

# Episode 7 – Bye 2023!

**Mell:** Fluff this. Let's eat, drink and be merry.

Hello, my friends. Welcome. Welcome. Welcome to the seventh and last podcast of 2023. I got to say the fact that this is lucky number seven, it is a little profound to me. The number seven is considered a super lucky in a lot of traditions and a lot of religions and mythologies. The number seven is associated with divine or mystical qualities.

It's, it's interesting. For example, in Christianity, there are seven days of creation in the book of Genesis. And seven is often seen as a symbol of perfection or completion. In Hinduism, there are seven chakras, or energy centers, in the body. There are also seven seas and seven continents, which are fundamental components of this world.

Numerology. Numerology is a little significant to me because my mom was huge into numerology when I was little and still dabbles in it. And there, the number 7 is often seen as a number of spiritual awakenings, intuition, and deep inner wisdom. It's considered a number that encourages introspection and a search for the truth.

So, ending 2023 with lucky number 7 is Very auspicious for me, given where I am right now, both mentally and spiritually. We'll get more into that later on. Let's get back to it. Did we survive the holidays? You're here. I'm here. So we must have. I hope you're relaxed, full of joy, and great family memories. I hope you got to see family and gather around a table and laugh a lot.

That's really, really something that I do miss about the holidays is the laughter and sharing stories and catching up with everything. Everybody just seems a little bit more jovial and a little bit more close. I wish we could carry that over through the year. Now, do we have big plans for ringing in the new year?

I find it fascinating the different cultures and different regions have so many different ways of bringing in the new year. It's interesting that this holiday always evokes cleaning out the old year and bringing in the new and setting new goals and new resolutions. And I am not one for making resolutions, kind of setting myself up for failure.

I like to make resolutions every day. Just small baby step goals to get there. Don't overload yourself. Otherwise disappointment, you know what I'm saying?

But different cultures have so many different traditions. Like here's one that's interesting. I don't know if you're modern family fans, but there's an episode where Sofia Vergara's character, she celebrates the new year and she has to have her grapes.

She has to have seven grapes at New Year's eve to eat seven grapes for seven wishes. But. She's Colombian. Her character is Colombian in that, and that's not a Colombian tradition. I don't know why I looked that up, but I would look up so much useless knowledge. It's just fascinating because it's Spain that does that.

In Spain, they do 12 grapes, and you have to eat each grape as the bell strikes 12, one for each bell strike. And you have to eat one at each bell, and you make your wishes that way. So if you don't choke to death, you might just get your wishes.

But in, uh, Japan, a tradition emerged from back in the 1200s when Buddhist monks would feed the poor. And so a big tradition is eating warm soba noodles or what they call year-crossing noodles. It's supposed to bring long life and prosperity in the year ahead. And I think that's lovely. In Haiti, they share soup. In France, they feast, have a big huge feast and have champagne. Being Irish, I can attest that we are superstitious.

We have some seriously wacky traditions. One new year tradition in Ireland is banging on the doors and the walls of the family home with Christmas spread. Okay. Why? I don't know. It sounds crazy. It probably is, but it's all about chasing bad luck out of the house and inviting good spirits in before the start of the new year.

So I may be making some Christmas bread. No, no, I'm not going to do that. I promise. I'm not going to do that, but I think that's funny. But the most famous of all of the Irish New Year's traditions On New Year's night, families across Ireland set a space at the dinner table for those that have been lost in the year to make sure that they're remembered, and they make sure that the doors are unlocked so that their energy and their spirit can be with them to bring in the new year.

So I think that's a beautiful tradition. For me, I think that I'm going to do a little combination of a few of those. I'm going to have noodles. I don't think I'm gonna have the Irish Christmas bread, but I will have noodles and I will have uh, champagne and um, maybe even try a couple of grapes. But does that count if I have champagne that's made out of grapes?

I don't know. What do you think? Whatever your tradition is, if you like to stay in your pajamas and go to sleep at nine, that's just fine with me. But 2023 kind of closed the gap on the pandemic, you know, we, uh, we're, we're still reeling from it. And as a matter of fact, it's a horrible thing. Some friends of ours just found out that right before Christmas, um, they both got COVID and he, her husband passed away and my heart is crushed for her.

So it's still out there lurking and it's still hanging over our heads. And then we've got all kinds of things popping up. We've got that RSV and then the flu is pretty bad. So, you know, we've got, we're a little shell shock, still a lot shell shock. And given my family circumstances, we have to be very cautious.

My mom's immune system is compromised. So. As you know, I don't get out much. You've got to be careful out there. So you need to be healthy and happy and don't squander time that we're blessed with. And I know I preach that over and over again. So take a little time to celebrate the passing of the year.

And we made it baby. We made it through another year, or we're gonna make it. It's still got a few days to go, so knock on some wood, Irish and superstitions. If you don't know my personal circumstances, I'm my mother's full time caregiver, and that limits my ability to get out and about. Honestly, I would kill to be able to go into a Target.

I miss Target. A lot. I don't know why, but I just do. I don't get out very much and I'm very much in a vacuum, so I don't get very much feedback and the creative process is kind of me, myself, and I, so I talk to myself a lot. It got me thinking about how loneliness affects people. I know I touched on it in a previous podcast, but I think that it's really important to say.

This again, last May, the U. S. Surgeon General released an advisory calling attention to the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in our country, in the United States. In the United States of America, where everybody's taking selfies and people are gathering and protesting and sitting in and it looks like there's groups everywhere, but is it quality time and quality connection?

This is happening right now. This was just May 2023 that this. Advisory came out about loneliness and disconnect, and I can relate to that. I, you know, loneliness is real and it affects everything and disconnection and not knowing what's going on in the world with the people that you love and the people that you care about.

That's, that's affects you emotionally and mentally. And there's some really serious statistics on this one. And the reason why I bring this all up is that it. It goes back to me hoping that you got to spend some time with family and friends over the holiday season. And if you're not planning on doing anything for New Year's Eve, do something little, you know, like what we did.

We had, instead of an ugly Christmas sweater party, it was a Christmas pajama party. And it was a hoot. So, you know, if you live in an apartment, invite your neighbors across the hall, or Your cousin or your sister or whomever, even if it's just two people make a connection and bring in the new year with that connection.

I think that that would be kind of nice. And let's get back to the statistics, though, because on this whole advisory that came out, it says that physical health consequences of poor or insufficient connection include. Now, get a load of this one, 29 percent increased risk of heart disease, a 32 percent increased risk of stroke, and a 50%, 50, 50 percent increased risk of developing dementia for older adults.

Additionally, lacking social connection increases risk of premature death by more than 60%. Premature death by more than 60%. So we got to take care of our elders. We've got to make sure that they know that they're, they matter. They love their love. They count. They're important. Listen to the history and tradition and wisdom that they can pass down to us.

Don't mock it. Those who choose to forget the past are doomed to repeat it. We can look at a few things going on in our world right now and say, Mm hmm, I'd say so. But we also have to realize that each individual is valuable, not just Facebook likes or clicks. People, the people closest reach out and point and there's somebody there's got to be.

And if there's not, you may be suffering from a little too much isolation and that'll affect your health. So 2024 is going to be jam packed with all kinds of very, very interesting things. This coming year, let's make a pact to connect more, check in on each other more, make time to even video chat just once a while, get back around the dinner table.

And I know I ran about that way too often, but sitting down and even sharing a pizza, that connection and communication is kind of critical. It's not just about the food, it's about the connection. And as we can tell by the statistics, that's very important to a fulfilling and happy life. I'm acutely aware of how isolation

leads to loneliness and depression, and I've made a commitment to myself to do everything I can to minimize that damage.

And that's all part of my journey that I've been going through and what I want to share with you, my tips, tricks, hints, and that's all part of the big ball of wax that's coming flying to a speaker near you soon. Because when I started this podcast, it was about connection and it was about sharing and thinking, there are definitely more people out there that are going through these things.

How can I help them get through the way I'm getting through and the way I've gotten through, we have a responsibility to lift each other up. And so that's the whole reason why I started my podcast. But when I started my website, that was all about, you know, food and drink and recipes and whatnot, but that's.

It's changed. It's evolved. I had something entirely different in mind and over the past year, the concept has completely evolved. You know, about a month and a half ago, something happened and some update happened and my website completely imploded. Actually, it was probably about three months ago. It was three months ago.

But it imploded. It was like gobbledygook on the page and I had to start from square one. And I really truly believe with all my heart that it was the universe, divine intervention, whatever you wanna call it. But it was something shifting in the universe saying, Uhuh, that's not the way you're gonna go.

You are gonna go that way. We got a different plan going on for you. And I'm like, oh, I see how it is. I get it. I have no doubt about that. So many things are coming full circle right about now. And the universe is leading me back to it's really amazing, leading me back to my roots and my core beliefs and things that I kind of let go by the wayside.

Things that. I held so profoundly up front and center, but as you grow and get older and you kind of put some things aside, you know, when I was a child, I played with childish things, that kind of thing, but it's not. And as the world is evolving and things are changing, it's all coming back full circle.

And I know I touched upon that, I think in the last podcast or two, so many things that technology has replaced. And the industry has replaced things that we used to do and take time and pride in doing with our hands. That's something that I have discovered is really important and it's important for me. So it's time to turn up the volume and share things.

And I'm digging out notebooks and I'm taking notes and I'm writing down things. And I've got like five notebooks going around the house all at once. And I got to color code them. And I've got my Echo, poor baby. I keep on, she's got notes on her. I think she's going to tell me I quit soon. I'm just super jazzed for the year to come.

Even more super jazzed for the next few months. I've got tons and tons of work to do, but I'm super excited to share it with all of you. And when you're done listening to me, I'd really appreciate it. If you take a minute, hopefully I had the brain cell left to put the subscribe link at the bottom of the podcast notes, but if.

I did not. There's one all over my website, so please take a minute to subscribe. I promise you I won't spam you or anything, but you will know as soon as I let things fly. Plus, I'm putting up some pretty awesome recipes, so those will be going out too. It'll let you know that I got something yummy or something delicious or a new bottle that I reviewed.

I'd appreciate it if you'd take the time. It would mean a lot to me if you would let me into your email box. No, that didn't sound creepy at all, did it? Yes, it did, but I promise you, I'm not creepy. Well, maybe a little, but in a good way. No, I'm kidding. Seriously. One of the things that was interesting is I like to get your feedback, and the holiday season gathering with my family, some of them I hadn't seen in a year, and a lot of them I hadn't seen since the podcast launched, so it was fabulous to get some feedback from everybody, and I gotta be honest with you, I got feedback that I really wasn't expecting.

I was prepared for a lot of criticism. I was prepared for meh, you know, not my cup of tea, Godspeed, da, da, da, da. But instead, I was a little surprised I got, it's too short. And then I got, you know, you've got to be a little bit more you. You're a little bit too pansy ass. You, you got to take on some more serious topics and be you.

Don't be afraid to get controversial. And you know what, that is kind of me in a nutshell. I'm kind of in your face a little bit. So, I'm taking all of that in, and with everything that I've been taking notes in my thought process, and my vision, and everything that's going on these past couple of weeks, and these past few months, and so expect a little shake up on the next episodes, you know, it's gonna change a little bit, and it's totally okay not to agree with me, and you can even get pissed at me, but you gotta remember that infamous saying, you know, that's attributed to Voltaire, I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

Now, I know that those weren't written by Voltaire, but it's what he meant, and those words were written in like 1900, 1906, I think it was, by Evelyn Beatrice Hall in her biography, *The Friends of Voltaire*. She used those words to sum up his attitude. I'm really getting grounded again in my processes and, and utilizing the tools and my training and my, my education and my experience to get to a really good spot of tolerance and kindness and generosity of spirit, so to speak.

Look, don't get me wrong. I'm still always going to be the snarky bitch that you all know and love. That's never going to change, but the root of it is I will always have a handout for you if you need to be lifted up, and that's what it's all about. And that's the motto for 2024 is we're going to be sharing and lifting up and I'm going to share everything I can possibly share with you that has helped me just I'm super jazzed and I want to share that feeling with all of you.

So I'm very excited for the future and the future of this podcast and the future of my little adventure here. Fluff this. We're doing it, baby. It's as simple as that. Fluff this. Let's eat, drink, and be merry. And we're gonna do it on multiple levels. We're going in with the wine, the food, the meditation, the laughter, the funny, down to vision boarding if you want.

I mean, seriously, that is a cool tool that is so underrated. Be prepared for a new kind of philosophy and personal development through wine, food, and laughter. I'm so excited. I hope you'll join me. This is a perfect place to wrap up this podcast. I want to say to you, thank you. I know that most of you listening aren't my relatives and you have to listen to me, but For those of you that are not, I want to say thank you, and I want you to understand that when you take the time to listen to me, it is really filling my heart, and I am honored and privileged that you're doing so, and I'm so grateful that you're here, and I cannot wait to spend the next year with you, so thank you.

With my whole heart, I'm so grateful. Anyway, my loves, Happy New Year, be safe, be happy, be kind to one another, eat, drink, and be merry. Sláinte!