

## DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME ARE YOU COMING TOGETHER OR COMING APART?

How do you thrive during this difficult time rather than just survive? With our Charlotte Shelter In Place order, so many are struggling to find a new “norm” day to day, week to week, until life returns to what we are used to. Ask those around you what their deepest fears are and surprisingly, most are not as concerned about catching the virus as they are with other fears. So many individuals are struggling financially with job losses, market changes, difficulty paying their bills. Many are afraid to go out to the store or get through each day, not knowing what to do next or how to survive the loneliness?

How do you stay sane and stable during this difficult time? What are we learning from this pandemic and how can we grow? We have always assumed that life will continue day to day as “normal”. We expect things to be the same each morning when we wake up and start our day. Sadly, we never entertain the possibility that things can change in an instant. Life is always unpredictable yet we assume it to be stable and status quo as we know it. We often believe we can control what happens to us and what our days will look like, yet we have now learned that control is an illusion and that the norm can change in a flash.

Presence, and mindfulness, are the way to live our lives and are the best tools to help us through this time. So often we rush from chore to chore, place to place, meeting to meeting, without stopping to take in the moments. During this time, we are learning that our experiences are precious, that the moments need to be valued, that we need to be present with the people we love and care about and the daily moments of our lives. We need to stop, smell the flowers, take in the beautiful sunrises and sunsets and nature around us. So many things in our lives are still the same ~ it is still spring, the trees and flowers are still blooming, the sun still rises each morning and sets each evening. Hopefully the people we care about are still in our lives virtually for now, but soon to be back in social contact. With social distancing, we are learning to remember what it feels like to hug people, to touch people around us, to value standing close to someone and also make eye contact, pay attention to the people around us and not fear being too close.

Though we are safer, for now, to social distance, we need to open our eyes to remembering what is important in our lives. What are your goals when life does return to normal? What do you miss the most and what are you valuing in the extra time that you have, for now, to learn about yourself, to reach out virtually, to grow and most of all, to settle and learn to be in the moment?

Ann Kreindler-Siegel, LCSW, BCC, PLLC

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(704) 491-5273