

Hey Hoosiers! welcome to the all careers considered podcast where we explore the amazing things you can do during and after college with your liberal arts degree. I'm your host Maria hambone a career coach for undergraduate and graduate students at Indiana University's College of Arts and Sciences I am so excited to bring you all our first cross-over episode Oda I am here with Rachel Gerber and Nick Lane from the major choices podcast at the Career Development Center.

Maria: Hi Rachel, Hi Nathan! I'm so glad you're on! Thanks so much for coming in with us today.

Rachel: Hey Maria!

Nathan: Hey Maria, good to see you!

M: it's so good to see you both thanks so much for being here. I am so excited to have both Rachel and Nathan here not only because they're fabulous career coaches at the Career Development Center and fabulous casters, shout out make sure to listen to their podcast major choices, but also because we're going to be talking about a kind of you know tough topic today right guys?

R: Absolutely yeah!

N: Yeah!

M: We're talking about graduation today and especially our seniors who are experiencing the loss of a really big celebration and a really big moment in their lives as they graduate college and some of whom are the first members of their families to graduate college, isn't that right?

N: Yeah.

R: It's a big one it's a big loss absolutely you know when we have looked forward to this day and we put all of this effort of energy and anticipation for these big milestones to then sort of not be able to go through it that's that's a huge loss.

N: Yeah and it's a loss that is you know compounded by so many layers of things you know, the expectation that you've held within yourself, and the expectation that your family has held for this moment and then all this uncertainty about the future on

top of that and you know I think it's a super important moment just to yeah to really listen within yourself about how you're feeling right now so I'm really glad we're having this conversation with you Maria.

M: Yeah, yeah thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Rachel and Nathan are both great people to help us think about this. Rachel is, in addition to being a career coach Rachel is an ordained minister and in addition to being a career coach Nathan is a therapist so that's one of the reasons why I thought they might be great guests to have our podcast today as we're thinking about, you know, feeling bummed about not celebrating our graduation this, impacting our outlook and motivation and what comes next from here and as we're exploring ideas for seniors to celebrate your a few even during this Covid and social distancing stuff. What thoughts do you have Nathan or Rachel, you know I'm talking to a lot of seniors now who are bummed about fellow celebrating graduation, what's that like what what can you say for them?

N: You know I think that if there's one thing that I've really been noticing as I just kind of watch social media throughout this experience and talk to students is that I think there's kind of a like you know, there's kind of a amount of optimism that some people are feeling like they have to kind of force out maybe even you know like like they kind of have good optimism because it feels safer than nothing but I think this is a moment where beyond like beyond anything like a place to start this conversation is simply saying like if you're feeling sad if you're feeling disappointed if you're feeling overwhelmed like it is completely acceptable okay and understandable that you're feeling that way and it's important just to start this conversation to just say it's really okay, that you are sad like sometimes, we revert straight to the “but I'm gonna be okay, everything's fine everything's fine”, but it's okay if before we we go there it's okay that we have to need to acknowledge that we're very sad and just really feeling the feelings about this

R: Absolutely Nathan. I would just sort of continue along that same thread and treat yourself accordingly, you know what does it mean to offer yourself self compassion self care at this moment where we really do need to extend I think ourselves a little or a lot of empathy because it is a genuine loss you know we've had all of these expectations and that's a lot different than the reality of what it turned into and so I think you know really acknowledging our true feelings and and being kind to ourselves I think is going to really help us um transition through this time.

M: What do you think acknowledging those feelings and being kind to ourselves right now could look like for different people?

N: Hmm, I think that if you're right now going through this experience and maybe even for the sheer like anxiety you're feeling and sometimes when we're feeling that kind of like ringing/buzzing about all the uncertainty is sometimes hard to even get to that experience of feeling and if that's what you might be dealing with something that... piece of advice that I've been giving now quite a bit is a couple times day take a deep breath in take a deep breath out and write down on a sheet of paper how you're feeling and it's okay if maybe that is vague and uncertain and maybe you don't even understand what you write down but there's a power to a: breathing and there's a power to b: dedicating your thoughts to a place that's not just saying it out loud. Maybe writing it down on a sheet of paper or a sticky note or like a you know a note to yourself in your phone because when we start to identify the way we're feeling. It's important to not only see how we're feeling but then see the trend in how we're feeling a span of time and so that's a way to just kind of check in acknowledge and again if you're doing any exercise like this I think it's important that we don't need we're not doing any of this to change the way we feel we're doing this to simply acknowledge the way that we already are feeling.

R: Yeah well, a practice that I've have found really helpful during this just, time of Covid, I know I'm not graduating, but think we all also who are going through this Covid experience are experiencing loss and grief in different ways, for myself I found that getting out in nature is so important. You know, it's not only a centering and a grounding but it's also an expanding and and I've found that as I go on walks and especially if I can get you know into the woods you know to see the trees, those kind of things just sort of like root and ground me in a in a way that's um I don't know helps me not necessarily to detach from the feelings that I am feeling but sort of to help me find a way to, feel like it's manageable you know, as I can sort of see the sky and I actually heard there was a scientific study that that said... I don't have the details of it right now but they said even if you know, you're near in the middle of New York City and actually finding green space is difficult to come by, even just looking out of a window or even a picture of nature can actually evoke those same types of feelings as actually being in nature itself so, depending you're wherever you find yourself today yeah, nature can be a real healer.

M: I love these tips, thank you so much this is this is helpful as much for me I think perhaps for some of our seniors and for some of our students, so I really appreciate that we can spend this time focusing on our feelings and also I also like to look ahead you know when seniors and our students are going to be listening to this podcast it's going to be a week or two after graduation and I want to think about you know as much as we want to take care of ourselves create space for our feelings and allow ourselves to feel whatever it is we feel without trying to change that perhaps it's also the time to celebrate

our achievements and to think about doing that in a creative way that acknowledges the social distancing parameters that we might still be under in two weeks from now. What are some of your ideas for ways that seniors could celebrate their really big achievement of finishing their college degree

R: Those are some great questions and oh my goodness, you're absolutely right. You know as students you have still done all of the requirements to graduate and this is a huge milestone so you know, I would just say actually consider a virtual graduation I know some you know places are actually having opportunities where there's you know an online ceremony that friends and family and yourself can sort of go to but also what does it mean to create sort of maybe more of an intimate graduation ceremony where maybe you invite people who are significant and played a significant role in your life family friends neighbors to is to a quote, unquote graduation space of your own and maybe even invite them to share words of congratulations or blessings or maybe a picture or a memory of them that they have of you to to launch you into this this new new expansive future that you have. That hasn't changed and sometimes you have to just sort of make that yourself to make that it's a special thing so that's one thing that I thought about. Nathan what about you?

N: Well and I think just to jump off of what you just said Rachel, the ritual of commencement which unfortunately we don't get to share together is very much exactly that it is a ritual and any ritual be it maybe a, you know, like a good luck little thing that you do maybe like I know personally I think about myself every time I walk to Dunn meadow for some strange reason I always take the sidewalk on the left and I've kind of turned in to do a ritual for myself like we all have little rituals we do and you know this is a ritual in that way too and all the ritual really has to be to hold significance is something where we dedicate time and energy to the intentionality of it right so anything you do with intentionality, if it is you know sharing a special moment or sharing a special meal or maybe going to a restaurant that holds significance to you and just pausing to acknowledge this, because this is a huge deal you have finished your you know your undergraduate degree which is a substantial accomplishment one of the you know I'd say most people hold it in probably the top five in their life and so you know, whatever really, you know, maybe it's even an exercise in pausing and reflecting on what does it mean for this to be significant what do I need that to be like could it be yeah like a zoom night with some friends maybe you could even dress up you know make it into a party yeah and anything like that you know it's like a drive-by graduation party.

R: That's exactly what I was gonna say that has been some of the most fabulous things I think that have come out of this COVID is just seeing the creativity that people have

and all of these like parades and graduations sort of you know celebrations has been really really cool and I was also gonna say it but also like these visuals and I think some of that what that ritual does is it can also provide us a visual of remembering these accomplishments you know, so get a yard sign put it out there decorate your front door get some sidewalk chalk you know say I've graduated you know sometimes all of those those visual reminders and visual cues can also sort of be our celebratory status.

M: I love how that builds community in your neighborhood so that your neighbors can see you're celebrating of your graduation your neighbors know that you are a graduate they might be able to give you a wave they might be able to give you thumbs up from walking their dogs showers good job to you that kind of thing I also love the idea of even doing a photo shoot on... with your iPhone right? Or, with somebody who your social distancing with you know get dressed up either they're just in fancy clothes that you have or if you have a graduation attire that you were going to wear for the ceremony take some pictures of yourself and that share that on social media you are totally welcome to share your accomplishment right now both physically in the real world and digitally online with your community. I think that's a wonderful idea. So as we move toward wrapping up, you know, Nathan, Rachel, do you have any last thoughts that you want to share with students about this milestone and about your hard work and achievement?

N: Yeah well first of all just congratulations you know Rachel and I mostly work with students as they're entering the college experience so it's really really cool to get to pause here for a moment and say congratulations to people as they're departing it you know I think one thing is we're thinking about those kind of moments that we might have lost because of this I think that you know I'm reflecting right now as we're talking about my undergraduate institution and how I've been gone from it for 14 years and I've been back more than ten times, so just because you didn't get your picture in front of the sample gates in May, it doesn't mean that that can't be a special moment when maybe you come back for homecoming in a year or two and you know remembering that just because this experience didn't get to happen on campus IU is still going to be a significant place for you forever and coming back to this campus will hold that meaning and really they're you know in a moment where nothing seems normal and we still inevitably find ourselves I find myself accidentally saying oh and things return to normal just reminding ourselves that we do have the agency and the power within our own life that we are currently finding the new normal and so again letting that be whatever experience you want to be but also remembering that in a moment where it feels like we don't have very much control over things, we are defining our concept of normal and I think that really goes back to that stuff that you probably worked on with the career

coach which is deciding what your values are and deciding how you want to relate to this world and also seeing how your unique strengths gifts and skills can you know emerge in this new normal that we are all collectively creating right now.

R: Absolutely.. for myself this COVID time has been a real eye-opener into what is it that I want to allow in my life right now because everything else has been just really stripped away you know what I mean? It's down to these essentials and I think as we kind of go back to with things opening up to I can really create the life that I want versus just being reactionary to just what is expected or whatever so I think this is a great opportunity to sort of look ahead but about graduation I just want, graduates, you to just allow yourself to receive this milestone and even though it might look different than the circumstance that you are expecting to just literally take a moment and allow yourself to feel this momentous time to celebrate your hard work and accomplishment and not just jump onto the next thing right? You're going to really create a space to receive this significant experience in your life fully, so congratulations, I am so proud of you and I do wish you all the best as you continue into your future.

M: Thank you so much, Rachel thank you so much Nathan for talking with us today. Hoosiers, if you want to follow up with Nathan or Rachel I'm going to include their IU email addresses in the show notes but you can email them if you want to talk about this a little bit more if you want to ask them some questions about their ideas for how you can process these feelings around graduation or for how you can tell a great graduation, They're here for you as much as we are at the Walter center for career achievement I really encourage you to check out their major choices podcast. It's a great show I'm really enjoying listening to it and I'm learning a lot and thank you both for coming in today. I really appreciate it!

R: Thanks Maria

N: Hey thanks so much Maria. Congratulations again seniors!