



Wellbeing

Lament

Leaning into the Struggle...

On the recent BBC Big Night In, comedian Miranda Hart finished her sketch on surviving our current lockdown situation by saying: **“It’s okay if you’re struggling, it’s okay if you’re bored, it’s okay if you’re okay, it’s okay if you’re not okay. Be kind to yourself, be kind to others, and remember...love wins.”**

In just those simple few words, Miranda manages to articulate the breadth of different experiences of the lockdown – and all our experiences are and will be different. You may even find yourselves asking, ‘Why?’ Why so much struggle? Why so much difficulty and hardship? Why so much suffering? These are questions that people have asked throughout many generations. You can even find reference to them in the major world faiths, particularly in Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The thread that runs through each of these questions is **lament** – it can mean sorrowful, frustrated, lonely or full of grief. Lament is what happens when people ask, ‘Why?’ and don’t get an answer.

Lament can be where we get to when we are struggling or suffering, or when we look at some of the really hard and difficult stuff that we see happening in and to the world.

There is an ancient book called the Psalms – you may have heard of it. It’s a book of poems or songs and some of them are really well known. Quite a few of them are laments – cries from the heart – that came from a group of people called the Hebrews. For example, the big question the Hebrews kept crying out about was where God was in their struggle. During this coronavirus pandemic we may find ourselves with some big questions as well that we want answers to.

If you ever get to read any of these lament poems what you discover is that hope is always mentioned. **Hope and lament are different sides of the same coin.**

Sometimes, we may feel we are struggling - we may be so sorrowful, frustrated and lonely, that we can’t comprehend what is happening in our circumstances – just like Miranda Hart said. It really is okay to feel like this and it’s important for our wellbeing and mental health to recognise and verbalise how we are feeling; to lean into the struggle. It’s okay to ask or even shout or scream, ‘WHY?’. It’s okay to lament.

If you recognise that you feel like this perhaps try talking to a really good friend to express how you’re feeling. Listening to music can also help us to express and process lament. Or if you just feel overwhelmed, you could try the Oasis helpline: **0203 9684 330**.

You can watch the Miranda clip here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OayZtgNcJPK>