

## Study Life Balance\_mixdown\_edited.mp3

**Voiceover** [00:00:02] This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.

**Bekah** [00:00:07] Hello and welcome back to our BeWell podcasts, our episode today will discuss work-life-study balance, how to find the right balance and how to maintain it. Joining me today, I have Jemma Murdoch, leading student support advisor, and students Helen and Gabriella. Can we just go around the room and do some quick introductions, so our listeners know who you are and why you volunteered to be part of the podcast today?

**Jemma** [00:00:28] Hi, my name is Jemma. I am the lead student support advisor in the student advice and support team. I work with students on a range of issues and I lead a team providing advice to students on frontline queries relating to things like finance, wellbeing, mental health and health. And we all sort of refer into our disability team for further support and advice. So, I guess work life balance is quite a big key issue at the moment because of the pandemic, but I guess always. So, we work with students on a range of issues. And I guess the work-life-study balance is quite important for us in the pandemic landscape. But generally as well, we always talk probably a little bit like health professionals about actually being proactive and trying to tackle issues such as stress and wellbeing before they become a problem is the key to sort of sustainable studies, but life as well. And I think it can be really helpful to work with students on adequate plans to make sure that they're maintaining their wellbeing rather than, you know, having to pick up the pieces when things go wrong. Ultimately, we always have staff available to deal with issues when they arise. But I think discussions like this can be really helpful to allow people to pick up tips and advice before there are kind of genuine issues and concerns to have to deal with there.

**Helen** [00:01:56] Yeah, I'm Helen. I'm a fourth-year anthropology student and I'm currently in my final semester. So I am busy writing my dissertation and doing all that. I think that, like you say before, Jemma, this is a really important thing to look at at the moment in this sort of pandemic landscape, and especially because we're sort of into the third lockdown now in Britain anyway. So, it's important for people to make sure that they're looking after themselves and maintaining a balance that suits the work that they're doing or suits the life that they want to be living at the moment.

**Gabriella** [00:02:41] Yeah, I'm Gabriella. I'm a first-year neuroscience with psychology student and coming into my first year I realised how important it is to have a work-life balance. And I think it's really important for students to be aware that you need to find a balance for yourself. So, yeah, that's why I was interested in joining.

**Bekah** [00:03:03] Brilliant. Thanks guys, and thanks so much for joining me today I really appreciate you giving up your time. I would like to start the episode today thinking about the following statement. Living to work or working to live? The statement can also apply to your studies and coursework. So, do you live to study or study to live and broaden your future opportunities? Is one outlook better than the other? What are your thoughts and what camp do you guys sit in?

**Jemma** [00:03:29] So I have to say that I think this is something that will fluctuate during somebody's life, I don't think there's ever going to be sort of one camp that you fit in throughout your studies or your working life as you progress. I think the reality of all aspects of life is that your priorities will change over time. And I think depending on what else you've got going on in terms of part time work, your social life, your relationships, your

health, your work or your studies will take more of a priority. I think that is a cliched statement that talks about, you know, whether you study or choose to work in an area that you love, you won't feel like you're at work. I don't necessarily agree with that because I think even those that are doing careers that they really enjoy will have difficult times where work will still feel like work. You still have to follow a pattern. You still have to turn up at a certain time. And there will be other aspects of life that will feel like they're a conflict to what you're trying to achieve at that time. I think that for a lot of students, it's easy for us to think that studying is just their life. I think people kind of see study as the key aspect of life for people within the kind of typical studying years. But we understand, particularly from the work that we do, that a lot of students have lots of things that they're trying to juggle at once. You know that it isn't just that sort of typical 18 to sort of 25 year old student who is focused on getting that degree and that career they're after. A lot of our students that we tend to work with, you have got caring responsibilities, have got financial responsibilities, they need to work more than one job at times. So I don't think that is a correct camp to sit in. I think it's just understanding that there isn't going to be a perfect balance. I don't think anyone has that balance. And if they do, I would love those answers on a postcard, because I certainly find that those days, you can hear my children in the background, and probably understand that there are days when I feel more on top of work and I feel like I'm really living to work. I'm enjoying my work, I feel like I'm being productive, I'm working on a project or a task that I feel really passionate about and I can't see my life without that. That's my key thing. But the reality is that a lot of the time it might be the other side and actually, we're just working to get through the day so that we can then achieve whatever we're aiming to achieve at the end of it. So whether that's getting a project finished or working towards that pay packet at the end of a month. And for students, you know, maybe just getting the credits for that specific course, some courses will just not be, you know, the ones that spark imagination. And so actually, there'll be aspects of studies that maybe are the kind of key focus for a student that the area that they're passionate about and then other areas where they're just making up the credits and kind of going through the motions. And I think that's ok. I think it's just appreciating that you won't have that perfect balance and that there will be times in your life where it will feel like it's swayed the other way and you may enjoy it more. So I suppose my answer is very kind of vague and on the fence, but ultimately I think it will just fluctuate throughout a lifetime. And I don't think that you need to necessarily park yourself in one camp and stay there. I know that I have been in both camps and have felt at times where I am just working to live, particularly maybe in younger years where I'm doing a job that doesn't inspire me. I'm just there to kind of move on to the next thing. But then other times in life that I've really enjoyed my job, or my studies and it's been that key part of my focus and everything else just fits around it.

**Gabriella** [00:07:22] Yeah, I really agree with Jemma on this, that you kind of have to have a balance and you can't really stay solidly in one camp or the other, because if you live to work, then I think you'll be disappointed sometimes when your job is just a bit of a grind and you're kind of like slogging through and it's not exactly what you expected. But on the other hand, if you work to live, that can be not very fulfilling because we as humans tend to spend a lot of our time working. And if you find no joy in that and no fulfilment in that or anything, you're kind of setting yourself up to not be enjoying a lot of your time, so I think you kind of have to have a bit of a balance with that. And I was thinking, we don't live to work and we don't work to live. We kind of just live to live. And working is part of living. And anything we do outside of work is also part of our lives. So I think, yeah, it's you kind of have to think of it a bit differently, I guess. I don't know. Yeah, I guess it was just putting it into live to work or work to live, I guess I was thinking there might be a different option.

Like you just live, and working is part of living. I'm not sure if that makes sense, but yeah, that's kind of what I was thinking.

**Helen** [00:08:51] Yeah, I definitely agree with you about that I think that, obviously work and study is sort of part of life. And if you want to study to have more education on a certain subject, then it's definitely part of your working career as well, I suppose. And I definitely agree with what you're saying Jemma, about part of the learning or university experience maybe sometimes is just about doing credits because you sort of have to get through them. There's definitely been a few subjects that I did in first year that I sort of thought, oh, this sounds interesting, maybe I'll be inspired by this particular subject, then you're sort of hating your life by halfway through it when you had hundreds of essays to write and you really weren't very inspired. But I would definitely say that my experience in the anthropology department has been one that's been overwhelmingly positive. I've definitely felt like I'm sort of just living to study because I've been really enjoying my studies and they've been really inspiring and not only in like an educational aspect, but also sort of like changing the way that you live your life. And I think that's probably what a really good university course should help you to do. But I'm definitely on the fence about the statement as well. I think that I mean, feeling like you have to work just to live is definitely a sort of thing that's based on capitalism and whether you agree with that or not, then that's a different kind of thing. But I definitely think that it's something that's this kind of idea that you have to work in order to have a satisfying life and I mean, for some people, doing that just isn't the case. So I think it's definitely more complicated.

**Bekah** [00:10:44] I completely agree with what all of you have said, I don't think there is are right or wrong answer, I think it is about creating that balance. You know, traditionally you spend eight hours a day at work and that's quite a lot of time to spend somewhere that you're potentially not enjoying, and you are only there for financial gain. Yeah, so if you are there for financial gain, you're likely to feel unhappy and as you've all kind of said, like feeling unfulfilled or if you spin the coin the other way and you are living to work, you're potentially missing out on spending time with your family and friends and the other aspects of life. So it definitely is, I think we've kind of all hit the nail on the head it is creating that balance. And I think it's clear from what everyone said that it's creating that right balance that's essential for our wellbeing. Your work or your studies should not stress you out every day or shouldn't make you feel unhappy. However, it shouldn't be our entire life either. How can we create separation between work or study and our personal life, particularly in the current climate when everything seems to be merging into one like it's extremely difficult, just now?

**Jemma** [00:12:00] So, yeah, I think with the pandemic, it's really challenging to divide our time because a lot of us will be living our personal lives, our social lives, our work lives, our study lives, our romantic lives, all from one small, small space. Some people will be fortunate to have a space where they can take themselves away to work and then close the door at the end of the day and come away. But a lot of students and staff members just won't have that luxury. So I think that the focus now has to be on trying to divide up our time more economically and being a little bit more organised about breaking it up. I would always recommend to students to break up their day and to sort three different chunks morning, afternoon, evening, and keep one of those spare away from their studies to try and focus on another activity, whether that's a hobby, watching Netflix, catching up with friends. Obviously, for some students, part time work will impact on their ability to break their week up because the typical student week probably does involve working at the weekends and not keeping those sort of set days clear, which would obviously be the gold standard to or to have a full weekend clear for, you know, just focusing on other pursuits.

But I think we also need to be mindful of the fact that for some students, study can be an escape. And actually, it's not necessarily always about taking yourself away from your study to focus on other things, but actually the study can be the focus elsewhere. One thing we found out this week that's a sort of piece of advice for students is that you don't have to necessarily watch your full downloads of lectures. So sometimes, for people's broadband and so on, it can be quite difficult to download a full video, but you can actually download them as an MP4, so you can just listen. The other thing, I guess, would be to consider whether you could download them to a device that you could then take out for a walk. So you're maybe kind in engaging in your studies, but not in the typical sitting at a desk reading a book or reading a screen and finding different ways to plan your studies so that you can do a bit of active study or have a meeting while you're out for a walk. I think it's important to be a bit more creative now because we can't make that physical divide between our life and our studies, but also just to reach out and speak to somebody, whether that's a member of staff in student support or the student learning service or a friend to help make a plan for the week if you're feeling a little bit overwhelmed with what to do and when to do it, because actually just getting someone else's input as to what they do can be helpful.

**Gabriella** [00:14:30] Yeah, I really agree with you that it can be difficult to kind of divide your work and your work life and the rest of your life, especially now. I'm a first-year student and I'm studying at home right now, and I found it quite difficult sometimes to separate the studying and just relaxing. So if I have a normal day, I might do a lecture and then have like a live session or two and then I'm done for the day, but I still feel I'm still in study mode and I find it really difficult to kind of get out of that. But one thing that's really helped me is kind of finding a way to take my mind off of that. So if it's like Jemma said, getting outside and going for a walk or going for a run that can really help. But also, just even though I can't physically leave a classroom, I can kind of close down all the files and close down all the tabs I had open and kind of clear my laptop of all traces of studying and stuff like that. And that kind of helps clear my mind a little bit in a way. Yeah, but then I really like what Jemma said about creating a chunk of time in your day where you don't study. And I've kind of accidentally done that in the evening, and say, I'm just done studying. So I think maybe in the future I'll try to be more conscious about, okay, now it's six o'clock, I'm going to close everything and be done for the day. So then my mind will kind of know, like, okay, you know, it's time to relax. And I think creating a routine with that could be really helpful. So I'm definitely going to try to do a little bit more of that in the future.

**Helen** [00:16:19] Yeah, I definitely think it's important to try and carve out your day as well. And something that I've been finding useful recently is doing what I think it's called the Pomodoro Technique where you study hard for twenty five minutes and then have a break for five and repeat that a few times. And I think it's a good way of removing yourself from the screen. Thankfully I'm in a flat where there's a spare room. So me and my partner have both sort of been doing quite a bit from home recently. So we both have separate desks and that's like our kind of workspace. So I'm very, very thankful that we have that extra space. But I've been finding it quite helpful if I set up my laptop in there, then I can leave the room for five minutes and come back maybe with like a cup of tea or something and carry on studying for another twenty five minutes, which is like so useful. But I definitely agree. I mean, it has to be hard for people that are in typical university accommodation spaces where there isn't much space. And I can definitely sympathise with that because I was in a space like that in first year and I know it was really difficult trying to study in that space. So I don't really know how I would have managed if that was me in

first year this year. But I think it's so important to try to carve up as much of your spare time as possible.

**Bekah** [00:18:01] Absolutely, I fully agree with absolutely everything you've all said, I think it's quite nice as well that we're all feeling like we're in the same boat. It can be a bit of a struggle. I personally am definitely finding that physical separation has been a lifesaver. When we first got told that we were working from home, I took my laptop and stuff home from campus and set it up in my living room, on my dining room table, and just that constantly being like at the side of my vision when I was trying to chill and watch television, it wasn't going to happen. Like you, Helen, I'm really fortunate that we've got a spare room at home. So, I did take it to the extreme, got rid of the bed and got desks in because my husband's a student at the university as well. So when it came to well we only have one space for someone to work and he needs to work just as much as I need to work, although we've got different priorities. So we've done that, we've got two desks and in our spare room, we sit back to back. And of course, it's hugely challenging because, as you said, Jemma, we're basically in the same room every single day with each other, like with no separation. But having that physical separation from work, we do just use our spare room, it's basically an office. So that has really, really helped. And I found over the winter break, it was amazing to not come into our office and that you were away from there for three weeks. And it made us feel just so much better and we're very fortunate to have that space because I know a lot of people don't have that space. I really like what you said, Gabriella, about switching off the tabs and turning off your laptop properly. There's something about that, I really like to do that on a Friday. I don't generally do it throughout the week. And I think I feel like it's during the week, I'm still working and I can sometimes struggle to find that balance and switch off at the right time, but I really am trying. It's my New Year's resolution to switch off from work by six o'clock because I can be so engrossed in what I do. I love what I do, so that, I suppose, can be a slight negative in the fact that I don't know when to switch off and park and leave it. And my job is a wellbeing advisor at the university and I'm so passionate about wellbeing within my personal life. So I find the balance difficult because it's that I need to think about wellbeing for me and wellbeing for others as such. And I'm sure you guys can resonate, but I guess the working from home or studying from home guilt is real, constantly worrying, am I doing enough? Am I pulling my weight in a group project? Am I giving my family or my flat mates enough attention? Is the guilt something that you guys have experienced, and have you got any tips for overcoming it?

**Helen** [00:20:58] Yeah, I can definitely relate to the guilt, I'm writing my dissertation at the moment and I've been finding it really difficult, especially this third lockdown, I don't know what it is, but I've just been finding it really difficult to stay motivated and keep writing. And now it's like a month until it's due and I still have a fair bit to do, but I'm starting to get back into it again. But I think the way that I probably deal with that is that I'm just sort of like, okay, well that time has passed. There's no point in worrying about the time that's already passed and I didn't do something that I was supposed to do. I just have to think about what time I have left and how best to divide my time so that I can work sort of most efficiently and most productively to make sure that I do get it finished. And I think it's really important to sort of try and be kind to yourself like that, because otherwise you'll end up getting completely burned out and you'll have nothing left to give and you'll have absolutely no productivity left. So I think it's really important to make sure that you're being kind to yourself in that way.

**Jemma** [00:22:06] So I think that this point also reflects back to what we were talking about there when we talked about, you know, planning our time and making a schedule, because I think that if we can have these goals to work towards and things to sort of tick

off our list, so to speak, it can help us to feel a little bit more productive and hopefully reduce that guilt a little bit. I think it can be really difficult to sort of measure what we're achieving at home, particularly because in the office or on campus and studying, you would sort of have these lectures to do today and you would have a tutorial to attend and a submission to hand in and now everything just feels very open ended. I think the style of teaching and learning has changed so dramatically in order to be as successful as possible for people throughout the pandemic. And so as a result that flexibility probably means that there are less strict deadlines. You know, teaching is available for people to access whenever they choose, which can be absolutely suitable for people that have got other things to fit around. But actually, that lack of routine can be quite daunting. And I think it can make you feel like you're not achieving as much. What I would recommend, particularly if anyone was feeling concerned about guilt or concerned about their productivity, is to check in with a course coordinator or a personal tutor, and actually just run through all of the sort of things that are needing to be done. And it can actually just help you to talk that through with somebody. And you realise, no, actually, I have achieved quite a lot or, you know, I have managed to do a lot more. And the thing to remember as well is our productivity will change at the moment just with everything else that's going on in life. But you may actually find that you're achieving as much without bumping into people in the library and having a chat or going for a coffee. You probably get as much done in 20 minutes as you might have in an hour while you would in a more social setting or in, you know, in a place that's got more distractions. So I think it's easy to underestimate ourselves and to judge ourselves and to feel guilty about what we're achieving. And I think when there are other things to try and balance like personal relationships or family, you can just feel like you're sort of trying everything and not quite getting there with any aspect. But I think we need to be kind to ourselves and really look at what we've managed to achieve in a year. You know, we've all sort of moved almost seamlessly to studying and working in a completely different way. And that deserves a lot of credit. And I think that the reality is that those of our students who are managing to sort of tick along and engage as much as they possibly can are doing everything that could be expected of them at the moment. And I think it's just reaching out and speaking to people if you did feel overwhelmed about that aspect of things, because it sometimes just takes to talk it through, a problem shared is a problem halved. Another great cliché, but actually one that I do strongly believe in, that actually just having the opportunity to run through things with somebody else can make you realise, you know, that you are being hard on yourself. And we are creatures that do like to be tough on ourselves. We've got high expectations set, but it's just realising that we probably are doing better than we think.

**Gabriella** [00:25:17] Yeah, I really liked what Jemma said about putting so much pressure on yourself to always be achieving so much, and sometimes we don't see how much we have achieved, especially when you're at home and everything's online. You don't really have tangible evidence of everything you've accomplished. But we've all made a huge adjustment to this new lifestyle. And I think that that's an achievement in itself. But one thing that I've struggled with when it comes to guilt is knowing how many people are struggling with isolation and trying to reach out to all of my friends and keep in contact with everyone while also maintaining my study life. And sometimes when I'm studying and I get a message from someone, I want them to know that I'm there for them, so I want to reply. But I also need to focus on my studies. So I felt a little bit of guilt on finding the in between when to when to be focused only on studying and when to be focused on my friends, and especially now with everything online, studying online friends are online. It's kind of difficult to separate the two. And that kind of mixes in a little bit of guilt as well, because, yeah, you want to be there for your friends, but you also have to take care of yourself. So, yeah, finding that balance has been difficult as well. But as the pandemic goes on, you know,

you kind of fine tune it, and maybe turning off notifications or letting your friends know like, hey, I will reply to you later, I'm studying right now. Those little things can sometimes help. But yeah, it's been it's been a process to figure out, to figure out how it goes, you know.

**Bekah** [00:27:04] Yeah, absolutely, I think kind of keying in what you've all said, it's really important to be to be kind to yourself and actually it's so easy to kind of feel negative or I'm not doing enough and just kind of feeling stuck in a rut. But actually looking over the positives, what have been the positives over the last year? Like, as you say, we've achieved so much but might not have that tangible evidence there. But even submitting an assignment in this current climate is something to be so proud of, like you've managed to work at home without having any face to face contact with any lecturers or certainly for you, Gabriella, you're a first year so it must be so difficult to not have met your classmates face to face to kind of build that relationship with them and have each other to support each other through your studies. I think it's so important to think, wow, like I've done this. I'm here and I'm doing well. And although we will all have struggles, it is important to take time and reflect and just think how far we've come and it's so easy to get caught up. It's important that we slow down and take time for ourselves each day to look after ourselves and prioritise self care. As you said, be kind to yourself. It'll help us perform better in our studies and our working life, just all round and feel better and help build resilience as well. It doesn't matter like what we do, as long as it's away from work and study, it could be going for a walk, it could be listening to music, it could be having a bath and anything that's solely about you, not about your work or your studies. Do you guys have anything that you use to help you guys switch off mentally? Do you have any kind of favourite self care activities that are maybe unusual or common that you might want to share with our listeners?

**Jemma** [00:29:03] I'm a fan of the typical sort of Netflix series, something that takes my mind completely away from work and other aspects of life. So things that allow you to fully immerse yourself elsewhere. I also really enjoy picking up a book on the Kindle and just getting, you know, getting into that. So those are quite common things I think that people will use. And I guess the only sort of slight warning to that is it's probably more screen time, which is not necessarily ideal in terms of our health and wellbeing. I'm a firm advocate of getting outside every day, wherever possible. I know that the beautiful Scottish weather that we're getting at the moment, which if anyone's listening to this further down the line or from elsewhere in the world, currently involves approximately a foot of snow. So it looks great, but maybe not conducive to getting the exercise that we would want. Even just getting out and having a walk around the block I think it can really clear the mind and take you physically away from that space that we've already identified seems to be forming the purpose of all aspects of our life at the moment. But yes, certainly I'm a big fan of a Netflix series and something like Married at First Sight Australia is ticking all the boxes at the moment because it's set somewhere that's sunny, people are getting to live life in a relatively normal way, there aren't any face masks. So I think it's quite nice just to, you know, to watch something or to be involved in something that doesn't mention coronavirus, pandemic, work, studying, parenting for me particularly, but also that kind of getting outside and making time just to step away from wherever it is that you've been doing all the other parts of your life. And I think the other thing is just to kind of build on that routine that we've already spoken about, you know, trying to set that time away, you know, and it doesn't matter how trivial, whatever your self care is, it's just making that time for if it's something that lets you switch off and enjoy, then that's fantastic. Masked Singer is another fantastic show that I'm loving at the moment because it allows me just to sort of totally immerse myself elsewhere. A lot of recommendations for the Headspace apps. So I don't know if anybody here has listened to them before, but they've also got a Netflix show.

I'm not sponsored by Netflix, but it certainly has become such a huge part of everyone's life at the moment and I think it's getting involved in watching something like that. But that's maybe slightly more wellbeing focused and something that allows you to maybe switch off in a more positive way. But I also think, you know, making plans ahead, thinking about, you know, what'll happen next year and what we might be able to enjoy, I think is nice just to focus on the fact that there will be you know, there will be another side to this sort of situation. And I think we can acknowledge all of us that has brought a lot of change to our life. But I think, as you already mentioned just there, Bekah, congratulating ourselves for what we have achieved, I think that's a moment of self care that we can all take as a just a little bit of a note every day of the things that we've got right that day. I like to do a little round up of my own social media, of the things I've enjoyed that day, the things I've not necessarily enjoyed. I think it's a good way to just reflect on small wins, because at the moment, you know, we'll take anything that we can. If we've managed to sign off on a project or finish off a small essay, then that is something to be congratulated for because we've managed to achieve it through what is at the moment diversity all day, every day. And also just acknowledging the things that didn't go so well got, interrupted on a meeting when the postman came three times when we were trying to speak to colleagues or friends and maybe the things we didn't enjoy, the things that didn't go so well for us, just taking stock of them, learning from them if we need to. But more often than not, just, you know, putting a wall up and saying, you know, that happened, let's move on. And I think we probably need to do that a little bit more at the moment than we ever had before as just putting things in the box and saying, you know, that happened. And that's okay. Let's move on from that. Let's start fresh tomorrow. Let's start fresh next week, constantly reinventing ourselves and our task lists just to be more accepting, I think, of the fact that we don't have as much control at the moment. And that's okay.

**Gabriella** [00:33:25] Oh, yeah. I think reflecting on your day has been something that's been really helpful for me. I don't really put it in list form. I tend to, well, actually, I just have this giant document where I'll just write down my thoughts that I have for that day. And it's been really helpful to kind of clarify how the day went for me, what I've been thinking. But it's also been really interesting to kind of look back. Yeah, it's been really good to kind of look back over the past semester and see what I've been thinking and see what I've achieved. And yeah, so it's been that one thing I used to kind of relax and kind of clarify my thoughts a little bit. But another thing that I sometimes do is just put on some music that I really like and, and just draw or just paint or do something creative and make something, especially now everything's online. There are so many screens. So it's kind of nice to do something a little bit more with your hands and stuff like that. So I found that really helpful.

**Helen** [00:34:33] Yeah, I would say that I would agree with you about being creative, I think that's a really important way to sort of get your feelings out, whether it just be, well, I got a painting by numbers, which I still have to finish, but I have been working on it for a while. But it's one of those ones that has absolutely massive and has tiny, tiny, tiny little squares. So it's been a thing that's taken me forever. But I am nearly finished it now. But that's definitely something that's sort of like mindless, but you still have to concentrate on it enough to know that you're getting it right. So I think things like that has been quite helpful for me and as well, like I mean, maybe having food that you think is comforting or spending the time to make something nice for dinner or making sure that you're taking care of yourself, maybe it's like a little pamper session or something like that, which sometimes is quite good for you, for well, for me anyway, I found that quite helpful. And as well, I was just thinking about what you're saying, like Married at First Sight. I thought it's such a funny programme and it's so weird now looking at all those Netflix series and stuff

or anything that you're watching on television and seeing people going to parties and meeting up with each other, you're sort of like, what is your mask?

**Jemma** [00:35:52] I think one thing that I would add to that as well, you mentioned you are doing things with your hands, maybe cooking something. And I think maybe actually having processes that you follow that are really comforting and make you feel like you're achieving. I know that last year a little bit of a pandemic cliché, but I got a lot of seed kits and grew quite a lot of things from scratch. And there was something really comforting about checking every day to see how that had progressed and then being able to move seedlings outside as they'd got a little bit stronger. And then, you know, seeing the kind of plants blossom in the summer. I think that, as you say, it's just trying to find things that make you feel like you're achieving as well. And I think cooking a nice meal and, you know, getting something that has those tangible results can feel really good, as I say no doubt that watching a Netflix series is great. But you don't get a certificate at the end of it. You know, there's nothing that you can get out of it other than your own enjoyment. But I think finding something that you can make, crafts and cooking and growing things and you can do that with very little space and very little resource, you know, these things are not expensive, not particularly time consuming, but there are things that just are a process that you can kind of immerse yourself in and then see an end result. I think that that's a really nurturing thing that we can all do.

**Bekah** [00:37:08] Absolutely, I've absolutely loved this conversation that we have and the key thing that I'm taken away and I think you've kind of all referenced it, is to just reflect on your day, take five minutes each day to think what's maybe something that hasn't gone so well today but that's okay. Acknowledge that difficulty and let it go. But then think about the three things that have went well in that day, and that could be something as small as I got one of my five a day today. And it doesn't have to be oh I've submitted my massive thesis, you know, that's a great thing to do. But it's important that the goals are small and achievable as well. It's also important to ask yourself every day, am I okay? If I'm not okay, who can reach out to? Who do I want to speak to? And then check in on your friends as well. Make sure they're okay. And we have spoken a little bit about that today as well. And I suppose the most important part of all is now that you've had that thought process, switch off, recharge and get ready to start the next day. And it's so, so important that we look after ourselves and we do create that work-life balance that works for us and everyone's balance is going to be different. But it is important to have that time for yourself and you're not constantly consumed in coursework or work, but you've got time just to chill and reflect and look after your own wellbeing. I would just like to kind of round up and thank you guys so much for joining me today. I really enjoyed this conversation. It's helped me quite a lot as well, because I can struggle with finding the work life balance. So I really enjoy the conversation and getting some tips myself from you guys. So thank you. I really appreciate that. And to any of our listeners as well if they are struggling. Remember that we do have a university support system available to speak to you. We've got our university helpline as well. If our services face to face or over the phone are shut, you can contact the helpline through the weekends and the evenings if you can't speak to one of our student support advisors or the counselling service. There is always someone there if you need to chat, there's loads of resources. Thank you so much for listening as well and take care and I'll see you next time. Thank you.

**Voiceover** [00:39:43] This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.