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On any given day, there are crowds of seemingly happy people making their way around the city. And yet so many in that crowd feel that their life doesn't measure up to the others. You may see happy couples and wonder why you're single. Or see families seemingly easily filled with children, while you're struggling to conceive. You may stand to the edge of the party, feeling unable to make conversation, as you watch the effervescent ones around you easily conversing and enjoying their time. You may wake up feeling down and see all the happy people around you who seem to have never been down in their lives. Maybe you can't help but notice the ones with perfect appearance while you wish you were more in shape. The others around you at work may seem so much smarter. Or, you're shopping next to someone who seems to have no cares about money.

All of this comparison certainly doesn't make for a very happy new year. Is there an antidote? Luckily, yes. "Don't compare your insides to someone else's outsides". This is a great quote attributed to Rob Lowe. It can be helpful to remember how many others may be struggling, whether with the same struggles you are having or something else. A simple look at statistics can remind us of our shared humanity.

Everyone knows the statistic that about 50% of marriages end in divorce. Jealous of that happy couple? Remind yourself that one, or both, may have been divorced or will be. That family with children may be one of the 7.3 million that used fertility services (cdc.gov).

Feeling anxious at a party? Look at the crowd with new eyes knowing that 1 in 5 have anxiety so bad it's a disorder with an even larger number having anxiety symptoms (NIMH). Woke up feeling down? Seven percent of those smiling faces have a diagnosed depression, with a much greater number depressed but undiagnosed (NIMH).

There will always be those that look better but don't zero in on the best looking and forget to also look at the more than 2/3 of US adults are overweight or obese (NHANES 20013-14). And the one that looks so good may be one of more than 50 million Americans silently struggling with chronic or severe pain (NCCIH).

Those around you at work may seem to complete tasks so easily, despite being one of over 4.6 million American adults who have, or have overcome, a learning disability (2010 US Census). And that person spending money more freely next to you at the store may be one of the 80% of Americans who are in debt (Pew Charitable Trusts).

It's a great thing to set intentions for the New Year. But whether you want your soulmate, to be more positive, lose weight or budget more effectively, don't forget to "cut yourself a wide pair of slacks" (as my husband alters the phrase). Allow yourself to be human, knowing humans aren't as perfect as we tend to look on the outside. Having compassion for ourselves, and the unseen struggles of those around us, allows our humanity to be the basis for a rich and meaningful life.