



For Those Who Feel They're Falling Behind

ADHORA KABIR

The early twenties are very complicated years. On one hand, you are more energetic than ever, ready to chase your dreams and brimming with inspiration. On the other, it is very easy to get lost among a sea of achievers.

For some people, it seems like every other day they are congratulating a friend for a new milestone, be it personal or professional. And for those feeling a little left behind, here are some helpful words.

It seems like you were attending classes with your friends just yesterday, and your biggest worry was not messing up the board exams. Suddenly, you find yourself attending their weddings, baby showers, anniversary parties and so on. Then come the incessant questions from your relatives.

"When is the good news coming?"

"When are you settling down?"

"Aren't you getting a little too old to be lying around all day?"

Sometimes, you do not even realise if you actually want to settle down or being peer pressured into thinking you want these things. If you are unsure, you might want to concentrate on what actually makes you happy rather than conforming to society's expectations.

It is completely fine to live life on your own terms. You can be happy for your friends getting married or reaching milestones, without you having to worry about living the ideal life.

Watching your friends succeed in different arenas professionally, you might have conflicting emotions. You can be extremely proud of their success and achievements while feeling a certain sense of insecurity. You may feel as though you are not good enough or not working as hard as the others.

It gets tiring to congratulate people for their victories because you seem to wonder, *"When is my turn?"*

You cannot rush through the process. Everyone has a different definition of success. Just because you do not feel satisfied with yourself does not make you a failure. It just means you have to pat yourself on the back for pushing through a very difficult phase of your life and understand that for some people, success takes a little longer.

This does not mean the taste of victory is any less sweet. With hard work, a sound state of mind and a good support system, you can do anything you set your mind to. A competitive environment can take down even the most resilient person. So, the best thing would be to find inner peace and work hard, at your own pace.

There is a lot of pressure on a young adult, and it does not help when people point this out and urge you to head towards a direction in your life that you are not even sure you are ready for.

To the people who feel like they are falling behind, stay focused on your own path, and you will be alright.

Adhora Kabir likes to speak her mind but only when her identity is undisclosed.

SHOULD YOU GET THE SHOT?

SUBAH NUZHAT HUSSAIN

Vaccines have abolished debilitating illnesses like polio and smallpox. According to the WHO, global vaccinations prevent around 4 to 5 million deaths per year. An additional 1.5 million deaths can be avoided if global vaccinations improve in the future.

Despite knowing how important vaccination campaigns are, people tend to put off getting vaccinated.

No one has fond memories of getting jabbed in the arm with a long, thin needle. Pain experienced after getting an injection is nothing compared to the breathlessness due to Covid-19 infection. It definitely beats getting hospitalised and it is the least you can do to protect yourself and your family.

The biggest concern related to the vaccines available is the efficacy rate. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine had a 95 percent efficacy rate against the first strain of Covid-19 while the Oxford/AstraZeneca one had a 79 percent efficacy rate.

Does that mean that Pfizer is better than AstraZeneca?

Efficacy rates depend on the timing and location of the clinical trial. Pfizer and Moderna trials took place mostly in the US before the appearance of more contagious strains. Whereas other vaccines were tested in Asia and Africa when infection rates started climbing higher. It is not sensible to compare different vaccines since their trials took place under different circumstances.

An efficacy rate of 95 percent does not mean that five in a hundred people will get sick after vaccination. Instead, it means that compared to an unvaccinated person, someone who is vaccinated is very, very less likely to become infected when they

are exposed to the contagion.

Vaccines are not invincible. It is possible to get infected even if you are vaccinated. However, most vaccines are 100 percent effective against moderate to severe infections. Vaccination significantly raises the odds of surviving Covid-19 and reduces the chances of getting hospitalised.

Another reason why people are still afraid is the side effects associated with vaccines. One should not be alarmed by mild fevers and aches after getting the shot. Your body is training its army of lymphocytes in preparation for a very likely encounter with the virus.

Less common side effects include anaphylaxis, which is treated with an injection of epinephrine. Even rarer side effects include rare blood clots associated with AstraZeneca's vaccine and myocarditis associated with mRNA vaccines. However, these side-effects are so rare that only a handful of cases are reported in a million doses administered.

As Covid-related mortalities climb higher each day, it is important now more than ever to get vaccinated. Get your papers in order. Register for a vaccine if you are eligible. Encourage people to get vaccinated, and help them through the registration process. The faster we contain the virus, the sooner everything returns to normal.

References

1. WHO (December 5, 2019). *Immunization.*
2. Vox (March 20, 2021). *Why you can't compare Covid-19 vaccines.*
3. Yale Medicine (July 29, 2021). *Comparing the COVID-19 Vaccines: How Are They Different?*

Subah is an average science nerd. Contact her on Twitter @hussain_subah



PHOTO: NAYEM SHAAN