

Caring for Self and Others in Times of Trouble:

Some Spiritual Tools and Tips

1. **Breathe.** Breathe. Breathe some more. Take time in your day, at any moment, to take ten deep even breaths. Carve out 5-10 minutes to meditate or practice mindfulness or contemplative prayer. Start here, now, wherever you are.
2. **Ground yourself in the present moment.** Focus your awareness on something real, enduring, or beautiful in your surroundings. Look up often. Discover the wonder and awe that is already here.
3. **Acknowledge your fears, anxieties, concerns.** Offer them up in prayer, if you pray. Write them in your journal. Share them with others. Feel what you feel, honor it, and know that it is not the final word.
4. **Remember you are not alone.** Ever. You are surrounded by care and support. Reach out.
5. **Create and sustain community.** Show up for one another. Listen compassionately. Practice empathy. Even while avoiding “close physical contact,” message the people you care about. Stand with those most vulnerable and those who suffer the brunt of prejudice and fear. Check in on folks. Call your mother, father, guardian, mentor, little sibling, long lost friend.
6. **Unplug, judiciously.** While staying aware of developments, do not let the Corona-chaos govern you, but forgive yourself when and if it does.
7. **Practice kindness.** There is a temptation in health scares to view others as potential threats. Remember we are in this together. While practicing health guidelines and appropriate caution, remember to engage one another. Smile when you can. Bring good deeds and good energy into our world.
8. **Stay healthy** through sleep, diet, exercise. See healing and wellness holistically – mind, body, and spirit.
9. **Make art.** Discover, imagine, engage your hopes and fears, the beauty and ugliness of our world. Write, paint, sing, dance, soar.
10. **Practice gratitude.** In the face of crises, make note of the things for which you are grateful: your breath, the particular shade of the sky at dusk – or dawn. The color blue, the color green, the gifts and strengths you have, other people in your life, the ability to laugh. A pet.
11. **Connect** with your spiritual, religious, humanist, cultural, or other communities. Find strength and solace and power in traditions, texts, rituals, practices, holy times and seasons.
12. **Pray** as you are able, silently, through song, in readings, through ancestors. Remember the long view of history, the rhythms and cycles of nature, the invisible threads that connect us all.
13. **Practice hope.** Trust in the future and our power to endure and persist, to live fully into the goodness that awaits.

- Alexander Levering Kern

Friends Meeting at Cambridge, Massachusetts

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