

## Some Thoughts About Self-Care and Action in Turbulent Times

~ Jan Edl Stein, MFT

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*I offer these suggestions from my heart and own personal practice. Please take these as suggestions and invitations to your own nature as you adjust and re-organize to the very challenging time we have entered. Nothing is rigid!*

1. **Take some time** (even 7 minutes) to connect with your breath and your body. Let your awareness rest on your breath while you gently “notice” the sensations and thoughts that arise. Simply be with whatever arises without judgment or interpretation. Notice your center of gravity. Welcome a felt sense of your “ground of being”.
2. **Set an intention** each morning for your own orientation to the world and speak it aloud. For example, “I am committed to being kind to everyone I encounter today”.
3. **Go into nature**. Whether a short excursion into an urban park or a longer venture into a wilder land, whatever you can manage is fine. When you are there focus your attention on what is in the present moment. Open your senses and receive all that is present. Notice the sounds, the smells, the colors, and images. Let your languaged mind relax. Welcome the impressions that great your senses. Welcome contact with beauty of any size and kind.
4. **Connect with a non-human** every day. Find a non-human and have a conversation of at least 5 minutes. This can be a plant, a pet, or something natural available locally. Try it!
5. **Be mindful** of how you are receiving news. Check facts and sources. Pay attention to how news affects your energetic body and respond with care. Turn off your connection with news/media at least one hour before bedtime.
6. **Make a list of your friends** and acquaintances who are most likely to support your intentions in the world. Let yourself feel the support and camaraderie of these people. Connect with these people, as is comfortable, and welcome the formation of groups. Be willing to extend, even just a bit beyond your social comfort level to make new and supportive connections. Remember that we are ALL CONNECTED!
7. **Make a list of all of the non-human beings** in your world that you LOVE and bring you great joy and solace. Let this list seep into your bones. Actively cultivate hope within.
8. **Write a list of 7 places in this world that have touched you deeply**. Include with each the most salient feeling that arises as you remember that place. Let your body re-member each of these places as deeply as possible. Ask yourself if you are willing to defend one of these places.
9. **Identify ONE cause that speaks to you** and make a commitment to support that. Consider getting involved in that cause beyond financial support. Contact the leaders of that cause and make a real connections. Allow yourself to feel some agency in this one directed activity.
10. **Don't be alone**. **Connect** with like-minded friends and connect with like-minded organizations. If you are feeling stuck in despair or need help with contacting hope within yourself, reach out to a community. It does exist! Consider reaching out for counseling support that is sensitive to the context in which we live.

*~ I invite you to walk in gratitude and love – not fear ~*



The breathtaking beauty of looking westward (a direction of compassion) in West Marin Co., CA spring 2017. Photo credit: Ilana Stein