

Mayo Clinic Q & A - Dr. Abu Dabrh - Wellbeing

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

mayo clinic, challenges, wellness coach, life, health, wellness coaching, wellness, journey, explore, goals, important, compassionate, partnering, set, resilience, medical school, clinical setting, intention, improve, understanding

SPEAKERS

Dr. Halena Gazelka, Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh, Narrator

N Narrator 00:01
Coming up on Mayo Clinic Q&A,


D Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 00:03
Well-being is a journey. It's a dynamic situation. We need to think about what potential challenges that we might face. Generally, one of the biggest challenges that we see, and often they're unaddressed, is the balance or the harmony between what our life demands are and what is our personal capacity to take on those challenges.


N Narrator 00:25
Well-being is fundamental to our health and overall happiness. Having a strong and well adapted sense of well-being can help us improve our outlook on life and have a positive influence on others.


D Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 00:36
But we need to allow ourselves to be compassionate to ourselves and to others. These are challenging times. So, being kind towards each other, being compassionate towards each other and towards ourselves. It is important.


D Dr. Halena Gazelka 00:53
Welcome everyone to Mayo Clinic Q&A. I'm your host, Dr. Halena Gazelka. Whether you suffer from a chronic condition that affects your quality of life, or you have bad habits you'd like to change, a health and wellness coach could help you and what a great time to think about it as


change, a health and wellness coach could help you and what a great time to think about it as we start 2022. Health coaches are professionals who can be trained and integrated in health care settings to help support caring for and giving patients skills and tools to improve their well-being. Here to discuss being well with your well-being today is Mayo Clinic physician, researcher, and board-certified health and wellness coach in integrative medicine and health at Mayo Clinic in Florida, Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh. Thanks for being here today, Moain.


 Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 01:38
Great to be with you, Halena.


 Dr. Halena Gazelka 01:40
I'm so glad to have you here to talk about this topic. We talk so much about illness, and so, it's fun to talk about promoting our wellness.


 Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 01:50
Indeed.

 Dr. Halena Gazelka 01:51
Moain, when we say well-being what does that encompass? What do we mean by that?

 Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 01:57
Well-being is such a great word that encompasses so many aspects. And there is a lot of debate about what is the exact definition. However, we like to think of it as the state of being good within yourself and how you feel about your living. So, this truly has the word divided into two words, well being. And that's really simply where it comes down to.

 Dr. Halena Gazelka 02:25
I like that. Well being, a being who is well. It's good.

 Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 02:30
Absolutely.

 Dr. Halena Gazelka 02:31
When we're focusing on well-being why are intention, accountability and commitment all important concepts?

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 02:39

Those are important because when we think about well-being we like to think about what are the aspects of our well-being. So, those are not only limited to our physical and emotional, or psychological, they also extend beyond that to social, spiritual occupational, vocational, cultural, any and every aspect that affects our life and well-being. And when we think about those, we like to think about how can we approach them. So, we really have to define first, what is our motivation to make this change. What is the outcome where we would like to be in our life, and then as we set the motivation and decide about the direction that we would like to explore, the step that is important after that is to create accountability to making that change. And that is work in progress. And when we become accountable, and we become committed to the process, that journey sets itself moving forward.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 03:46

Well, that's wonderful. I like that idea of looking forward and knowing where you want to arrive so that you can plan the pace and the strategy to get there. It's good. Moain, what are some of the challenges that an individual might experience as they attempt to take care of their well-being? And how do you as a health and wellness coach assist them with that?

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 04:09

Well-being is a journey. It's a dynamic situation. It depends on the day and now, and the future. And as we set intentions and become accountable and committed to the process, we need to think about what potential challenges that we might face. Generally, one of the biggest challenges that we see, and often they're unaddressed, is the balance or the harmony between what our life demands are and what is our personal capacity to take on those changes and challenges. So, really understanding what is the, in simple words, the supply and demand. Knowing what is on our plate, and what are the resources that we have also within ourselves and in our surroundings that we can take on those challenges. So, that's one of the biggest challenges. There are other things. We go back to the work we said earlier is setting the intention to where do we want to be on this journey. If I want to lose weight, what is the purpose? Why am I deciding to lose weight? If I want to eat better, what is the ultimate goal here? And it's not really just the goal, it's the process and where we would like to reach as a destination. Another thing, we have these challenges of setting this all or nothing. If we can't do it all, then we're not doing it at all. So, we need to be more compassionate towards ourselves about making those small changes. And those small changes build up and eventually lead to bigger changes.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 05:46

You know, I like what you said about supply and demand. I often tell my chronic pain patients that you start each day with a bucket of energy, and you have to decide how you're going to spend it. It's not going to get any larger during the day. So, you have to ration it out. Maybe

you save it for something important you're doing that day. But the same kind of concept applies here. It's very interesting.

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 06:08

Very thoughtful, very well said. Exactly.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 06:11

Moain, we often hear the term resilience used. How do you define it?

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 06:16

So, resilience is a term that really, I like to use the metaphor, it's how we can be the Phoenix. How can we arise from the ashes? Life throws so many challenges at us, and resilience is the ability to cope and come back and rebound from those challenges. So, if we are faced with some challenges that just kind of forces us to sit down to pause to maybe fall, it's how can we stand up and rise again and become stronger and learn from it to move forward. And that's really simply what resilience is.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 06:57

Tell us about health and wellness coaching. What is it, and who is it for?

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 07:02

So, a health and wellness coach really is a professional who has been trained on understanding how to partner with a person or a patient depends on the context and the setting. And creating an understanding of what matters to that person, partnering with them to help them identify their vision to living their best life, and then really how to move forward, how to explore and experiment with strategies and using evidence-based strategies to achieve that. Centering on motivation, centering on accountability and commitment, as we mentioned earlier. In clinical care settings and healthcare settings, coaching is relatively still a new process. And it has been integrated because we do believe that a patient's life is still a person's life. We don't only focus on illness care, we need to look at the 360 view, illness and wellness care. We need to understand our patient's context of life, their values, their preferences outside the clinical setting, and how we make sure that their health care plans fit within their lives and not the opposite. So, that is really a part of how health and wellness coaching is becoming crucially important, and as new players in the game partnering with other health care professionals in the clinical setting.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 08:04

You know, we have just been through a busy holiday season, and we're starting a fresh, brand

new year of 2022. I have often said that I do not like to set resolutions any longer the older I get, but I do like to have goals in mind. So, what advice do you have for people who want to make some positive changes in their well-being in 2022?

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 08:53

You brought up an important point. People are divided about am I a resolution person or not? So, and I say whomever you are, power to you, that's the thing. If you are a resolutions person, set your resolutions. If you are not and you take it one day at a time, there's nothing wrong with that. So, what matters is how can you move forward and continue to move forward. So, I think one of the things that I encourage patients when I work with them with my partners in health, I say, think about why you would like to do this first. Where would you like to be, and sometimes we get stuck in understanding that purpose. And I would encourage you to allow yourself to explore that. You don't have to find exact purpose to set a goal. It's okay to say, you know what, I'm going to explore it a little bit. I have this where I would like to be, but maybe it's not clear yet, and that's okay. So, being intentional about where we'd like to go and allowing ourselves the room for exploration. The next step is really setting the goal. Thinking about what are the goals and processes that we would like to change. What are the habits that we would like to change? What are the habits that we would like to maintain or improve? There's an acronym out there has been from research that has been done and is called SMART goal setting. And that is an acronym that comes from being specific, setting goals that are measurable, attainable, realistic, and really thinking about the time that you're going to spend working on these. So, those are some things that I would like to think about as we set the intention to move forward with improving our well-being.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 10:45

So, sometimes goals have to be practical because you have to fit them in with the rest of your life.

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 10:50

That is important. The context of our life is important. And often in healthcare, we forget about that. We forget that our patients, we have other things that happen in our lives. And it's important to think not just from our illness care, but also from our wellness care, what happens outside the clinical setting, how can we bring those together to match our values, our preferences, our context of life. Those are important, and they should be accounted for.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 11:23

Moain, I'm curious how you became interested in integrative medicine and health and wellness coaching.

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 11:29

It is a journey in its own merits quite honestly. Growing up I've always been curious about well-

it is a journey in its own merits, quite honestly. Growing up I've always been curious about well-being and wellness and health promotion. And actually going into medical school was truly by chance. I was having a conversation with my father who was asking me about what is my intention, where I would like to be. And I said, I really want to do something that has something that sets me in a path that I can serve people. And my mother always taught me that whatever you do find joy and meaning in what you do. So, I decided to go into any field that will serve those two. And he looked at me and he said, I think you will be good with helping people in the medical field. So, I made an agreement with him, and I said, I will make that, I will go into medical school if you quit smoking. And he decided to quit smoking on the spot that day. So, that was really what started this journey. And as part of going into medical school he encouraged me to go into what used to be a course in health promotion. And that was really kind of the baseline to how I experienced coaching and motivation and changing habits. Which later on as I joined Mayo Clinic, I was given the opportunity to be trained and become a health and wellness coach along the way.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 13:00

That's a wonderful story. Thanks for sharing it with us. Moain, any last words of wisdom for our listeners today?

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 13:08

Yes. Thank you. It's been really wonderful exploring this together. I think really what we need to allow ourselves to be is to be compassionate towards ourselves and towards others as we are exploring. These are challenging times, and they will continue to be to a certain extent. We're learning more, we're exploring more. And it's okay to make mistakes. It's okay to say, I don't know. And it's okay to ask the questions. So, being kind towards each other, being compassionate towards each other and towards ourselves is important and well-being is a journey. There will be progress, there will be success, and there will be setbacks. And that's part of it. So, I hope everyone finds that purpose and finds the the resources and the support to lean on each other during these difficult times.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 14:10

Thank you so much for being here today, Moain.

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Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh 14:12

Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

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Dr. Halena Gazelka 14:14

Our thanks to Dr. Moain Abu Dabrh for being here with us today to discuss health and wellness. He's an integrative medicine specialist at Mayo Clinic. I hope that you learned something from him today. I know that I did. We wish each of you a wonderful day and a wonderful year.

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Narrator 14:32

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