**BeWell Doha - Episode 1.mp3**

**Speaker 1** [00:00:00] Hi, everyone. Welcome to the first episode of BeWill Doha. I can't believe I'm actually saying that it's actually been such a long time in the making. Safe to say I'm very excited. Also scared, but mostly excited. I say I'm a little bit scared because starting this podcast here in Doha was my idea and I had originated the project. So, like with every project, there's a risk of it failing and nobody wanting to listen to it and it being a waste of time for everyone involved. But guess what? I don't care. I wasn't going to let fear of failure stop me from doing something that could be so great for students and for this uni. I'm going to try it regardless. So here we are. Welcome to the first episode of BeWill Doha. Let me explain firstly what this podcast is and what it's about. Basically, what we're going to do is every episode we're going to have a main topic linked to our overall wellbeing and I'm going to introduce it and I'll have amazing guests with me every episode who are going to talk about it with me, whether that's give advice on it, share stories about it, any thoughts or commentary we may have. This is the platform where we share it all. So that's how this podcast is going to work. It's going to be very chill and very open-ended. Now the moment we've all been waiting for. Can our guests please introduce themselves? Hi, I'm Yara Abughaidah

 and I am in third year studying business management.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:14] Hi, I'm Mariem Nafie, and I'm a fourth year business management student.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:19] All right, so let's get into the topic of our first episode. Today's topic is failure. I think it's a very important topic to discuss, and I'm personally very hard on myself on anything I do. So, I felt the feeling of failure so many times in my life, just like everybody. I think even when it's not warranted or necessary to feel that way. So let me get into it. Failure. There are so many forms of it. For example, when you fail a test, what an awful feeling. Right? But I wish I could tell every single person who's ever done a test. You could fail every single test you ever do in your entire life. As long as you're genuinely trying your best, you shouldn't beat yourself up about it. And here's why. You can get to whatever you want. Even if you fail every single test, you can probably still find a way to get further education. You can still find ways to get a job. My point is the little mundane failures in everyday life simply don't matter in the grand scheme of things. I remember in school every day people would torture themselves, not sleep, not eat, never relax just because they were scared to fail their A-levels or their IGCSE. The biggest thing about failure, I think, is ego. I think failure is just an ego bust. So, there's another type of failure I feel like many people don't talk about or describe as a failure, even though I would say it's one of the most emotional forms of failure you can face. And that is when a friendship or a relationship in your life doesn't work out. So, let's say, for example, you and your longtime friend don't work out anymore and you just grow apart and stop being friends. I would argue that that's one of the worst feelings of failure. Even if neither one of the parties did anything wrong, it still feels like such a failure and such a bust. Your ego. I've come to this realization a few days ago with some of my old friendships, even if I'd done nothing wrong, it always feels like it's my fault. I think that I was just being a bad friend and I should have maybe done more. Maybe I'm not a good person to be around, and I'm sure that this feeling is relatable and that's why I'm sharing it. But let me just say that's not the case. Even if you've done something terribly wrong, it's still not a failure. You either weren't meant to have that person in your life or you learned through being friends with that person what you should or shouldn't do in your future relationships. Because that's what this feeling of failure will hopefully teach you next time. It's not a failure, even though it feels like it. It's difficult in those situations to not blame yourself. And for me, it's so hard on my self-esteem because I know this person is not good for me in my life. Even if it's my decision to leave the friendship, it still messes with my self-esteem. Moral of the story is, I think we all need to relax about failing. We really need to try to see the positive side of these failures. Once you wait a few months and you see how this failure is a positive, then you can see why it happened clearer and move past it. I feel like I sound like such a life coach, but whenever something bad is happening, I tell myself in a few months I'm going to know why this happened. I know it will show through time. So, do you guys have any stories about seeing the positive through a dark situation as time went on? So, I think for me, I've actually kind of experience that both academically and in my personal life. I also feel the same way in academics, where I put so much pressure on myself with exams or even anything like, you know, academics validation, you know, if I don't get the good grades immediately, like I think I used to think of myself as a failure and still do, But I see it's over the years I've actually come to realize that if I hadn't failed or hadn't gotten the bad marks that I did in the past or even now, I wouldn't actually know where to improve on myself. And that could actually be implied in like multiple scenarios, specifically for me personally and my personal life with, you know, the relationships that I've had with people. Sometimes, you know, when a friendship ends or even a colleague that you really want to build that friendship with. Then if that friendship hasn't worked. I tend to turn into myself and be like, what did I do wrong? Or What is it in me? But you also have to kind of look at it as maybe this person wasn't meant to be a friend or maybe wasn't meant to be in my life for this. Like, for the whole time, maybe they just served as a lesson to, you know, understand myself better and maybe build on my relationship with failure. Because I do have a very complex relationship with the term failure. So, I think that is, you know, that's the most common ground between academics and my personal life is I also feel the same way with you. Gunner's failure is my immediate go to thought whenever anything doesn't work out, when in reality, a lot of times out of our hands, you know, it's you do as much as you can, but you can't really help the result that comes out.

**Speaker 2** [00:05:49] So similarly, I think one of the kinds of failures that I struggle with myself where also an academic failure. So, growing up, I used to go to a school where we did have exams, but they didn't really matter in the end. And even then, I always felt like they were too easy, and I didn't really ever have to study for them, so I didn't push myself enough. And then when I moved on to high school in a different school, it was under a very different system. Things were definitely much harder. You were held more accountable for your grades. It was just generally more difficult to keep up with the amount of workload that we had. And so in my first semester, I think I failed one test. So, it was just a test. It wasn't a course, but I think it made me realize like hey this is academic failure. I didn't technically fail the whole thing. But at the same time, it wasn't really happy with the kinds of grades I was getting just because it was such a big change from what I was used to. And so looking back, I think it kind of made me pursue my grades in a different way. So I think I became a bit more responsible. I've always been responsible, but it made me put more accountability to myself and how I pursue my own grades, how I study, what kind of time management I do. And overall, by my second or third or fourth year in high school, I was getting straight A's and everything. I graduated with honors, so I was very happy about that. But I don't think any of that would have happened without that initial shock of failure. In general, I don't think I'm someone who has affected by failure, and I would probably attribute this to my upbringing. It's very different to my brothers though, because my parents are a bit more strict on them, I think mainly because they're just not naturally as responsible. My mom would always tell me that it's okay to fail. You know, she never stresses me out and neither does my dad. Something that they always told me was as long as you do what you have to do, so you study, you put in the work, you put in the time. That's what matters. I know you can still get a bad grade, even if you do study, but there's only so much you can do as a human being. And it's impossible to always get good grades. It's impossible to always be on top of your class. So, I think it's important to take it easy on yourself because we are humans, not robots. It's okay to fail. It's okay to make mistakes. And in general, I think that's why I'm not as affected by failing even now. So sometimes I'll open up blackboard. I'll see. I got like an average grade on my essay when I was expecting something really good, but I just take a deep breath and like, okay, it's one. Average grade. Sure. I was expecting something else, but it is what it is and I can't go back and change the past. So, I just take a deep breath. I acknowledge it because I don't think it's healthy to just feel upset about it and then do nothing. It just goes back to this idea of toxic positivity, which I'm very much against. It's like, oh, whatever happens, if anything bad in your life happens, it's fine. And if you just move on and you pretend you're happy, I don't think that's a healthy way of coping with it.

**Speaker 1** [00:08:45] Just adding on to that, I feel like a lot of people's relationship, I guess with the term failure kind of develops in school because I feel like especially, you know, if you went to a British curriculum I’m saying curriculum because that's what I can relate to, you know, with IGCSE and A-level, I feel like the environment stuff was very competitive, you know, So even, you know, just touching on the toxic positivity, I feel like so many of the people, because it was so competitive, they, you know, obviously strive to get better grades then everybody. But then when they failed, it's you just worry me they're going to oh, no, don't worry. Like it's just a test. But that kind of started letting people think of it that way. Like, okay, it's just a test. It doesn't really matter. But then, you know, for whoever got like, they didn't, for example, get the grades that they wanted for As or A-level, I feel like that might have even made the feeling even more significant when relating to failure. So, I feel like that's also something that's I feel, especially when I started thinking of failure as such a big construct rather than what it actually is, you know, And I still struggle with it, you know, to this day, but it's just taking one day at a time and. Just like moving through it, you know, like what was mentioned earlier, acknowledging it, but also seeing how you can, you know, go forward like what you can imply going forward that you didn't do this time. Yara, I love what you mentioned about schools and the British system and how it kind of puts this image of failure and it makes it seem like it's such a such a big deal, such a such a bad thing and a shameful thing to happen to students, especially if we're in school. And the point of being in school is ultimately learning. Do you think that there's anything teachers can do or anything that teachers have done in the last few years that you've been in school or even in university that has really helped put into perspective why failure is not such a big deal? I feel like definitely like one of my most memorable teachers. She was actually my business teacher in school and she was one of the like, I guess you can say, the most authentic teacher because she didn't just, you know, care about teaching us the coursework or teaching us, you know, the theory. But she actually also would say, like what, you know, reflected on herself or like, for example, I myself struggled with this topic, you know, when I was in when I was in college or even in my working life. So, I feel like, you know, if teachers kind of make it, like make it seem like it's okay, it's not something to be ashamed of for the students, it can really, really impact how the student sees that, like sees that. Because even though everyone thinks that, you know, in in years 12 or 13, you know, you're not as influential anymore, but in reality, you actually are, you know, because the teachers are the people that you spend most time with when you're in school. So if you kind of see that the people that you're spending the most time with kind of have that outlook, it really starts to shift your mindset. But it's also I feel teachers should also take into consideration that maybe not everybody can, you know, absorb or can understand the theory of this in the same way, you know, So maybe they should try and see different types of teaching that they can do, whether it's interactive or just talking as students. Because I feel like a lot of students even now in university, we struggle with actually keeping focus or try or like reflecting positively in our exams because we just feel like our professors are just talking for 2 hours and we're just sitting there listening. So I feel if there's more discussions or even if it's just more discussion based theory was, but also personal experiences, I feel like that would really shift the movement of like decreasing the effects of the word failure to people.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:32] So circling back to the point Yara made about how teachers can adapt different ways of learning to students or different ways in which they can present the information and the course content that they want to get across. I think it really reminded me of the fact that not everyone learns differently. Teaching is not a one size fits all approach, so some people might have different struggles, different learning challenges, and I don't think those are taken into consideration very much as much as they should be. The way I learn can be very different to the way someone else learns. So, for example, I, I personally, I'm okay with theory learning. I do like group projects and I do like practical work, but it really doesn't make a difference to me. I know for other people they may not feel the same way. So having someone go up to a screen and read some PowerPoint and bullets, it just doesn't cut it for them. They won't get the same kind of information that I will get. And I think it's inherently unfair to them because it's not their fault. They just don't get it. It's the idea of applying the same methods of teaching that everyone that's unfair to the students. Um, I think that will of course affect their grades and it's going to affect how they perceive themselves. And because generally I think some people kind of consider grades and success and happiness to all be mutually exclusive. So, if you get good grades, you're happy, you're successful. If you get bad grades and you're sad and you're a failure, I think that's very wrong idea of going about it. And that's probably what I would think. The biggest issue is you and your grades are not the same thing. You can be smart, you can be successful, you can be talented, but you can still get bad grades sometimes. Now, this doesn't Mean. That you don't know what you're doing, and you don't understand the coursework. It could mean that the learning wasn't the way you would have preferred. It's not something that works the best for you. It could mean you have other things going on your life, which is fine. I know that's something that I had last year. I think there was some stuff going on and it affected my grades. But what can I do about it? You know, you just look at your grade and I move on. You know, I can't go back and change time. And I think it's unfair to you to beat yourself up over things that you can't change. It reminds me of something I saw online a couple of days ago, and it was about how whenever someone faces an issue, they kind of take two approaches to it. They'll either fix it, they'll find a way to fix it, they'll find a way to mentor or address it. Oh, there's nothing they can do about it. So what's the point of worrying? What's the point of dedicating all this? Negative energy and stress towards it when there's nothing that you can do. And that's kind of the approach that I try to take. It works pretty well for me. I do get stressed, but in a way, I think that it presents more positives and negatives. I think that's what works for me personally. It may not be the same for everyone, but failure is not something to be afraid of.

**Speaker 1** [00:15:20] I feel like I'm just going to, you know, just touch back on what you were saying Mariem. But I feel like recently, especially within the last couple of months, I feel like you even see on tik-Tok on social media. Everyone feels everyone's feeling way more comfortable now to admit, you know, that they're not perfect, you know, and more like more successful people are, you know, coming out and being like, you know, I might be successful, I might be like a millionaire right now. But if you met me in high school, you like, you would have never thought that, you know, because, like, really like, you know, okay, school, school and university will teach you the foundation, but when you go into a job, they're not going to tell you, Oh, what did you learn in week six of university? You know, they're not like obviously, you're going to have to have that basic knowledge where you're just gonna learn everything again. You know, in every stage of your life, you're going to learn again and again and again. So, when you kind of shift that mindset, you know, like when I was saying how you approach it in two ways when you kind of shift that mindset to listen, I'm not alone in this, which I feel like that's why a lot of people have a fear of failure, myself included. They are always we always think that we're the only ones dealing with this, but we have to remind ourselves that we're not. There’re so many people. The more successful people, I guess, and like failed at some point. Some people even failed school or didn't even complete school. That's not to say drop out of school, but you should definitely like. Really, don't be hard on yourself. And I'm saying like, this goes back to me as well. Like, I was just speaking it to myself. Like, darn it, learn as you go. Don't put that pressure on yourself to be perfect all the time because you can't be perfect all the time.

 I absolutely love the points that the both of you made, and I feel like it's really relatable to anybody, whether they're pursuing higher education or not. Everyone's felt failure at some point in their lives, whether it's personally, academically, within their within their self, with family, with friends, with anyone. So, my question to you girls is, is there something that you'd like to say to people who are too hard on themselves and think that one failure defines them completely? Do you have anything that you want to say to them, or you want to remind them? Or you wish that you could tell people who have this mindset?

The only thing that kind of comes to mind when you say that is discipline. And the reason why I say that is because, you know, through my own experience and, you know, you can obviously only advise people from your personal experience or, you know, what you've learned. Discipline is one of the most powerful tools when you perfect it, you know, it's not going to be an overnight process. You know, you're going to you're going to you're going to like every for example, C, I'm saying C, because I always strive for in A but, you know, sometimes you get the occasional C, but when I get the C, I'm like, why? Like, why did I get a C why did I not get an A right? But then when I need to get back to the discipline, where the more you work for or the more you kind of work on having a positive mindset, the more will flourish. You know, like how they say, if you're planting your brain with weed with bad seeds, you're going to grow weeds. And if you do something with good seeds, you're going to grow a garden, right? It's the same way when you shift that mindset and I'm saying shift that mindset as if it's so easy. But it's not. It's it requires like active work for you to really just say, like, okay, it's not the end of the world. You know, I'm going to have a bad grade than this. That doesn't mean that my teacher thinks I'm a failure. That doesn't mean that my parents are going to be like, Oh my God, you're like, you're the worst child. You're not. Because I'm pretty sure everyone has failed at some point. Even failed a course, failed maybe a semester, and they had to repeat a semester. So the more dedicated you are and by dedication, a lot of people actually tend to link it to motivation. But there are actually two very different terms. You don't always have motivation in order to get dedication. You know, for example, linkage, academics. Sometimes I don't want to work, I don't want to do I don't want to write this essay, I don't want to do the research for it. But I kind of I start by like forcing myself to do it, and then it kind of becomes a habit, which is kind of mentioned in the book Atomic Habits. But dedication is honestly, I feel like the best solution for that, for like, especially your relationship with failure. Because the more you see yourself, you know, like as you work harder, you'll see that your work is paying off and like, Oh my God, like, I actually did that. I got that. A So you start to feel proud of yourself and like, I think even think that I can do that and then be like, okay, well like I can if I can get this A, then I can get another A. And then you just see that positive incline again that good. But with success. It's not a linear line. You know, you're going to have high highs and low lows. So when you're in those low lows, don't think that, Oh, I was going so up and I'm down. Just think of it like that. You think that you're going to have high highs and low lows.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:16] The first thing that popped into my head would be going back to a point that I made previously is I think it's very unfair and very unrealistic to link your self-worth with a grade because at the end of the day, a grade is what? It's a letter, it's a number, and it it's based on an arbitrary scale. You know, you ask someone from one school what an eight is, and they'll tell you, Oh, and A's from 100 to 95. You ask someone else, they're A's from 100 to 90. And I think yesterday I saw someone where an 85 was an A, So everyone's so different. Every school has its own system. Every university works differently in terms of grading scale. So, what my A is. It could be a B to you or someone's B could be an A To me, it's unfair to put everyone on that same scale and assume that we can all be compared because, like I said before, we are more than just a grade. There's so much more to us than a grade. There's so much more to us than what someone says your intelligence is or your intellect. Because a lot of grades are based on exams. And it goes back to a different point of how exams are an unfair way to treat students grades or treat or kind of figure out their understanding of the course material. Luckily, I've heard of some schools that have started ditching that kind of testing system, so they'll have like a different kind of system where they test students understandings. I think I've heard of another school where it's not really an A or B or C, it's more like a pass or fail. And even then, it's okay if you fail. I'm not saying that if you're consistently getting lower grades, if you're consistently failing that, it's okay. I'm not saying you should just acknowledge it and move on. There is an issue that needs to be addressed. The main concern is that you understand and find the root of this issue and then you find ways to deal with it. So in terms of academic failure, personally, what works best for me is I just I see what grade I got and I know that I can't go back and I change time. So you always think, Oh, I should have picked answer B instead of answer A or I knew that it was this or this, and I picked the wrong one. I always used to feel like that, especially in high school with all those multiple-choice tests because we had so many. I just try to find out what exactly went wrong. So, you try to find the root of the issue and you figure out a way and how you can address that. So did I cram everything last minute and which resulted in me possibly not learning the information that well or retaining it as well as I could? Or did I not manage my time properly? Did I just forget? Because one time in high school I forgot I had a test and of course I failed that test. Luckily, it wasn't a big test, but I did fail, and it made me double check every single time that I had no test for that class. And that's how I never failed the test for that class again. But the important point is to figure out the root of the issue. Sometimes the hardest part is there is no cause. And that's kind of a tough pill to swallow about life, especially going back on the first point you made,Yara, about friendships and relationships. Sometimes it's not as easy as finding out the why to the situation. It's not as easy as figuring out what went wrong and how you can fix it. And that's the kind of approach I prefer to take, which is just to accept what happens. Again, you have to process those feelings because you can't move on from what you don't let yourself feel. That's good advice that I heard somewhere. I don't know where I heard it, but I really like it. And so, I just try to process what happens, whether it's a failure in terms of a friendship, in terms of academics, a test, whatever it is, sometimes there isn't a root cause, and I'll try to figure it out so I can avoid a similar situation in the future. But other times that's just how it is. And I think part of life is accepting what happens and living it day by day. Of course, there may be ways to avoid certain things, but in the end it's such a big universe and you can't possibly expect everything to happen and figure out a way to avoid it. Sometimes things happen and part of being human is figuring out how to move past that and not letting it affect you so negatively to the point where it impacts all the other aspects of your life.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:35] Thank you so much for all those stories and all of these good vibes that you guys gave out. I'm so happy we got all deep in our feels and we got to talk about this. I hope you guys enjoyed and I hope maybe we opened your mind a little bit to something. Maybe. I hope it made you view failure differently and maybe change your perspective. Please do contact us if you have any ideas or feedback, you could email wellbeing@ AFGE-Aberdeen.edu.qa. and let us know if there's any topics you'd like to hear about next. Be creative and be honest and let's hear it. All right. Yara, Mariem thank you so much for being on the podcast and thank you guys for listening. Have an amazing day. Subscribe anywhere you like to listen to your podcasts. If you'd like to hear any more episodes, maybe give us a rating or a nice comment. I don't know. I don't know what people do on podcasts. Up to you guys. All right. Goodbye, everyone. Thank you.