, I think Li Neng, this is 3Ls, I always love my acronyms, so I'm just wanting to jump to give another [group of] acronyms, right? And these 3Ls actually come from psychological first aid, right? And essentially, for people who are responding to things, 3Ls, right? **look, listen, and link with love.**”

And so, if you think about it, what do you look out for? [You] **look** out for signs and symptoms; **listen** to what the person is going through, right? Being present, actively listen[sic], right, and **link** them up with resources. And of course, do all that exactly, at what Tas mentioned, right, what her seniors did for her with **love**. Because when we listen to it with love, it really can make the difference. **People do not care about how much we know, until they know how much we care.** So that's a little bit on that front.”

LLN: “So Yi Feng again, with a whole bag full of wisdom, dispensing it as we go along in this conversation, right? And one of the things that when he talks about like, 3Ls—**look, listen, and link with love.** Many of these things, I also realise, are skills. A lot of times, even as a person that's trained in psychology, I understand it. But I realise

when practicing it, is a different story. It is really a skill that takes time to actually practice and get it done well.

Now, one question I have, and maybe I'll direct this back to Tasneem again. Now imagine, you realise that one of your group mates, like for example, let's go back to the last example of a lab module, in a group setting whereby everybody's work is required. Because if you don't, because the task is really very big task to do, right? So it's a group work, you're operating in this module, everybody needs to give their part. And you realise that one person is not doing well. For example, you might not be doing well, right? How do you think in this case, we can help because, for example, if like in your setting, the seniors can come in to help you do the thing. But in this case, is it okay for example, for us, the rest of the group just to do the task? And you know, let this person not do anything, considering there is a group mark given?

So I'm giving this very specific context right now. Do you think it's okay like, how do you feel about this? Because, as a teacher, we have differing, not differing, but from different students, we have different points of view. So maybe I hear from you first before I talk a little bit more than this.”

(27:38)

Tas: “So Dr. Lee, just to clarify, let's say one student is not doing too well, and then what would I do and oh, [what] should we do as a group [and] my response to that? Is that the question?”

LLN: “Yes, maybe you see that? Maybe as an individual, would you suggest that the rest of the group like, take over the task of this particular person and therefore, you know, “This person is not doing well, maybe we just take over and then you let her rest this time?” Is it then okay to do that? Is it something that you think will be advisable to do, right, considering that you still have a group mark, that is given to everybody?”

(28:18)

Tas: “Okay, this is quite funny because I've been in that situation many times, too many times that I can count. Unfortunately, 90% of the time, although it's not advisable, it's not ideal—and we all could agree in this group that it's not ideal—90% of the time, we just let it slide. Because honestly, I think as Singaporeans, we're not very comfortable talking about feelings. And sometimes the person is not necessarily comfortable with opening up.

But I think if I were to advise—if this happens in the future, I can't promise that I would, you know, practice what I preach and unfortunately, I cannot—but I think something you shared in your class, Dr. Lee, when I took the lab module, before we started to have the hardcore stuff, we talked about group dynamics. I think I use this with my group, and I feel that this was really helpful.

So whenever things start to—thankfully, I don't think anything really bad happened in my group, because we learned that practice, and we were informed about our practice to your lecture. So what we will do is that we will regroup at the beginning of each week. So we will have a Zoom meeting, and then we would like, [have] all cards on the table, “Okay, who this week has like, three finals, where they cannot handle, and who needs extra help?” We try to be as open and honest about it as possible, and each person gets a turn saying what they have on. So it's not like, okay, one person admits to all these things, everybody else said, “Okay, I'm fine”. But everybody has to say something. And then from there, if anyone needs a bit of extra help, we will list out, okay, what they can do, like, “Okay, you can deal with Task One, Task Two, and maybe I can get help in Task Three, Task Four, just for this week.” And then I will make sure that I update [the group]. And when I finish it, I will try to come back on and finish up the lab project, because the lab is a long-term thing, the final is just there and then. So okay, once I'm done with the final, I'll give myself (and the group members also give themselves) one [to] two days to rest, and then come back on a weekend.

This is what I feel really worked in our case. And so far, if there was any unhappiness, like beneath somewhere, it wasn't expressed and it didn't cause issues. So I think all of us got on well in that context. So I would say definitely, when things aren't all that good with one particular group member, I think what the group can do is that maybe just arrange or schedule like, a powwow or like, a quick group meeting. And then [put] cards on the table, talk about [whether], you know, if anyone needs extra help or anyone has anything overwhelming for that particular week and will require assistance, you know, we quickly divide the work in an efficient manner, in a quick manner. And also, I think, [to] also be open about the emotions experienced, although it's very ideal. It'll be interesting to see if anyone tries that out, Dr Lee, it's an ideal situation, but I think I'm lucky that it worked in my case. But it's [an] ideal [scenario], probably [be] interesting to see how that works out.”

LLN: “So I mean, this is good advice, being open about what your commitments are. I think sometimes it's hard for other people to really empathise with what you're going through, when you don't say anything. They just assume that you are trying to slack off, for example, sometimes this is an assumption.

And this practice of learning to be non-judgmental but more than that, being generous in terms of assumptions of other people. That everybody is trying their best and giving what they can, even though [it] may not match up to our current view of what they should be doing—because all of us have different standards—can be very helpful that you assume the best of people. That if they're not doing what you think they should be doing, then in this case it may be something that they're struggling with, and being very open about your current commitments and sharing them on a real-time basis can be very helpful because life changes and is so dynamic all the time, right, and I think that really helps, especially in the larger picture.

Now, I asked that question, especially on Tasneem, because when we think about being inclusive, especially from the educator’s point of view—I'm running a course, [and] I want to, for example, help students who are for example, struggling—yet at the same time, the other tension that I have to hold is this issue of parity, or fairness, to everybody, right? And it’s a tension, it’s difficult because sometimes when you want to help, it may not be fair to others. If I want to be fair and completely fair to others, sometimes it's not very helpful for that person. Because you know, I may have to give a grade that’s not so good. That’s why I wanted to hear what your thoughts are, especially at the group level, “Is it okay?” Because sometimes, [there’s] also the perception that we are in a very competitive environment and because of that, grades matter very much to every single person, we go [by that] assumption. I think we also tend to try to go towards [being] more fair so that, you know, at least we are making sure that everybody is on the same page, that we are not trying to be biased towards anybody.

Outro Voiceover

“Thank you for tuning in to the CDTL podcast.”

Outro Music
