



Holly Morris

How To Stay Positive When Surrounded By Negativity

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Welcome back to the optimal performance summit. I'm your host, Dr. Patrick Porter. And today I have a very special guest. She's an award winning television reporter. She's from Washington, DC. She has been reporting there since 1998. She's also a graduate of Duke University in 1993. with a degree in civil engineering. She anchors them the morning newscast as well as good day DC show I'm talking about is Holly Morris. Welcome to the summit Holly.

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It is my pleasure to be here. Clearly, I was a child prodigy. I can't possibly be that old.

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Right? That's exactly, exactly. I mean, it doesn't seem that old to me. So you're, you're

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I agree. I guess it's all relative.

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Yeah. So one of the things we want to talk about, we're kind of turning the tables on you



because you're the one usually presenting the news and sharing it with people but we thought, what could we learn from you that maybe successful people use to stay connected to the world but don't be consumed by don't get overwhelmed by it? So just starting off, I mean, you you've been you I'm sure you've been putting in a lot of hours and reporting on what's happening. With what's just happened with our, our economy, as well as our medical conditions and all of those things. So how do people successful people consume the news? Do you think?

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You know, it's interesting? Because I mean, you know, I've been in news for so long, but you could just take 2020 It's been one heck of a year and a lot to consume on many different levels. Any one thing could be difficult, but putting them all together, it's really been difficult. I will admit that. So you do draw upon your ability to compartmentalize. But when you're in the news, you're informed and so you have to allow yourself to react to it. But I've, I've had years of dealing with bad news. And you have to make a choice to not let it affect you. And yet still have compassion towards it, if that makes sense.

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Yes. I mean, when when people when you experience all of this negativity, I mean, because you're basically reporting on what's happening out there. So you're, you have to know it, you have to really be up to speed. How do you not let that negativity affected when you speak with other people? I mean, cuz sometimes if you're bombarded with negativity, sometimes that shows up in relationships or in other activities.

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It definitely does. And I will tell you that I believe day in and day out, that positivity is a choice. It's a mindset. And so even if it doesn't come natural to you, it's something that you can actively work on. And in terms of being surrounded by information that is always negative. And a lot of times that's what the News is. I believe that positivity comes with perspective. And so sometimes when I feel overwhelmed by all that is negative. There's three questions that I asked myself, first and foremost, what am I grateful for? Right? Because gratitude is the seed that blossoms into positivity. And so no matter how bad it is, there's always something for which you can be grateful. I also will do something as simple when it just seems like everything in the world is going wrong. Think about what are the things that I can control? There's a lot I can't control. But when I think about what I can control, then I feel a little more hopeful. Right? Excuse me. And then the last question, let me take a quick drink here.

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I've got it. But of course, I've already been talking Excuse me. I'm so sorry. Yeah.



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All the time. Right.

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thing that didn't happen on the news this morning.

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The third question that I always ask myself when I felt like there's a lot that's wrong? Or what are three things I did right today? You know, can I just really figure out three things where I made a good choice I made, you know, thought about things in a positive way. And that can help really redirect your thoughts. Yeah, no,

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that's great. So those are great, great tools. So when right now we still don't know what's happening out there. In because of, you know, like in our state of North Carolina, he went back to having to wear a mask in different places and things of that nature. And of course, like my wife doesn't like to wear a mask. So she just had, we have a grocery store here. Here's here that you can actually shop online, they deliver the groceries to you. So I said just do that. I mean, you know if they screw up a little bit, just order again or whatever, because you never know what's happening. But when you when you stay on We have to stay connected because obviously we need to know what's going on with within the news. But how can we when we don't know the outcome or what's going on in the future. I think your your your tip about staying in the present, where can you control? But is there any other techniques about how we consume the news that you might be able to help us with?

05:18

Well, first and foremost, as someone who works in the news every day, you need to limit it. You need to limit the amount of time that you watch the news, because we live in this 24 seven news cycle. And not only is it you know, on TV, it's on our phones. It's accessible all the time. So you have to literally, just like you would limit your kids screen time you need to limit your news time. I also think that it is really important in this day and age to be careful about your news source. And I say that with full transparency with the network that I work on. All networks have their bias. That's the fact of the matter. So I think in this world where we live in where news very much is opinion based, it's really important to find those sources that are based on fact. And sometimes that's hard work. And it takes more work now than it used to be, because I think news used to be more objective than it is. But it's really important to find that. And if you can't find that, then my next suggestion is just to make sure you search for balance. If if you are a conservative person, and you like conservative news sources, you also need to make sure



that you watch the more liberal ones as well so that you get all sides and then you can make the best informed decision. But I don't think it's healthy, to just continually reaffirm what you already think. Because then I really don't think you will be the best informed

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So what kind of strategies to use Because I know when I had a chance, obviously to meet with you, which was great and have a talk with you and your husband and go out to dinner and, and you were telling me about your schedule, which I don't think most people realize. They think you pop out of bed at six o'clock and you do the news, you know, or seven o'clock. So maybe you can tell people about you know your schedule what you do, because it kind of blew me away that you have to, you know, get up in the middle of the night really to start your day.

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Yeah, like, oh, dark 30 for sure. So I get up at 2am every day and I'm at the studio at three o'clock. And then we go on the air at four. And we are on the air straight until 11am. And then we have a post show meeting and then so my day is over around noon time. So I have put in my full day before most people have lunch. Oh, which is definitely an interesting schedule. But so this is one of those things. So the number one reaction I get when I tell people I get up for work at 2am is like oh how can you do that? There's no way you can do that. Okay, well, I could allow myself to totally focus on that. Or, you know, it's kind of the analogy of I can either complain that the roses have thorns or I can rejoice in the fact that the thorns have roses. So, right, it's all in how you look at it. That's that's that back to my original thing where I'm like, you have to choose positivity. It is a mindset. So for me, the the single best thing about getting my workday done by noon, is that I have the rest of the day to be engaged with my son, to be involved with my family in the evening. I don't miss evening events, I don't miss dinner together and all of those things. Those are the things that really, I find rewarding and bring me real joy. And because I'm able to have a shift that enables me to not only have the career I want, but also have the family life. I want Like I'm winning, and so therefore that makes that alarm going off at 2am. A little bit easier,

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right? Yeah, we have a, there's a lot of people wondering about like shift work, and they work what they called, bro, the graveyard shift, although yours wouldn't necessarily be called that but it is. I mean, you're pretty much getting up. You just don't start at 11 o'clock like a lot of the shift workers, you're starting at two o'clock. So what would you say to somebody who is trying to balance that because a lot of people let him let that get to them. And I think that that adds to their their negativity really because they're kind of out of phase with reality, you seem to make it work for you. How would what kind of tips would you give somebody who's on that shift?



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Well, I think first and foremost, you definitely have to find time when you can sleep, right? You have I mean, you can't get up at two and go all the way until 10 o'clock at night, right? So you do have to find time where you can recharge your batteries. So you and you have to schedule that right But you also have to have a good support system, it's, it would be a hard thing to do alone, you have to have I mean, for me, I'm lucky you have to have a spouse that also supports that crazy schedule, and understands. And I would say that goes into one of my big tips on being positive is that people can either drain you or they can inspire you. And so you have to choose who your circle is, and choose who those people are around you, that understand you and help you and, and allow yourself to be helped, right? Sometimes when you're a strong person, you think you can do it all on your own. You don't allow yourself to be helped. And I think that you need to also allow that to happen.

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I think that's a very valid point because they're now showing in science actually, that our five closest friends which include our spouses, and then that are there, they actually turn on and off our gene expression. So our Express To be healthy or not. So if we don't have a good support system, obviously that's gonna that's gonna play into our immunity being down we're going to be more negative and things of that nature. So I know that when we met it was because of Nicholas, who's our CEO and he introduced you to Brain Tap and we got involved with with Brain Tap what's going on there. So maybe you can share with the viewers a little bit about your Brain Tap journey and your family's journey just so that they understand that you're also Brain Tapper.

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Oh, I am I am an avid Brain Tapper. So much so so that right before I came on this meeting, I did the eliminate negativity and start your day with positivity session, just because I wanted to be in that in that frame of mind. Um, but, but Brain Tap for me, let me tell you how much it has made a difference in my life in several ways. But this one since we just talked about it will really resonate with you because I remember when we had our meeting, and Nicholas had said, you know really how you should Brain Tap before you go In and I'm like Nicholas, Did you not hear the part? I get up to like, I'm, I'm not getting up one minute earlier, you know, but you know what? I, I took him up on that. And I said, You know what? And he said, try it for a week. And then don't do it for a week and see the difference. So I set my alarm for 1:40am. And I started Brain Tapping before I went into work, and I did that for a week. And then I did it not for a week. And I can tell you as someone who gets up in the middle of the night I don't care how positive you are your dog tired, right? And so there are times when I get up where I'm so tired that it hurts. When I Brain Tap, I never have that feeling. And I'm not just saying that I mean I I truly



don't have that I cannot function I'm so tired feeling when I Brain Tap for whatever reason. There are also times within my workday when I have a break that I might do. wanted the short little, you know, pick me up awake. And then I definitely try to do on obviously when I go to sleep at night and it is in it's, it's even if I don't I very rarely obviously get eight hours I usually get five hours of sleep that's usually my, but I feel like I've gotten so much more and as excited as I am about the transformation that it's made in my life. I have my eight year old son do it. And, and that has really been eye opening for me in terms of the fact that he actually looks forward to it. He definitely only wants to do the sessions that are Dr. Patrick Porter's voices. He tried to do just one of the music ones and he's like, I need Dr. Porter to talk to me. And I'm like, Okay, well then let's go back to Dr. Porter. But it's just it's one of those things that I feel like I'm at such a young age, you know, like we didn't know all this when We were younger to do, right? That he's doing it at such a young age to get him in this right frame of mind and to practice mindfulness, and then just kind of see him do well and flourish on the other side of it is really rewarding. It's real, it's been incredibly rewarding.

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When that's great, well, thank you for sharing that within the within the structure of getting back the the session that you're talking about. That's one of our most played sessions. And you wouldn't think about it because you would think people would be more positive there on Brain Tap, but we have to fight this. They say that 90% of our thoughts are negative during the day. So I mean, when you besides doing Brain Tap in that, what other things have you found over your career because you've been doing this, you know, for quite a while and you figured out how to do it as you moved up the ranks and now you're, you know, in primetime or whatever for morning shows. What what other things have you done, like some people say, Oh, I changed my diet, I have to worry about that. Because you're also Somebody that, you know, they're going to be everybody's looking at you. So they're gonna, they're gonna be, if you I'm sure if you gained some weight you'd be talked about or whatever. So tell me a little bit about how you handle that or how you handle criticism in general, because I think that's a key point for people.

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Well, is that is a really key point, especially now with social media, because people have more access to you than ever right to say, really not kind things. But, um, so a couple of things. Here's like a little trick for me. A couple of years ago, I felt like, there was a lot of negativity in the newsroom. And so it was really hard for me to come in in the middle of the night and start in this positive frame of mind. I was like, What can I do to start my day off, right? And so what I started back then, and I have done every sense, is, you know, at work, everybody has their password right to get onto the computer and it might work if they change it every 90 days or something like that. And I was like, You know what, I'm going to make my password something



positive, so that the very first thing I do, I log on my computer, I have to physically type something in positive. And so that first one, this is not revealing anything, you won't be able to get my cast. But back then it literally was something as simple as stay positive 2018. And so every day when I went into work, I had to type that in the very first thing. And I found that very helpful. And so I have changed that over time when I have to change my password, but it's always some kind of mantra to just help put me in the right frame of mind. I also now I have this thing. I don't know if you are are you familiar with the app? Marco Polo?

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Yes. Okay,

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so I have a circle of girlfriends from Duke and we were all the same freshman all together and three are on the west coast and two of us are on the east coast. And we have this ongoing chain and it is just like a safe zone. For me to check in on and I can do it anytime of day. But it's different than just like sending a text because it's, it's like you actually see the person, right. And so it's like a visual text. And so it's just like, that's one of my, that's one of my go to groups, right? And so if I'm frustrated, I can say that on there and 10 seconds. And usually before too long, someone responds right back and you know, it just kind of helps me and I feel not alone and not overwhelmed in the setting. In terms of criticism. That's a learned thing. It's hard. It's hard not to take it personally. Because they talk about everything. But what I do tell myself continually, so here's a couple of things. One, I always make a point, and there's debate on this, but I always make a point to respond to the people that aren't nice. And I do that and I always respond very kindly. But I also don't I mean, if there's a point to be made, I don't back down, but I always do it respectfully. But it is important to me and cathartic for me to respond to the haters, because I want them to know there's a real person on the other end, and 9.9 times out of 10, they come back and they back pedal back pedal back pedal, right? So but it also gives me a little confidence to stand up for myself. And I feel like that's important. Instead of just registering it back here and letting it weigh on me and, you know, constantly trying to be the bigger person. I mean, I ain't you are the bigger person, but you can feel like you're someone's walking all over you. The other thing I constantly remind myself

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is that these people don't know you.

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They really don't know you, right? And so



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you have to take,

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you have to take it, I apologize for that. You have to take it with a grain of salt and and that comes with practice. It just comes from overtime.

19:01

You're also in a unique position where you have to work in teams. I mean, you're, you're not doing the show by yourself. There's a whole team of people helping and assisting you. So working in teams, and a lot of people will be out in the summit will have to work with co workers in that. So what have you found over the years? Because obviously, if they didn't like you, they somebody would get you out of that position. I mean, you have to there has to be some kind of teamwork there. What do you recommend for building teams? Or is there any strategies you've used over the years? Or that you've learned from your your profession that could help people get more of a team environment rather than just an I environment?

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Yeah, well, first and foremost, I think you need to be the teammate that you want to have. And so, you know, when people ask about, you know, do you try to change someone that's negative? No, I don't think that you actively try to change someone. I think the best thing for you to do is to lead by Example. And with that, I think that everybody likes to be acknowledged. And I think to be a good team member, you need to acknowledge what the different things are that people are providing in order to make up the team. Because you don't want everybody to provide the same thing. You know, you want everyone to have different strengths, but you need to acknowledge those strengths. And I also think that it is very important, if you want to have a good team where constructive criticism is allowed and people don't get defensive, is that you can't just lay a problem on someone's lap, or you can't just tell them what they're doing wrong. You need to be able to say, hey, I've noticed this, and then provide a possible solution. And it may not be the right solution, but it's a solution that then gives them the feeling that you're willing to work together and you can brainstorm from there. But to just, you can't just constantly criticize someone, you're never going to motivate them to want to be make the team better.

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So one question that I probably should have asked up front, but I'm gonna ask it now is you weren't you have a degree in engineering, and now you're in front of the camera. So it seems like you'd be behind the camera being in it or a sound engineer or something. How did you go from engineering school to getting into broadcast?



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So it's the That's the number one question I get all the time. And the truth of the matter is that I always had an interest in television news, but it can be challenging to make it in television news, because sometimes you just have to be in the right place at the right time with the look that they want. And that's the truth of the matter. I also happen to be very science and math oriented. I love that just as much. So when I was thinking about going to school, and I was you know, talking to different people, including my dad and actually even a news director in I'm from Cincinnati, Ohio, in the Cincinnati area. The the news director from Cincinnati said, I can teach you how to do a newscast. What I can't teach you to do is how to think. So go to school, and learn everything you can about everything that you can. And then come back and I'll teach you how to do a newscast. Because I mean, gosh, just think about in the time that I've been in news, the technology has changed so much, and even the methodology and the philosophy of news, you know, has changed so much. But you know, it's the age old, you know, you can't fix stupid, right? So go and go and do something smart. My dad is the one that was like, Look, let's give it a go at your TV career. That's what you want to do. But you need a profession to fall back on. And my dad was an architect. And so he architect and engineering kind of obviously go hand in hand and he was like, major in something that you can get a real job to so That's what I decided to do, because I was like, Okay, well, I'll major in engineering, and I did some independent studies and TV news while I was at Duke. And I'll try it for a certain amount of time. And if it doesn't work, then I can, you know, build dams, bridges, handle hazardous waste, you name it, because I was Civil and Environmental Engineering. But I will tell you this too. Here is the best thing about an engineering degree. And I say this all the time, and I would do it all over again. And it doesn't even totally have to do with like actually becoming a practicing engineer. Getting an engineering degree teaches you to solve problems. And it teaches you to take in massive amounts of information and process it. It teaches you to work as a team. And all of that is applicable to so many different professions that you could go into. And I will say this too. I mean, I started in a very small market and I worked my way up and I've done all the different jobs, but because I understand technically was going on, I have a lot of respect from my teammates that make the whole newscast happen. And so I'm not just, you know, the talent. I actually I understand being in front of the camera, but I understand just as much being behind the camera. And so I would say as I'm talking and thinking about that, understanding the roles that other people play and the importance of their roles, really makes the team stronger, because everybody wants to feel like they're contributing, and they want to feel valued.

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That's great. Now, one thing you said earlier, which was kind of interesting, because I don't think people go back and review what they've done. Like you said, the newscast. I would think that the newscast is done every goes home, but you say you have kind of a post mortem, or



whatever you call it there. So tell us tell us a little bit about why it's so important that in the news that you go over things like that.

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Well, it's it's extremely important one We always go over, you know, what worked? What didn't work? Was this a good guest? Was it a bad guest? Is that someone we want to, you know, a good contact to have in the future? Or did we do the topic justice? And if we didn't do we need to follow up the next day and do something different. And as you can imagine, in everything we do, we get constant feedback. And we listen to that feedback. And then also, you know, program accordingly, we don't let it totally dictate that dictate what we do, but we do respect it. And because it is, for us always about providing viewer benefit. And every I mean, news is subjective, right? So everybody wants something different. And so in our editorial meetings, there's all these different viewpoints, you know, people at all different places in their life and all the different things that are important to them. So it's really important for us to hash out how things went and our newscast so that we can either Hey, we need to do more. We need to not do that again. Or, you know, change accordingly.

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Right? And you kind of brought up when you were getting into this or this. He sent you off to school to become a thinker. But one one thing that a lot of people don't understand is the role of mentors or people that can train you, in your profession. Were you taken under the wing by somebody and told them, Hey, this is how you do it. And then do you do that now with people or tell us a little bit about the role of mentoring?

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Yes, and yes, and I think it is so important to have someone that's been there to kind of give you the inside scoop and advice. And again, to be a safe space, right, where you can go and ask the questions that you may not feel comfortable asking in the open. I had. One of my first mentors was the main anchor in Cincinnati. At one of the stations there happened to be a Duke grad. And so I didn't know her from Adam, and I literally cold called her I started talking to her and told her I was going to Duke you know, and so that's the power of networking. Never underestimate a connection that you might have with someone even though you don't really know them. And so she got me in the door and then kind of started to show me what working in news is really like and I would say that's for any job right? Because training for it at school though I didn't, you know, train as a journalist, but training for any job via books is totally different than being in the job itself. And so that first mentor for me, she really helped me solidify the fact that this is what I wanted to do. And this was the route that I wanted to go. But probably the most influential mentor for me over time has been the woman that was the main morning



anchor when I first came to Washington DC. And she was the one that wasn't afraid to tell me when I messed up. You know, which is important. You need that person. You need to Someone to be honest with you. And it for me, it ranged from everything from, you know, you weren't really fair in your reporting there or you know, that didn't come across, right? You need to think about how you phrase that or why didn't you ask that question, too. Don't ever wear that hairstyle. Again, Holly, it doesn't work on TV. So, I mean, you need that person. And she was definitely different for me. And to this day, I talked to her she is not in news anymore. She got out of news. But to this day, I call and talk to her and ask her advice on everything. And it's really important to have that person. I then have done that anytime someone asks me to take them under their wing, I say yes, because I think that you have to pay it forward. And I and it's really selfish. If you're in a position where you can impart helpful information to someone and you don't do it. So I never forget the people that helped me along the way. And I with great joy, help others. I just I talked to a young girl who's in engineering school at Duke just this this past week, because she was, you know, I'm not sure I want to be a practicing engineer, but I like my engineering degree can't really work out. And I'm like, Well, let me tell you a story.

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So, yeah, I think that's really important.

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That's great. So can you give us a lot of great tips here, I think people are going to take away a lot of promising information that they weren't able to get. So within where you're at right now, what do you see is the future for what you're doing? Where do you see yourself? I mean, the move from Cincinnati to Washington was a while ago, that's a big move. I don't there's not really very many markets that are bigger than DC. But is there anything bigger that you're you have your eye on or anything you're working on that you think you could share with the with the summit?

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It's interesting because I am actually at that point where I feel like I need to figure out my next step. I don't know Exactly what that is. I have had a wonderful news career. It is. I have witnessed so much history and been a part of so much that I feel very fortunate to have done that. If I walked away from news today, I would have no regrets. Right. And so that's a good place to be. I feel like, like, a definition of success is to have as little regrets as possible that you don't look back and go, Man, I wish I would, you know, I wish I would have done this. So for me, I feel like the sky's the limit, and I don't even know what all my options can be out there. But I want to do something. I like interacting with people. I love interviewing people. I like telling good stories, but I like having a purpose. And so if anybody out there knows what that next step for



me is, you can contact me That would be great. But you have caught me at a point where I'm really trying to figured out for myself, but at the same time, super happy where I am because, I mean, who would have ever thought that this year would have happened? And all that's happened, right? So the beauty of news is that it's always changing. It's always different and you can always learn and I have that love of learning that I've had since I was little and I don't think will ever go away. And so every day when I go to work I learned something new about a person or a topic and I I find that really rewarding

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during during the time of the pandemic, did you still go into the office or did you do it from your home?

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No, welcome to my news studio you're anchored from here and and so look, that was a first never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that we could do the entire newscast remotely and I don't just mean me, I mean, producers working from their home, their boothing it from the home writers, editors, all those people people doing that from their home yet us still being able to put a product on the air that was pretty seamless, which was impressive. So however Having said that, it was hard to really have that real feeling of team being so segment and and apart. I just went back to the studio two weeks ago, and, and in things are still decidedly different at the studio and I don't see a lot of people there, but we're all in the same building, even though we're in separate, separate locations. And there's something that's even just better about that and, and a small baby step towards us, hopefully someday getting back to normal, right?

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Yeah, whatever that is. You're gonna tell us what that is on the news. As soon as

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we know that form is ever changing.

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So that's great. Well, well, Holly, this has been great. We've heard from Holly Morris who's right their finger on the pulse of the nation actually being in Washington DC, which is a pretty good area to be for the news, I think it's being made there more than anywhere else right now. So it's great to help to share with us how to keep positive even when surrounded by negativity and uncertainty, and who more than a newscaster gets bombarded with that. So we appreciate you taking your time to do this. And I hope we didn't keep you from your sleep to do this. So we appreciate you and we know that our viewers and the people on the summit are gonna really enjoy this. So appreciate you being on the summit. Thank you.



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My pleasure. Remember, a negative mind will never give you a positive life. I tell myself that all the time. And with that, you know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna go do a session of Brain Tap and take it out.

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Alright, that sounds good. I just did one before I came up here to the I'm always experimenting with sessions. So I don't want to say that what I did because nobody could listen to it right now. But it was I do it every afternoon. That's what I do. I reboot. So that's great. So appreciate you and tell your son and your husband I said hello and look forward. Next time we get together if you're waiting for the next speaker now on the summit, make sure that you click below, follow through. We'll get you the next summit. Remember, if you have somebody out there that's surrounded by negativity that needs some help this This video will be up for 24 hours, totally free. Just send them the link. They can watch this video and learn from Holly how to handle that negativity, but you've done a great job on sharing with us. So again, thank you for being on the summit. Look forward your next speaker just now. Thank you.

