



Mind: Times of Crisis: The Opportunity to Dream Newer Visions

Body: Hope and Our Body

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Times of Crisis:

The Opportunity to Dream Newer Visions



Times of crisis bring out the best in us and the worst in us. In the last edition of Maturity Matters, we discussed how to protect ourselves from a number of new Covid-19 Scams introduced to exploit and take advantage of our friends and families. This edition looks at the other end of the spectrum – the opportunity to demonstrate the vision of our better angels.

Shortly after preparing the article on the scams, I was invited to participate in an email chain that shared uplifting messages with other women. Historically, I have chosen to not respond to these types of chain requests. Something caused me to pause this time. If I would spend many hours researching how to protect folks from the worst of us, why would I not invest the same attention and energy to celebrate, inspire, and share the best in us? I made a leap of faith and decided to participate. While I forwarded to others on the list an impassioned video message on gratitude, I received, (thanks to Melanie Rupp) the following poem:

Written in 1869 by Kathleen O’Mara:

“And people stayed at home
 And read books
 And listened
 And they rested
 And did exercises
 And made art and played
 And learned new ways of being
 And stopped and listened
 More deeply
 Someone meditated, someone prayed
 Someone met their shadow
 And people began to think differently
 And people healed.
 And in the absence of people who
 Lived in ignorant ways
 Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,
 The earth also began to heal
 And when the danger ended and
 People found themselves
 They grieved for the dead
 And made new choices
 And dreamed of new visions
 And created new ways of living
 And completely healed the earth
 Just as they were healed”

Reprinted during Spanish Flu Pandemic, 1919

Yes, these are uncertain times and difficult times. Some have lost loved ones, jobs, structure, routine, and certainty. Many are physically isolated from



friends and family, our faith and social communities. Milestone celebrations are postponed or completely cancelled, never to offer the original majesty they once promised. Countless are fearful for what the future could bring for their physical, mental, and financial well-being.

And yet, the words written in 1869 are timeless. What powerful counsel – to recognize the opportunity to pause, listen, pray, meditate, think differently, create new, heal and be healed.

There is much we do not have power over right now, but we DO have the ability to choose HOW we will respond. Embedded in the crisis is a global re-set opportunity to give us the space and invitation to reflect on what truly brings meaning and value to our lives. From personal, local, national or international perspectives, the call to heal and be healed involves new ways of thinking, feeling, being, and doing. Integrating an expanded and more delicate balance of mind, body and spirit.

We have always had the ability to reconsider and recreate, and yet during these times, the window seems even more clear and compelling. Whether in quiet contemplations or widespread movements, the summons to design a new and better normal sit right beside the uncertainty and fear. We can acknowledge the fear and recreate anyways. We can embrace the uncertainty and still dream new visions.

Individually and collectively, we can fashion our own 'new normal,' and, like Kathleen O'Mara, pen our own new poem to serve as timeless inspiration to be discovered in generations to come.

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Hope and Our Body



Dr. Dan Tomasulo recently updated an article on the power of hope to impact not only our sense of emotional well-being, but to also improve indicators of physical health. While research on hope has tended to focus on younger populations, a study conducted by researchers associated with the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University's Institute for Quantitative Social Science found a positive relationship between hope and physical health for older participants as well. Greater sense of hope reduced evidence of chronic conditions, cancer, chronic pain, sleep problems and death from all causes.

Human Nature

"Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings."

Elie Wiesel