

# Kindness in Troubled Times

March 2020

I had an article prepared and queued up to be sent to you all, but I decided not to send it out right now, because a data-driven article was not the kind of thing that I would want to receive, given that we've all been bombarded with data regarding the coronavirus. I am getting tired of data. I realized that words of kindness were the most important. What we are facing now is a call for us to draw upon stores of kindness that many of us never thought we would need to tap into in our lifetimes.

I just found out that one of my favorite people in the world, Yo-Yo Ma, has set up a music sharing program to reach out and connect people in this time of isolation. He has been, and continues to be, a generous and loving man with a great gift. The project, called "Songs of Comfort," can be seen on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, where you can contribute to this lovely gesture of sharing music to provide solace in these times.



This is just one example of a well-known person using his fame to help us get through something for which we have no reference point. It's so easy to blame this politician, that doctor, this vector for what is going on in the world. But that moves us forward not one inch.

For many of us, sheltering in place is quite difficult and we question whether it's necessary or even helpful. I questioned it at the beginning of this experience, but came to accept that this is a choice that might help in some small way to lessen the strength of the epidemic.

I think that it will continue to get harder to maintain our sense of calm as this continues. I have spent many hours in meditation and prayer asking for everyone (including myself) to be able to live in a manner that approaches bodhisattva nature as closely as possible. I have had to let go of my deep and residual fears: the fear of not having enough money, the fear of becoming ill, the fear of losing people that I love, the fear of the economy collapsing, and so on.

I believe I have successfully let go of these fears, knowing that the only thing I have ever had control of are my own actions. To that effect I have been studying, learning about SARS (as it is a coronavirus we have some data on) and COVID-19, to find ways to help people strengthen their immune system and, if they get the virus, be able to use the tools that we currently have in hand to treat it. This allows me to feel useful and perhaps to have some small impact on reducing what appears so enormous.



I am working virtually at this point, and will do so for at least the next couple of weeks. I would encourage everyone to do the same, to the degree that their job allows them to do it. I'm lucky that most of my work can be done this way but I understand that others may not be in that position.

Cultivating patience and kindness is very hard — a spiritual practice all its own. It requires raising the level of emotional and spiritual vibration, a concerted effort, perhaps on an hourly or even minute-to-minute basis. It is not easy. But it is a good and honorable choice.

I have been incredibly touched by some of the small things people have done. My little virtual neighborhood message board has been filled with people offering to shop, do errands, and support neighbors who they have never met, simply because they are able to do so. This is a blessing. I'm sure in your life you're seeing many people reaching out in the same way.

The coronavirus will inevitably run its course. We will be through it and clean up whatever damage and losses we sustain. I would ask you also to consider celebrating the kindness and resiliency of human nature as we go through this process. I send my

love out to all of you, and my prayers will continue to extend from the community that I know to the world and all of the humans who are dealing with this virus.

"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

- Kitty O'Meara

Namaste,  
Wendy Marks

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