



The YOPD Council
Downsizing Your Life with YOPD
Davis Phinney Foundation

Melani Dizon (Director of Education, Davis Phinney Foundation):

Okay. So right now I'm gonna hand it over to Kat. She is going to be talking today about downsizing, moving, simplifying some of the great things that can happen from that. Some of the challenges and looking forward to hearing everybody's experience with that. And I'll see you in a little while.

Kat Hill (Ambassador, YOPD Council Leader, YOPD Women's Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):

Yeah. Hey everyone. Nice to see everybody. Nice to see all of you panelists too. I always look so forward to seeing all of your faces and I'm by no means gonna dominate this conversation, because I think we have a lot, all of us to offer. I just am in the process of literally going from living in about 3,400 square feet in a home that I've raised my family in the last 17 years, my husband and I have sold our home and we have purchased an Airstream trailer that is 216 square feet. It has arrived now in Portland, and we will be moving full time into 216 square feet. So, I'm in the throes of literally downsizing from, you know, a life of 17 years and raising kids and hosting lots of people in my home to shifting to a different way of being. I don't claim to have all the answers or the strategies.

I just know what's worked for me and I have been a very sentimental person growing up. I moved a lot as a kid. I kept things in boxes, and I have been going through all of those memories and really getting rid of almost all of it. But trying to honor it in the process. And what I will say is that it's been almost a year-long process to get to where we are. We've gotten rid of about 95% of everything we own. And we will have about 20 boxes, mostly that have photographs, artwork, sketchbooks, and a few musical instruments. So, I think that for me, it's been a journey of really knowing how much energy that it takes to manage and inventory that much stuff. I also have saved some treasured things for my children in case they have children and each of them have claimed things that are meaningful to them. But I also know how much I'm enjoying not managing inventory and managing so much space. It frees up some creative space, it frees up some freedom. So anyway, that's my 2 cents and I'm certainly gonna open it up. I'm by no means an expert. I'm just well-practiced. Sree, you take it.

Sree Sripathy (Ambassador, YOPD Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):

Yeah. I'm just gonna speak quickly because I have to leave at 12:30 Pacific time. So, when it comes to downsizing, I wore this saree specifically for this YOPD council because it is about downsizing and living a simpler life. And I'm finding that wearing these beautiful clothes and these earrings is becoming much more complicated for me because my hands



don't work as well. These are legacies and treasures that I spent a lot of money on. Some of them have come to me from my grandparents. Well, my grandmother. Some of them from my mother, some of them from relatives, some of them, a lot of them, I actually bought on my own. You know, and even putting on the earrings today, everything was shaking. The back of the earring dropped like three times and I'm wondering, is this worth it?

And this might seem really small and Kat your downsizing is quite huge, but I think sometimes downsizing starts in small steps and we have to look at what we can manage. And I am learning to look at other ways to wear things which is really kind of shattering for me to find stuff that is pre-pleated pre-fixed. There's a beauty to draping a saree. There's a beauty to dressing up and not being able to do that as much anymore is really sad. So, that's something I'm struggling with and I'm still figuring out, still figuring it out. I might have to resort to clip-ons, which is horrific, actually.

Heather Kennedy:
You look beautiful.

Kat Hill:
Yeah. You look stunning, Sree. I love it.

Sree Sripathy :
Thank you.

Kat Hill:
I think Kevin had something, then Karen, then Robynn, how's that?

Kevin Kwok (Board of Directors member, YOPD Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):
Yeah. I think there are two forms when we talk about downsizing, there's physical downsizing and there's simplification in life and it's really important to separate the two because they're not always exclusively the same. I don't know how other people feel about that.

Kat Hill:
I definitely agree with that. I know Sree, what I've done with earrings is my husband bought me a beautiful pair of hoops that I don't have to take off. I can sleep with them, shower with them. I don't have to think about the jewelry that I'm wearing. And I also feel okay with having one really good pair of earrings and just not taking them off. So, that's a simplification. Karen, how about you?

Karen Frank (Ambassador, YOPD Council Leader, YOPD Women's Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):

Oh, I was gonna say originally, I thought, well, I don't have a ton to add to this conversation because I kind of recently upsized, which was funny, but I was taking it very literal, literally, but I've downsized in so, so many ways. I mean, I upsized in terms of space because I wanted to get kind of out into the country and have a little space to breathe, but physical space, but I downsized in terms of simplicity in my life, because like today I was sort of bent out of shape about having to get ready for this and time and my meds weren't working and I was OFF and I thought, well, what's there to get ready, throw a ball cap on and athletic shirt and put your earbuds in. I mean, what's, put some lipstick on. So, I did and I'm here and I was like, oh, so I sat outside by, you know, the sunshine and I listened to the birds for an extra 20 minutes and that sort of downsizing I do continuously, nonstop, I guess it's mindfulness.

Kat Hill:
Mm-hmm.

Sree Sripathy :
If I can just comment on that really quickly, just really fast. You get got dressed like that. And I got dressed list like this and I had like 15 minutes and I'm yelling for my mom. Like mom, I have 15 minutes before the webinar help mom, my earrings aren't working, mom, this isn't working. So, thank God for mothers, no matter how much older they are, or we are help tremendously. So, most of the time I'm wearing like regular sweatshirts and a hoodie, and I haven't taken a shower. So, there you are.

Kat Hill:
Go ahead Heather.

Heather Kennedy:
Sorry, go ahead.

Kat Hill:
Robynn, you had something you wanted to add and then Heather.

Robynn Moraites (YOPD Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):
Well, to Kevin's point, you know, can you guys hear me okay? Ok. To Kevin's point, years ago about in 2014. So, we lived in Charlotte, North Carolina and the average home size is large square footage, you know, 2 to 3000 square feet. And all these people who moved down from new England would say, my God, we sold our house in new England and we were able to get a four bedroom, you know, five-bedroom, four -house and a three car garage with a pool and a half acre lot. And in 2014 we moved from North Carolina up to Boston and that was a shock. And we had to downsize out of necessity because of the move. But when we got there, it's the most favorite house we've ever had. Less to heat, less to cool, less to clean, less to decorate, less to maintain.

And when we moved up there, I had not even been diagnosed. So, after my divorce, when I moved back to Charlotte, I stayed in like a 12 to 1500 square foot house because it's just so much more manageable for everyone. You know, just not even with Parkinson's. I just like the simplicity of it. But at first it was a shock to let go of so much material stuff. And then it was just a joy. It was like a release of freedom and a weightlessness to it. But one of the things that I've done is I'm selective about how I can spend my time. So now I have a cleaning service come in, so I don't even have to worry about cleaning. You know, I do that twice a month. And it's very affordable because it's a very small space. And you know, I don't know whether that counts as downsizing or simplifying, but it frees me up to spend my time doing the things I want to do.

Kat Hill:

Mm-Hmm, mm-hmm. Heather, you had something and then we'll go to Kev.

Heather Kennedy (YOPD Council Leader, YOPD Women's Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):

When we're finally on, we definitely don't wanna spend that one hour of movement cleaning the toilet and stuff. I was gonna add to Sree, I'm glad she didn't say mom, meatloaf mom. I'm glad you didn't do that. That was good. You just needed help with your earrings. But I wanted to just say two separate things. I just moved. So, I just went through all this. There's one part that's physical, just like Parkinson's management. We have the physical disabilities that we need to manage such as downsizing, like digitizing what you can, paperless billing, things like sweeping up and getting the three box thing started, you know, give away, you know, trash and sell or whatever your three boxes are gonna be. Just keep it really simple with that stuff. But the second part and the more important part in my opinion is the grieving process.

We have to let go of everything. Again, this is a disease of loss and what I didn't expect and was not prepared for was going through all the belongings that I had had when I was married, going through all the memories from childhood on, that's what was in this 2300 square foot home I just moved from down to about, I don't know, 700 square feet or something like that, which is still a lot for me, but it's on one floor. It's manageable, it's smaller, but I did not expect that emotional drop. It really was stunning. So, I was just gonna shout out to everybody, make sure that you have support, get a lot of support and really set yourself up. And just like Kat said, do this in stages. I mean, we have to plan way ahead for this. You can't do it all at once, because you're not gonna be able to do that heavy lifting. So that's what I wanted to say.

Kat Hill:

Literally and figuratively, right? You've gotta give yourself space to feel the feels and time and also help to literally physically move. Kevin, you have your hand up and then we'll go to Karen.

Kevin Kwok :

Yeah, I echo what Heather says to a T. I also had to move because of a divorce, and I actually broke it down into two stages. I first moved into a rental and then I finally ended up moving to a condo here in Boulder. And I found a couple of good things. I learned that, you know, I'm a hoarder, right? I keep everything around, including my Stephen Curry bobblehead.

But all joking aside, it was really hard to leave some, I'd call my kids and I'd be going through their art collections over 20 years, and I'd say, do you want this? And they say, no, dad. And I was like, but don't you want me to save this for you? You know, it was going through all those difficult times, but I would actually tell you that the first move was probably the hardest into sort of an intermediate place because I'm trying to jam all my furniture, all the things I wanted to keep into this smaller rental place on Nob Hill in San Francisco. And then the second time I was relentless, I was vicious about just getting rid of stuff. And I found that giving stuff away, just releasing things was a lot easier to do. And there's a practical side of it too.

For many of us keeping a large place is expensive and keeping a new space is not, doesn't really make sense. So, by cutting back, I was actually able to cut my living expenses in half and then in a half again on the second move. And for some people that's essential, right? I mean, we have to think about the practicality of why are we moving? But the one thing that I will tell you that was really hard, and this is part of it was I think the emotional side to it is with the grieving comes the physical labor of actually packing boxes with dystonia and unpacking them. And I think Heather, you said, make sure you have support. I did one of those on my own and I'm so glad the second time I had helping friends because I underestimated how hard, even just hiring a mover to move things, but you still have to make decisions, right?

Kat Hill:

Yeah. And Sree, Karen, do you mind if I let Sree go because Sree's gotta leave here in a little bit. Sree, hop in.

Sree Sripathy :

Oh, this is great. I should leave early all the time. So, I get all the air time and I wanna make sure Tom says something too, because I don't wanna talk away. But that's actually fun fact, fun fact guys. That's how I got diagnosed with Parkinson's when I was helping my parents downsize when they were moving from the large home that we all grew up in, to a much smaller home. And I kept saying, hey guys mom, you don't need all the huge I don't know what the word in English is. What's the word for things that you cook in?

Kat Hill:

Pots, pans? Pots and pans?

Sree Sripathy :

Pots. Huge pots. Because we'd cook for like 60, 70, a hundred family members pretty regularly. And she didn't need those. It was very painful to give all that away. And when I was lifting some boxes, I threw out my back and that started my journey to my diagnosis with Parkinson's disease just about a year later. But the one thing we did do to help with the grief and the loss was we took out our iPhones because we had iPhones back then and we recorded all the stuff that we were giving away and we just took photos of it. Like this is my VHS tape of 90210. It wasn't mine. It's actually my sister's, I was not a 90210 fan. But we did. And we look at upon that now and when I look at those images, it hurts. I'm like, God, wouldn't it be great to have all those 20 VHS tapes back. But we have the videos of us throwing it away together and we made it into a beautiful family moment where we really bonded. So, one idea is take out your phones, just document the process and then you'll have more digital stuff to manage. Yay.

Kat Hill:

Well or put it all in one file, right? Tom, I feel like you've gotten cut out of this conversation. Karen, do you mind waiting for Tom to go, poor Karen's waiting patiently.

Karen Frank:

I'll probably forget.

Kat Hill:

Tom, you're getting a lot of love and support in the chat here,

Tom Palizzi (Ambassador, YOPD Council Leader, Davis Phinney Foundation):

Man. I tell you what, I beat you all with downsizing today. I'm on my iPhone because I can't get my computer working. So that is downsizing. I feel like I can barely see everybody, but yeah, you know, when I was diagnosed 14 years ago, we thought right away we better move because we had a big two story house and the house we raised the kids in and stuff. And the doctor said to us, you know, why rush? You don't need to rush. You know, just take your time. You're gonna be walking for a long time. You're gonna be going up and down stairs for a long time. So just chill out and then we kind of did for about a year. And then my wife said, you know what? We really should rethink this because we should move now while you can, while you can help move. While you can make those decisions. That was really good advice, that helped us a lot. And we didn't really end up downsizing. The house we ended up in was a little bit larger than the house we tried to move out. But it's all on one floor and it has a main floor master of course. And that made life a whole lot easier.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. Karen.

Karen Frank:

Oh, well I was gonna turn a little bit more to the emotional side of the, you know, Kevin made a joke about hoarding and holding onto things. And you know, I know I have sort of an emotional attachment to things, not the objects themselves so much, but just like the memories of it. I have all this camping gear downstairs. I don't go camping anymore. I haven't gone camping in, I don't wanna go camping even. I mean, but I have all this gear. So, I thought, well I would donate it to an adaptive ability center because there's a shop nearby that does adaptive programs. And I thought that would be fun. And then, you know, perhaps I would sell a few things or just give them to friends or whatever, but why, I've been holding onto this stuff for like, I don't know, 10 years thinking I should get rid of my camping stuff. It's 10 years later. I still have it. Why? It's actually not about the camping stuff. It's not.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. And I think I'm gonna jump in with, I think being intentional about how we get rid of our things. I've been really trying hard not to throw things away. I feel like we have enough stuff in our landfill and you know, I'm in Portland, Oregon. That's how we do it. So, but it takes a lot of energy to be intentional. I'm giving away a lot of things to my kids and their, their friends. We also have saved Kevin, I got a box each of the kids and I have kept one box of their, what I think are their memories, the special things, some of their art, some of their early ceramics that are not huge. And because I think they may want them someday, but it's taken, it's been almost a full-time job for a year to donate things intentionally, sell some things, gas prices have gone up we're putting it in the piggy bank.

But I think I also have the support of my kids and my husband, which is helpful. And I also just wanna add, you know, we're all aging, right? None of us are, you know, my partner's aging, his knees don't work as well as they used to. So, the idea, you know, we live in three stories and up and down a lot, he's looking forward to having more one level and not managing three stories of painting trim and getting gutters undone. So, I think this is kind of a universal story. I think that because we have young onset Parkinson's, we're facing it more rapidly. And I think especially those of us without partners in our life, I think that it's harder. I think the support needs to be there for them for all of us. Yeah. Robynn, just hop in you guys. Yeah.

Robynn Moraites:

Yep. I wanna reflect on something Karen said where she said, it's not really about the camping gear, there's this idea of change. And this idea of transition and transition is this a change is a situational shift, but a transition is the process where we go from one state of being to the next. And a lot of times, the reason we resist change is because we have to let go of some kind of self-concept of who we are or what that thing might represent. We have to let go of a piece of ourselves in the process. And I just think that that's more, you know,

when Heather was talking about the emotional part of grieving the loss, it isn't even the loss of the stuff. It's the loss of who I was or who, you know, who I used to be or who I used to become. Or who I can become. And I wanna just go a little bit more on a positive angle with this too, because I used to say yes, pretty much to everything, every opportunity, every commitment, every kind of thing. And I have become really genuinely selective about what kinds of things are gonna bring value to my life, are gonna enrich my life, add to my life in a positive way. And so, like when I, after my divorce, when I moved back to Charlotte, I decided when I was decorating my house, nothing goes in my house that I don't absolutely love. And so, you sort of have all of a sudden this explosion of joy and enrichment in your physical space with how things look and a podcast or a Ted talk was the aesthetics of joy that really influenced how I decorated my house. But with experiences too, I asked myself, is this gonna bring value to my life? Do I really want to do this? And that's a very positive thing. So, there's two sides to the coin.

Kat Hill:

But yeah, the Marie Kondo method does this spark joy, and yeah, yeah.

Heather Kennedy:

She drives me nuts.

Kat Hill:

Heather, you don't look very joyful.

Heather Kennedy:

She drives me crazy, but I like the idea of it. Anyway, Kevin.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. Hop in, Sree?

Sree Sripathy :

Yeah. I just have to bounce out unfortunately. It's been great seeing you guys and getting a chance to comment and thank you to everyone for allowing me to chat again. The one comment...

Kevin Kwok:

You look great by the way.

Sree Sripathy:

Oh, thank you.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. You're beautiful Sree.

Sree Sripathy :

Thank you. The one comment I'll make in response to what Robynn says is I had copies of young and modern and sassy magazine piled up that I got rid of decades later, because I was still holding on to the fact that I'm sassy and I'm young and modern even in my forties and oh my God, it was painful to get rid of those magazines, but I'm not giving up my Martha Stewart. I'm holding on strong to Martha. But with that said thank you guys so much.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. Yeah. Thanks for coming. Yeah. Who wants to chime in on the next round here? Let's talk about what it's like to shift our careers some as we go through simplifying. Kevin. Yeah.

Kevin Kwok :

Yeah. You know, I used to manage large teams and I just found that as over time that became such an arduous task, you know, and I found as I started going to lesser responsibilities with less, they call it span of control and giving up that span of control was actually really wonderful for me because now I could focus on my own tasks and not worry about all the HR issues and things going on in other people's lives. I mean, I had enough going on in my, so that form of downsizing and simplification was actually really a good thing for me. I don't know if others felt the same way.

Kat Hill:

Tom?

Tom Palizzi:

I think that's what has to happen of course, at some point in time. I think the whole concept of downsizing is really about compromise and compromising with ourselves and the compromise we make with our family and friends and our care partners because, you know, they still need things in their world that may or may not be things that we can still use. But I think there has to be some compromise in there to you know, to keep the peace and to keep things moving in the same direction.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. And intentional, you know, I know I got rid of my backpack. I just can't carry something on my back, but I fully support my husband, keeping his backpack and fully support if he wants to go on a backpacking trip. I promise I'll drive and meet him with some good food. But some of that compromise, some of that's loss, in that, I'm trying to learn ways to enjoy nature in not such a backpacking kind of way more a day hike or something that I can, you know, put around my waist or learning how to sit and sketch a

tree instead of climbing up the tree. So, but, I still climb up the short trees. I just have to be honest, but the really big ones I stay off of.

But it is still adaptive. Right? What we're all doing is talking about adaptation, talking about compromise and it is, and talking about grief, and grieving. But I think if we do the work, coming to the other side of that can be very freeing. We can be in a smaller place like Robynn, you know, not everybody wants to be in, I'll let you know next year how, what it's like to be in an Airstream. But I already like having less stuff to dust, to move around, to think about, even in my brain, I feel more organized because there's just less tending to. Yeah. Heather.

Heather Kennedy:

I just want... oh, Kevin, did you wanna say something?

Kevin Kwok :

Oh, no, that's an old hand raise.

Heather Kennedy:

It's an old hand.

Kat Hill:

It's an old hand.

Heather Kennedy:

I was just gonna say, too, I have, when someone dies, I've cleared out their space and we all have these hopes and dreams. You know, like her bookshelf was filled with self-help books and inside were love letters and little things. So, I got to know this person, unfortunately, better and more intimately after she died. And I found things in drawers that were like things that she wanted to learn, like learning how to knit with all the accoutrements that she hadn't touched in years or all the things that we think we're going to do. Like when I go to the container store, I spend a lot of money and then I get back here and I'm like, this doesn't fit anything I have, like this is a dream. What am I doing? So those are the things we can let go of. Like, if you, it's true, Karen said it earlier, like if I haven't used this camping equipment and I have a dream that I'm gonna be a camper, I'll rent it or find it in another place. If I don't use something often, I do give it away and you can look at it this way, someone else will be using this item.

They will make it useful. And if you wanna go back to Kondo, items want to be useful. You know, if it doesn't bring you joy, it will bring someone else joy. I go to all these places where they do swap meets, or they do exchanges. There are ways to not have to buy things like Kat was saying, let's cut down on the waste. So just not to be the Groom Reaper here in the group, but to say death, you know, you can't take any of this stuff with you. I don't want



my loved ones to have to go through things and don't worry, I'll make sure that I clear your hard drive Kat.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. There's certain things I'm counting on you for Heather. Who else, hop in here, you guys. Tom's chuckling.

Tom Palizzi:

Yeah, I am. You guys always have me laughing.

Heather Kennedy:

Got you covered. Holding it for a friend.

Kat Hill:

You know, it's interesting. I have divorced parents and my mom was kind of a get rid of everything kind of gal. And she had very few things when she passed away. And it was very interesting. And my dad on the flip side has everything and a jam-packed, three-bedroom, two-bathroom house. And a lot of it's labeled with who they want these things to go to. And it's just two really different ways of looking at things. My mom kind of cold and was intentional before she passed. She didn't want a lot of stuff to move around. She also moved around quite a bit. And I think that it's gonna be interesting, Heather, when I go through my dad's house, my dad has passed, but my stepmom still has the home. It's going to be interesting, you know, going through a lifetime of their things and even generationally, it's different. My brothers and I aren't as attached to the things, we kind of have our own things. Our kids have their own things. They don't want our stuff. Right. So, this idea that it'll mean that I'm saving this for my kids is, you know, not as much a modern ethic and our kids don't want it. At least mine don't, my three, there are some things, but not a lot. Some, yeah.

Tom Palizzi:

Definitely the case here. I mean, we saved a box of, you know, this and that for this kid and this and that for that kid and yada yada. And of course they're still in our basement because neither one of them want the things that we thought they would need, like plates in that for their apartments. Of course, they blew right by that phase and they end up with their own stuff, you know, and we didn't predict that IKEA would change the world for that generation, but everything they own comes from IKEA. But anyway, I think there's a lot of things to be considered, I think, in downsizing or rightsizing or smart sizing like I used to do a lot of work on automobiles on cars and I've got a whole shop full of stuff that's gradually disappearing.

It's going to my son or my nephews and whatnot. And it's not the kind of stuff that you can really easily sell, but you can give it away and donate it to groups and things like that. We

do a lot of that kind of stuff, donating to different organizations and that gives you a lot of gratification, I think when you do things like that. But again, I think it's really being smart about what you have, you all talked about backpacks that you no longer use and things like that. I mean, you just gotta be smart about it and take it take a minute and go through the closet or go through the storage room and then organize things to where you can get rid of them easily or somehow give them away and just keep at it. It's gonna take us years more to get rid of the stuff that we've targeted to get rid of. So, good luck me.

Kat Hill:
Don't worry. Heather's got your back.

Tom Palizzi:
Alright Heath.

Kat Hill:
Kevin?

Kevin Kwok :
Yeah, I was just gonna say to my father's still trying to pawn off his 1970s, leisure suits and white hat leather shoes on me.

Kat Hill:
You know, another 10 years that may be in Kev, so you may want to reconsider.

Kevin Kwok :
I'll be so hip.

Kat Hill:
My husband's threatening to wear those leisure suits in the Airstream when we travel. So, there's some negotiate going on how we downsize.

Tom Palizzi:
Hey, Kev, can I borrow a leisure suit?

Kevin Kwok :
Absolutely. Come on over.

Tom Palizzi:
I'll be right there, buddy.

Kat Hill:

Oh, I'm hearing some things in the chat about work and how that's been hard to shift what we do and how we feel useful. Robynn, do you have thoughts on that?

Robynn Moraites:

Yeah, well, so much of our identity is wrapped up in our jobs. I mean, I'm in a job where my identity is completely wrapped up in my job and a lot of us suffer from that. I don't know if it's a modern American, you know, thing or whatever. But I also was always the kind of person that had a side business, you know, going on the side. And I had an idea for a business about a year ago and I put together the business plan and everything. And then I realized I don't have the energy, that if this was 10 years ago, I would've done it. I mean, I'm kind of one of those work till your grave kind of person and I just realized I don't have the energy and I, you know, we talked a lot, I can't remember if it was the last meeting or at the Victory Summit.

We talked about flow and I spend a lot of my quality energy now on my hobbies and things that I love, where I can get into a flow state and kind of forget about my Parkinson's, enjoying, you know, whether it's gardening or mosaicking or stained glass or whatever it might be, ride my bike or whatever. So that I, you know, there would've been a time where I could have juggled two jobs easily and, you know, hobbies, whatever I wanted to do, but now it's like, it's just such a precious resource I have to really conserve where I'm spending my energy. And like Heather said, I don't wanna be swishing a toilet when I have some good energy, I wanna be doing something that I love, so I gave up on the business idea. And I thought, well, it's a good idea, but another lifetime.

Kat Hill:

Kev.

Kevin Kwok :

Robynn, you have a new business, now it's called taking care of your health.

Robynn Moraites:

Exactly.

Kevin Kwok :

And that's a full-time job.

Robynn Moraites:

And, you know, I noticed, we just had a three day weekend because where I work, we got Good Friday off and I had almost a symptom free weekend because I was just doing what I loved and it was great, you know, three hours into Monday, my leg's going, my hands going like all the stress of my job. And it's like, all my symptoms start flaring. And I'm just like,

man, I just noticed, I noticed such a dramatic difference of how, you know, stress impacts my symptomology.

Kevin Kwok :
Oh, for sure.

Tom Palizzi:
Totally. Yeah. You bet. I got a good one for you. I haven't been, I haven't worked professionally for six years. I retired six years ago. And prior to that I had, I don't think I'd filled out a job application since I was probably in my twenties. And I just opened up a new spinning class or not spinning class, pedaling for Parkinson's class at the local YMCA here where I live. And they asked me to apply for, to do their application. And I got online and I was asked for all my experience, job experience. I'm like, what do they need to know that for? I mean, I'm just volunteering my time to lead this Pedaling for Parkinson's class. So, I called the gal and I said, you really need me to fill out, you know, all the jobs I've had and things like that. She goes, oh, no, no, you don't need to do that. I said, good, because I can't remember the dates and all that stuff. So, you know, that's sort of a right mind sizing myself to trying to remember what it was that I used to do and that sort of thing. So anyway.

Kat Hill:
Yeah. And I also know that, you know, like you were saying Robynn, the identity piece and our jobs, I absolutely loved and defined myself by being a midwife and delivering babies and running the program at the hospital. And it was, I grieved that loss when I left, I was not ready economically, or, you know, financially to do that. And my, I had no idea how much my ego was wrapped up in that until I left. So, I think there was, for me, those first few months were a lot about grief and fear, like, who am I, if I am not working and producing and bringing a paycheck home and modeling for my kids that I'm working. And I right away went on disability. And that was a whole other identity shift. Like I don't want to be put in that box.

Well, how do I survive? Pay my mortgage, help my kids through college and still feel like I'm contributing, right? So, I've shifted a lot of that, but it's taken a while. You know, people in the chat are saying some of those things, you have to grieve it, you have to, and then that creates space to where we go from here. I've written a book. I'm volunteering. I learned how to do a podcast, never in a million years would I have thought that I would have done those things. Am I grateful for Parkinson's? No. But I am grateful that I have learned and been able to pivot and thank you, Kevin, for the word pivot, thanks to Kevin and learn to do something new. And I challenge everybody out there to think about that. What did you want to be when you grew up? Right? Can we do some of those things?

Heather Kennedy:
A ballerina!

Kat Hill:

I wanna be Heather when I grow up. So.

Heather Kennedy:

I'm not grown up. People keep looking around for an adult and they look at me, I'm like, I've got you all fooled. Kat, that's what I was gonna say. This adaptation that you've done makes you even more purposeful now. Like when we talk about Victor Frankel, Brad McDaniels is doing some great work at the University of Houston, I think it is on purpose and meaning and how that's so important to people with Parkinson's. I think it would be a great coupling for Davis Phinney to talk more about this too, this organization, because this purpose is exactly what keeps us going. When I was in the hospital a few days ago, I was borderline suicidal for a few hours. Didn't have meds, didn't have food. Didn't have, I didn't know what was wrong. I couldn't talk, couldn't move. But I kept thinking of purpose. I thought about this panel. I thought about all the things that I get to do now. So, if we lose our jobs and we think we're losing our purpose, we think we're losing our meaning. Remember there's always something. I don't care what state you find yourself in. You can be helpful. The cracks are where the light gets in. If you think you're losing, you might actually be just getting something new or something different. Remember, transitions are rough, really rough.

Kat Hill:

And you're not alone. That's what I want people to hear too. That is why we're out here talking. That's why we volunteer our time to come out here and chat about some of these hard things. And plus, I love seeing all these panelists because I don't know what I do without you guys now every month. But I really think that I want people out there to hear that you're not alone you. And if you're feeling desperate, you know, pick up a lifeline, send us an email, make a call to a friend

Tom Palizzi:

Call us, call any one of us or yeah, send us an email. We do that all the time. And you know, another thing that I like to tell people is don't let Parkinson's take things away from you. If there's something you're still really passionate about, find a way to do those things. And there are ways to do things like cycling still. I ride a tricycle instead of a, you know, it's a recumbant trike instead of a regular bike. And if you still wanna fly fish, for example, I know I can't go in the water anymore and I can try. So, I look at other options to get out on water that might work better for me. So, you know, I, this year and last year, I've tried to talk myself back into doing the things that I let Parkinson's take away, the excuse of Parkinson's take away. And that's I gave up on that idea. So, get after it.

Karen Frank:

Yeah, I agree, Tom. I actually just sold my road bike to a friend who really wanted a nice road bike. And I was like, I'm not gonna ride it. I'm gonna do the same thing you're talking about Tom. I'm probably gonna get an e-bike if I get a bike or a tricycle, because it's easier for me. And honestly, I have my exercise bike for inside the house. What's the word for it?

Kat Hill:
Stationary.

Karen Frank:
Yeah. Stationary. I have that. No, not recumbent.

Heather Kennedy:
Okay I thought you had the recumbent, a specialty. I wanna get a green machine or one of those wheely things, those little...

Karen Frank:
I wanna a unicycle Heather. Can't you see that?

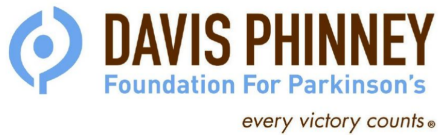
Heather Kennedy:
Let's do it.

Robynn Moraites:
Well. And Karen, to your point, I have a lot of friends that I cycle with, but I wasn't, my pace was slowing down every year by, you know, just half to one mile per hour that over the course of a 30 or 50 mile ride, that's pretty significant. And so, I sold my bike and I got an e-bike and now I can ride back with my friends who can go real fast. And at first I felt guilty for like my first two or three rides because I think there's this ethos about like, if you're not really suffering on a bike, you're not working hard enough. And then, but I was just having so much fun, I got my cycling life back and now, you know, and this year we're going on a trip to riding our bikes from glacier national park in Montana, up to Banff. I love these bicycle vacations. And so, Banff is our trip this year and I'm gonna use an e-bike and I'm gonna be unapologetic and I'm not gonna feel guilty, that I'll be not suffering.

Tom Palizzi:
Well, I'll expect to see all of you at the Tour de Victory bike ride in Boulder this summer. So, keep that in mind. I'm gonna be looking for you.

Heather Kennedy:
I heard Davis leaves people in the dust.

Tom Palizzi:



He does. Yeah, he does.

Kevin Kwok :

In Peloton magazine, where they interviewed Davis and the name of the article is Peloton Bicycles, our eBikes changed my life.

Kat Hill:

Oh.

Kevin Kwok :

Great article. I highly recommend all you guys read it. Because I fought e-bikes for the longest time. It's like, no, I'm not that bad yet. I don't need one, but I have to tell you there's so much joy when you're on an e-bike.

Tom Palizzi:

I gotta appreciate Davis for one thing, he pulls his battery off his bike when he rides with us, so.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. So don't let it hold you back or adapt to find a way to do what you love or.

Tom Palizzi:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. There's no shame. There's no judgment, Robynn. You go out there and do it girl. You don't, we'll be cheering you on. I don't care what kind of electricity you're generating while you're doing it.

Heather Kennedy:

It's electric.

Kat Hill:

It's electric. We've got about, let's see, we've got about 10 more minutes. Does anyone wanna talk about strategies about downsizing that have worked for you, any practical tips that we wanna share with anybody?

Heather Kennedy:

I have a couple.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. Heather.

Heather Kennedy:

I already mentioned digitizing, that word is hard, try saying that five times fast. Digitizing.

Heather Kennedy:

So because of the sheer labor, remember you are going to have to think, rethink everything and don't forget, change all your addresses and all that. I made a huge mistake with my pharmacy recently, which is one thing that contributed to my downfall the other day. But make sure that you research your new place carefully, check out everything, stairs, can you install a shower bar, all that jazz, try to create your support system ahead of time. And remember you'll always have your friends. Don't worry about stuff like that, you know, try to stay positive, involve family members. If you have kids involve them in all of this. Have them, you know, participate in choosing the new place or whatever, if you can, don't ever move alone. Don't ever think that you can do more than you can. It's just like Robynn was saying, and everyone here is saying, we can only do so much in each day. I keep forgetting that I'm disabled. Then I get to the end and I'm like, everybody help because then it's like chaos because I waited to ask for help. Do not wait to ask for help.

Kat Hill:

And if it feels overwhelming, there's usually somebody in your circle of friends or family that's good at organizing. Let them be the point person. Say I'd love somebody to come help me pack for seven days or sort or whatever your downsize looks like, ask that point person if they would be willing because that for us, managing the process of moving and downsizing and trying to manage organizing our help can sometimes push that over the ability to do it versus not do it. So think about having a point person. Yeah, Robynn.

Robynn Moraites:

I recently, I have kind of a storage unit, it's a tiny house in the back of my house and I was able to put extra artwork and furniture while I was redecorating my house. I got rid of all the stuff from my divorce and it was back there and I thought where's the enterprising, I know a little bit about social media, but I kind of hate social media and I was like where's the enterprising college kid and sure enough, I saw this post on Next Door and this kid was like, turn your trash to cash. And I hired this college kid to list all my stuff on Facebook marketplace and whatever, all these different, he did all of the selling and I had some interesting work, that he went to art dealers and got stuff appraised and he found people who were art collectors who would want to buy my stuff.

And I paid him a huge commission, but you know, it was, my stuff was valuable. I didn't wanna just donate at all. I mean, at the end of the day, I'll donate whatever to Goodwill or Salvation Army or whatever. And someone could get, you know, some good artwork or furniture for good discount, but I wanted to sell what I could so that I found the enterprising young college student who was a business major, who was figuring out how to

sell my stuff and that way I didn't have to deal with it. And we figured out how people could Venmo me the money. And then I would Venmo him the commission.

Tom Palizzi:

Is this the guy that started junk.com? That's awesome, awesome, great idea.

Kat Hill:

You know, and some friends are willing to do it too. Like if they've got a garage, I have friends that are good at that, that have taken certain items that have value and they'll sell it to me or for me, and then Venmo me what they for. I mean, people are amazingly willing to help and some people love that. They love the haggle, the process, and the, yeah. Any other tips you guys? I know one of the things that we did that kicked off our physical downsize was we had like a big yard sale in the very small window of time where we weren't all, oh shoot, what's the word for the pandemic...

Robynn Moraites:

Quarantine.

Kat Hill:

When we weren't in our quarantine. Thank you. It takes a village even to say a sentence and what we did is we got everything out of the house and then anything that was out of the house did not come back in. So, I had people staged to help me move stuff out. What did not sell, I tried giving away for free. What didn't go away for free, I had a friend come with her truck, she loaded up the last bits and I took it to donate. But it took, you know, it took weeks of planning for that because it's too overwhelming to do it all at once. But I did not bring anything back into the house.

Tom Palizzi:

Good idea.

Kat Hill:

Kevin. Yeah.

Kevin Kwok :

Yeah. I have a tip for people who are thinking about moving within a city, urban, inner urban moving is tough. I mean, I got three tickets ion three straight days, parking tickets. I fell through a pane of glass because I had to climb three floors upstairs to this what I thought would be a wonderful view of the vista of San Francisco. And so, I think my learning here is really question what you're moving for and what you want, because I didn't make the same mistakes on the second move, but the first move I made all kinds of mistakes for ego purposes.



Kat Hill:

So, how did you do it differently? Did you write things down Kevin or make a priority list or...

Kevin Kwok :

It's a priority list. I went from saying, you know, I've lived in big cities, now I wanna live for simplicity. I want a place is where I can park, where I can buy my groceries easily, little things, but they do make a difference.

Tom Palizzi:

Yep.

Kevin Kwok :

The fact now that I'm in a smaller place and I can vacuum the entire house by only changing plugs twice is a wonderful thing. Right.

Tom Palizzi:

I love it.

Heather Kennedy:

It is. It's the details. Like I can walk if I can't drive, I can walk or crawl or stumble to the Trader Joe's down the way.

Tom Palizzi:

Yeah. It's our plan to move someplace much smaller soon. But the problem we're running into in the housing market in Denver specifically is, you know, you can sell your house for millions, but the thing you're gonna go buy that's half the size, it costs the same as what you just sold your other house for. So, it's really a difficult market to try to move right now. So, we're just gonna wait it out a couple years and see where we end up, probably Kevin's neighbors.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. Hey, I'm envious now.

Tom Palizzi:

Well, I'd get a trailer in a heartbeat, but I don't think my wife would want to go that route.

Kat Hill:

Well, if you have a decent parking lot, maybe we'll come visit y'all on the condo, on the road.

Kevin Kwok :



Road tents. Let me tell you baby rooftop tents.

Heather Kennedy:

Yeah, how long was the process of you guys deciding, and then the decision that you made to getting the Airstream?

Kat Hill:

Hmm. Well, we had, that's a great question, Heather. We have had a trailer and an RV over the years for a long time. So, we have traveled on our vacation time, that way a lot. So, we knew we liked it and we knew that we wouldn't kill each other doing it. So that was the first thing. Try it out before you commit to it. But we made the decision that we thought we could do it financially in June of last year. So, by the time we move into the Airstream, it will have been an entire year of, it took a long time for them to build the Airstream. We got a brand new one because we want to minimize what can go wrong. I mean, things can go wrong with anything, especially with a house on wheels, but we want the warranty and all of that. But yeah, it takes a while. It took a while and I and it took a lot of discussion and a lot of planning. So, and it looks like we've only got a couple minutes left. Does anybody have any other red-hot tips?

Tom Palizzi:

Whatever you do. Keep exercising.

Kat Hill:

Yes. Yes. Moving is good for 10 pounds of weight loss I always say. Moving small boxes, not too heavy weight.

Robynn Moraites:

You don't have to do it alone.

Kat Hill:

You not have to do it alone.

Robynn Moraites:

There's a lot of people willing to talk with you, give you support. And if you might not believe it on the front end, but there's a lot of joy in it too. There's great loss, but there's a lot of freedom and levity and joy too.

Kat Hill:

Yeah. I saw a lot on the thread about buy nothing groups too. It's great. Most neighborhoods have a buy nothing group. They put it in the chat. People come to your house to your porch to pick things up. You just leave it out there and it's gone. I've done a lot of that. You don't have to take it places, which is also nice.



Tom Palizzi:
I'm gonna have to look into that one.

Kat Hill:
All right. Back to you, Mel.

Melani Dizon:
Great. Well, thanks for this great conversation everybody, really great tips. And people loved it in the chat. We will send you the recording and all the show notes and any of the links we talked about and any of the other resources. Tom, yeah?

Tom Palizzi:
I'd just like to say welcome back, Mel. It's good to have you back.

Melani Dizon:
I'm happy to be back, it's thrilling to see all your faces. I was looking forward to seeing you all today. So, thank you. Thank you very much. And I'll be at tour victory for sure. Right on. Yes. So, everybody we'll share all the recordings in the next week or so. And you can always reach us at blog@dpf.org. And we will be back here in May. No, yes, May. What month are we in? We'll be here in May. Thanks everybody. And we'll see you soon.

Kat Hill:
Thank you. Bye everybody.

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