

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for April 5, 2021**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about transitioning back to normal and look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

A year ago, Dave Hollis wrote this social media post: ““Hear this: In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to. If things go back exactly as they were, we will have missed the opportunity to take the good from this bad. The gift nobody has asked for is sitting here for us all to open — an opportunity to do some housekeeping in where we focus, who we spend time with, what we consume, how we work, what matters, and most importantly what doesn't. Take notes. We're getting a lesson we cannot forget when things return to normal.”

It seems strange to think that we could have been contemplating returning to normal on March 25, 2020, but we did not know then what we know now.

This post got my colleague, Patrice Powers-Barker, Family and Consumer Sciences educator in Lucas County, thinking about how we should approach our transitions back to “normal.” We were able to teach a virtual workshop together last week about anticipating a successful transition.

There are plenty of expected transitions in in our lives. In fact, many of them are even anticipated like graduating from school or getting married or retiring. We know life has ups and downs, but overall, we anticipate a smooth path.

But there are life transitions that are not expected. These include unexpected loss (job loss, loss due to violence, loss of a child or other young family member), illness or health problems, accidents, war, or natural disaster. There is much research about healthy coping during these “non-normative” or unanticipated life transitions.

Acknowledge the Good and the Bad: One exercise you can practice is the “Rose, Thorn, Bud” activity. List a positive thing in your life, a negative thing, and something you are looking forward to. Research has shown benefits of practicing gratitude, naming life challenges, and the value of looking forward to something. Giving thanks can make you happier. Naming negative

emotions is one way to make them more manageable. Looking forward to an event can bring happiness especially in the time leading up to it.

**Plan Ahead:** People have been hesitant to make plans in the last year for fear that they wouldn't be able to follow through. But there are plenty of things that we can do to look forward to the future. Planning ahead is considered proactive coping, because we are taking steps to modify or avoid a stressful event before it happens. Even the practice of meal planning and preparation for the next week is a healthy way to plan ahead. Also the anticipation of the activity brings us pleasure, so don't be afraid to make plans for a vacation or visit to family in the near future.

**Be in the Moment:** It may seem contradictory to say both plan ahead and be in the moment. But there is certainly a way to balance and practice both. Author Chris Bergstrom describes the value of the short practice of using your senses to notice what is around you. Simply take a few minutes to notice three things you see, three things you hear, and three things you feel. When you tune in to your senses, you are effectively living in the now, and you give your busy brain a much-needed break. Your brain focuses on whatever it is you experience with your senses instead of mulling over worries and to-do lists.

We all go through life transitions we are not anticipating, and we can seek healthy ways to cope with these unexpected changes. As Whoopi Goldberg once said: "Normal is nothing more than a cycle on a washing machine."

The "East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series" continues this Thursday, April 8 with "Bury Seeds, Not Stress." A total of 10 webinars and 3 field days are being held through July on a variety of financial, production, and home-related topics to help women in agriculture.

Remaining webinar topics include reaching your educational goals, knowing when to call a veterinarian, and women in agriculture communicating with men in agriculture. The May field day will be in Carroll County and focus on raising livestock on 5 acres or less. Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs or to find a link to recorded programs as well.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!