

Flourishing in 2022 January 1, 2022

Are we really saying goodbye to 2021? The last 12 months seem like one long, convoluted nightmare of recurring themes and oh too familiar challenges. We are emotionally exhausted, torn between the news of the emergence of another variant and the false hope that a few weeks last summer brought. A few weeks when we thought it was “safe to go back into the water”.

If it feels like someone’s played bongo drums using your few remaining nerves, then join the club. There’s no doubt in my mind that our normal resilience has been tested to its limits and our bounce back buttons were used so much, they are now stuck in the off position.

Still, every New Year brings its own promise, and no matter how weary we may feel, we still have hopes for 2022. But first, we may have to dig our way out of the land of languishing, a strange in-between stage of emotions best described by Adam Grant in his New York Times article published on April 19, 2021. In fact, that article, entitled: “There’s a Name for the Blah You’re Feeling: It’s Called Languishing”, was the Times’ most read piece for the entire year.

This excerpt from the article really struck home with me:

Languishing is the neglected middle child of mental health. It’s the void between depression and flourishing—[the absence of well-being](#). You don’t have symptoms of mental illness, but you’re not the picture of mental health either. You’re not functioning at full capacity. Languishing dulls your motivation, disrupts your ability to focus, and [triples](#) the odds that you’ll cut back on work. It appears to be more common than major depression—and in some ways it may be a bigger risk factor for [mental illness](#).

I can’t afford to be lost in the land of languishing any longer. I sure don’t plan to make it my destiny or even a stop in the road. There, I named it! I admit Languish has been an unwelcomed companion through much of 2021.

One of the steps Grant talks about in his article is naming this condition and finding small wins in any way we can. It’s not easy in our world of ‘achieve at all costs’ to dare admit we’re just ‘getting by,’ but for too many of us it’s true. Saying it out loud is cathartic; sharing its existence is healing. Like it or not, we’re still in a time of grief and unease, but the good news is that we aren’t alone.

So, I’m ready to get back to the Frontier of Flourishing, that place where excitement visited on a daily basis and my dreams were big and bold. I’m not sure how to get to that state, but I do know I’m making it my number one goal for 2022; in fact, it may be my only goal for this coming year! I’ll do whatever it takes to get there. I’m making that promise to myself. And, if I get off track, I’ll turn to my friends to push me back on it!

I’ll nourish my mind with great works of literature and fill my funny bone with hilarious tales of delight! I’m listing those things I love to do and making them a top priority; then I’ll gorge my senses on all that’s right in my world.

Most of all, I’m saying goodbye to the emotional roller coast of the past two years and hello to happiness and thanksgiving. My mind and well-being are at stake if I don’t. Frankly, that’s too high a price to pay for a measly pandemic.

We’ve gotten through this far, and there’s no going back, so we might as well dream up a new way of living and find ways to enjoy every day that’s given to us.

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/19/well/mind/covid-mental-health-languishing.html>