

Transcript:

## Episode Seven: Optimism for a Post Quarantine World

**Malak:** Hi everyone, I'm Malak, the Democracy and Liberation Coordinator

**Tony:** Hello I'm Tony Magaia, I'm the Equality and Liberation Officer and incoming Liberation Officer (I just changed the name), same position for a second term

**Malak:** Yay! We should do pronouns as well actually, my pronouns are They/Them

**Tony:** Yeah my pronouns are He/They

**Malak:** So Tony, how has lockdown life been treating you?

**Tony:** First week or so I was literally not doing anything, just waking up and staying in bed as long as possible, and yeah just procrastinating to the max. But then I was like yeah let's get a routine in, and try something out. Then I started to see my Aries side coming out a bit more (if you like Astrology, I'm an Aries) and I've been doing a lot more. So I wake up and do morning work outs and morning stretches, later I try to play the guitar, I've been trying to learn how to do handstands as well!

**Malak:** Ooo!

**Tony:** Yeah I'm legit telling you, I've been doing a bit too much, I might crash at some point, hopefully not! But yeah that's what I've been doing, and I've been working at the same time, don't think I haven't been working. How's it going for you?

**Malak:** See, I'm the opposite, it's funny because I'm also an Aries, but for me it's the opposite, because before lockdown I was doing quite a few things. I do this job, I do quite a few workshops, I used to read every day (I set myself a reading challenge for this year), I would do yoga regularly – since lockdown has begun, it's destroyed my routine and I'm not doing anything.

Literally all I am doing is working and eating and then sleeping, then loads of time in procrastination. I need to start building up a routine again, but I think I've just accepted that it's a little bit chaotic right now and to just give myself the space to cope with this new situation rather than force a routine on myself and then potentially cracking – as you just mentioned.

**Tony:** Yeah definitely, I feel that's a very good point that you've made, because like there's these things on Twitter saying 'if you don't come out with a new skill or something you didn't do this quarantine period right', but that's a lot of pressure. A lot of people probably don't have the means or it's a very new situation, nobody I would say in our life time has been in this situation. I think the main thing



to say is that 'I woke up, my family is okay, I've been able to talk to people' and just relish in the small things

**Malak:** Yeah definitely, I remember reading a really good Tweet that said 'you're not working from home, you're trying to work at home during a crisis' and I think that it really summed up my concerns about the discourse that's happening and what you're talking about regarding picking up a new skill or being productive, and seeing being at home as a new opportunity for growth.

Even if you're not personally ill, or your family haven't fallen ill from corona virus, or you haven't lost your job, you know, even if your life is relatively stable at home, if you feel as though your life has been turned upside down it's because it has. That's really helped manage my expectations and what I'm expecting of myself during this time

**Tony:** Yeah definitely, and it's that thing of accepting the situation

**Malak:** But speaking about lockdown have you noticed any positive changes to your lifestyle or your attitude since lockdown has started?

**Tony:** I'd say yeah! One thing I'll say about me is that I'm not a very communicative person, I'm very hard to get in touch or keep in touch with, but I feel during this period I've been able to talk to people more, and keep tabs on friends and particularly family with them being back in Mozambique. Now we are in this period we are finding new ways of communicating and almost communicating every day instead of previously once every two weeks

**Malak:** Yeah

**Tony:** What about you?

**Malak:** I think I've found this experience to be really humbling! I'm finding gratitude in that humbling experience. Like I used to have a very busy lifestyle, and now I don't due to lockdown, but I think it's really brought me back to basics and simplified my lifestyle a lot. So as much as I am looking forward to post lockdown motives, I do want to go out, but I am enjoying the simplicity, and I'm trying to find a role in that. Rather than thinking "I can't do X, Y and Z", I'm thinking about re-establishing the routine I had and dedicating more time to that sort of stuff.

So thinking about positive changes, how do you think or hope these will continue when social distancing laws end?

**Tony:** A lot of changes have been made during this period, and thinking about access ability in particular for students, many of the things have changed to online and these are many things that students with access needs have been asking for. They've been asking for so long and we've just been able to see that Universities up and down the country have been able to do it so I hope that this is one of the changes that will keep on going and it just shows that these things



are able to be done, and it makes me feel a bit queezy that it's down to corona virus for things to start moving and for there to be change.

It's a "good thing" but at the same time it's infuriating this had to happen, what about you?

**Malak:** You make a fantastic point about accessibility and what disabled students have been asking for. I know from a Voice perspective it's been really interesting to see and imagine new ways of upholding student democracy. Especially if this lockdown continues for the next few months, we can't just postpone Student Council indefinitely, so looking at new ways we do scrutiny panels, and new ways we can do Student Council panels and how we can count votes and things like that.

And whilst this is responding to a crisis, I think these things could be really useful as well, and while we won't need to hold student councils entirely remotely once lockdown is over, we might be able to create new procedures about bi-laws and people voting by proxy for example. Or can someone vote if they are unable to go to council? Because right now if you are unable to go you are unable to vote, so I'm quite excited to see some of the new procedures that we start during this time and how we continue those post-lockdown so our democracy is far reaching and as accessible as possible.

**Tony:** Yes definitely, and now doing things online, it gives a bit of optimism for the next day, so like with our online awards and things, it indicates that life is still going on and you can wake up and expect something going on tomorrow.

It gives you a bit of an upbeat optimistic view of the next day because you know you have a couple of things planned already. And yeah looking forward, as you were saying, hopefully we come out of this as soon as possible (please!), and yeah we can introduce these new digital things and make them more accessible.

What personal aims do you have when we leave this post quarantine world?  
What things are you excited to do?

**Malak:** I'm really excited to eat out again!

**Tony:** Oh, trust me!

**Malak:** Tony you know me quite well, you know this to be true, I am not a social butterfly, I like staying in my house, and I'm not someone who dresses up much either, I put myself together especially if I'm coming to work, but I don't necessarily dress up-up. But I keep telling my friends, every time we go out post lockdown, I'm going to be in full make-up, hair done, hijab done, outfit on – yeah I'm really, really excited to go out and have a reason to dress up! Because my birthday, that was on Monday, was the first time that I actually put on a nice



outfit and put on make up since the lockdown happened. I felt a lot better for it, I'm really looking forward to everything.

Psychologically this is considered trauma, and being able to adjust to post lockdown life again in the same way that we had to adjust to lock down, we will have to do this after lockdown as well. I'm just making sure I'm well adjusted to do that as possible

**Tony:** In my head I'm like this lockdown will be over, like instant you know, like a snap your fingers, and all the shops are open, everything is open again. But no I think it's going to be very slow steps and as you said just us adjusting every single thing in this lockdown.

You know what I've been doing sometimes? When I'm going out to Sainsbury's to do my weekly shop or something, I've thought you know I'm going to go full out! So I've been putting on my shoes, nice pants, my nicest clothes and going to Sainsbury's – you know I love my fashion as well! It boosts you and makes you feel good even if it's just a 10 minute walk to the store, it changes the entire walk and stuff.

Just being able to go out dancing as well – I want to go out dancing so bad! I love going out to a nice gay bar you know, and living my best life.

**Malak:** Yeah I really hope lockdown is over before Black Pride!

**Tony:** Trust me, it's so good! I'll actually cry

**Malak:** Maybe we should do a Leicester Union social for Black Pride if it manages to happen.

**Tony:** That sounds nice! I would jump on that!

To round things up a little bit, what would be your advice to students to staying a little more optimistic for the future or just the next day?

**Malak:** I really feel for students! Number one, this is going to end at some point and life will maybe not go back to the way it was before, but it will go back to something you are more familiar with, and it's important to remember that.

But also, be kind to yourself, and you should always be kind to yourself, but it's even more important that you do that now. Not necessarily a message of optimism but I can't be optimistic if I can't acknowledge the feelings I am feeling in this moment.

**Tony:** That's very important yeah!

**Malak:** As counter intuitive as it sounds, I encourage you to sit with your negative feelings and acknowledge the new feelings and the difficult moments for you,



and process that and not act as though you have to carry on like everything is normal.

**Tony:** Yeah that's very good advice, and as you were saying about accepting the situation, it literally changes a lot of things because like myself as well, I was in the same situation taking it day by day and then having to accept that this is a very s\*\*\* situation, and I think it's an important thing to do because then we can start building up on things and being kind to yourself because you're still students at the same time with exams coming up.

Don't put yourself in the situation where you don't feel as though you are doing enough, because again no one has been in this situation and we are all trying to adapt the best as possible, so if there was a day where you didn't study and procrastinated a bit more, just accept it happened and the next day you will work a bit better. If it's something you can do, add small things that will give you a boost in the day, like timing that you will say make a smoothie tomorrow and have the satisfaction of achieving that! The small things can change your day completely.

**Malak:** I really liked the point you made about achieving small tasks, and that's actually I'm going to start doing, and something I encourage students to do, just set out to achieve one task every day if you are struggling, especially if it was something you did before lockdown but aren't doing now. Thank you for sharing!

**Tony:** If it is things that have worked for me, share with the world, you know! Do you have any closure remarks?

**Malak:** I hope you are getting the support that you need, and I hope that this podcast is helpful!

**Tony:** Please stay safe, and bye!

