

PRESS RELEASE

“Make well-being your gold medal,” says Abhinav Bindra at the 2021 LiveLoveLaugh Lecture

Bangalore, India, October 10, 2021: "I will always remember the day my life changed forever. I was supposed to feel elation. Instead, I felt the weight of the gold medal around my neck. I stood on top of the Olympic podium for all the world to see, but I would rather have been buried under my blanket, lying alone in bed."

With this powerful opening, Abhinav Bindra, the Olympic and World Championship Gold Medallist shooter, set the context for this year's LiveLoveLaugh (LLL) lecture. Started in 2019, The LiveLoveLaugh Lecture Series features the world's foremost thinkers and influencers sharing their perspectives on the forces that shape the mental health narrative. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Padma Shri awardee Dr Siddhartha Mukherjee. In this year's edition, Abhinav focused on the importance of mental health for athletes, urging authorities, society, and individuals to prioritize mental health.

"Balancing the pursuit of success with caring for one's well-being is critical for everyone, including athletes. Abhinav is leading the conversation on athlete mental health, and we are proud to have had him deliver this year's lecture. I am sure his work will continue to inspire change in how our society views mental health," said Deepika Padukone, Founder, LiveLoveLaugh, a charitable trust that aims to give hope to every person experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression.

As a member of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Athletes' Commission and through the Abhinav Bindra Foundation, Abhinav has been a vocal advocate for the role of mental well-being in elite performance. His lecture offered a passionate account of his mental health struggle at the height of success and how it may be the story of many athletes suffering in silence.

"Athletes are trained and socially conditioned to channelize physical stress while silencing the mind, their feelings, and emotions. The sports industry has ended up prioritizing medals over all else. The pressure to focus on the outcome can drive athletes towards developing a one-track mind, ignoring every aspect of their life other than sport, performance and winning," said Abhinav. "We must take better care of our sportspeople and create mental wellness programs designed for athletes. Excellence has to be holistic."

The lecture was followed by a conversation between Abhinav and LLL founder Deepika Padukone, where they discussed their journey of success and experience of mental illness.

In the conversation, Abhinav urged those who may be struggling to seek assistance to avoid suffering in silence, saying, "Prioritize your well-being – physical, emotional, and mental – to give yourself the best chance of realizing your true potential. Reaching out for support is a sign of great courage and strength. I encourage anybody who is not feeling their best to go out and seek help."

Deepika echoed this sentiment and reflected on her journey. "In the last decade, India has seen a revolution of sorts when it comes to physical health. But the same cannot be said about mental health. Please know that there is absolutely no shame or stigma in seeking help. Having had a lived

experience with mental illness, I can say without a shadow of a doubt that the first step in the journey to recovery is acceptance.”

Abhinav signed off by providing a message of hope to viewers, stating, “Things can and do get better. It is okay to not be okay. Be kind to yourself. Nothing is more important. Make your health and well-being your gold medal”.

The entire lecture and the conversation with Abhinav and Deepika is now available on the LiveLoveLaugh YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvNQs74WZx8>

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About LiveLoveLaugh:

The Live Love Laugh Foundation (LiveLoveLaugh) is a charitable trust founded by Deepika Padukone in 2015. The organization aims to give hope to every person experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression. LiveLoveLaugh works on three core impact areas: Mental Health Education for Adolescents; Capacity Building for Doctors; and Enabling Mental Healthcare Access in Rural Communities. For more information about LiveLoveLaugh, visit <https://www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org/> or <https://www.instagram.com/tlllffoundation/> <https://twitter.com/TLLLFoundation> <https://www.facebook.com/TLLLFoundation> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-live-love-laugh-foundation/?originalSubdomain=in> https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZ1Kc8PKtSbkoycrBLBRX_g

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