

**Hello U3A Members!**



How are you all?

Some of you will know me from the **Healing Yoga** classes. If I haven't met you yet, hopefully I will sometime in the future when the planet gets its mojo back! For now, I wanted to check in, say hi, and wish you well!

I have a family member with a very high risk profile so I've been isolating at home with my husband and daughter for 6 weeks now. My son is living in LA and the situation there is grim. This has been a very challenging scenario for me and I would imagine the same is true for most of you.

The majority of us are experiencing a heightened degree of fear and sadness. Our way of life has changed drastically and the future is filled with uncertainty. I think it's completely normal to be anxious and worried during this pandemic occurrence.

There is great sorrow around the world and being human means that we care deeply about our global community. We're grieving for the suffering of others and also deeply concerned about those we love.

However, it's in our best interest to stay healthy in mind, body and spirit. I've been wrestling with my troubled emotions for several weeks now, but slowly I'm gathering strength and feeling a sense of emotional healing. In case you're feeling disconnected and ill at ease too, I'd like to share 5 very basic strategies, as a starting point, to combat emotional and physical pain.

### **1. Movement is MEDICINE**

When we feel sad and out of sync, we tend to be more inactive. However, we can use physiology to influence our psychology . . . and visa versa! In other words, movement makes us **feel better!** Lack of movement will lead to a **stagnation** of energy. So ... dance to happy music, go for a walk in nature, practice yoga, ride a bike (maybe stationary?), do Tai Chi, or whatever gets your body circulating energy, every day! Even if you don't feel like it, **force yourself!** Exercise releases 'feel good' chemicals and gets your body and mind in a happier place.

## 2. Be Mindful & Meditate

Right now, today, we are ok and **all is well**. Our thoughts often jump to the future as we project our fears forward to our **imaginings** of how life **might be** one day. This is not helpful and we have to work hard to override our destructive thinking. Mindfulness means bringing thoughts back to right here, right now ... the present moment. We have adequate food, a comfortable home and people who care about us. Take a few minutes each day to sit in stillness and bring to mind the things that you feel grateful for. Let's focus on what we **do** have and give thanks.

## 3. Breathe

In my **Healing Yoga** classes we've discussed how breathing influences; heart rate, blood pressure and the nervous system. The first step is to become aware of your breath. If you're breathing into your chest, this is typically a short, anxious type of breath. A yoga breath is slow and elongated and is sent deep to the belly. This is a calming breath. Recently I've included steep hills into my walks so that I breathe deeply into my lungs and also expel completely. Stress is often held around the chest and throat so deep breathing has a calming, detoxifying effect.

## 4. Eat Vibrant Foods

Food affects mood and that's a fact. When we're blue, we often crave comfort foods and that actually makes us **feel worse**. Comfort foods are generally packaged foods that have no life force. We call this 'empty calories'. Lots of dark greens, fresh fruit and veg will boost the immune system and lift emotions. We're moving into soup season and homemade soups can be packed full of goodness! Caffeine is a stimulant which agitates the nervous system so replace that cup of coffee or tea with hot lemon water or herbal tea when you can! Ensure that you drink **plenty** of water and remember, **fresh** is indeed **best**, so fill up your shopping trolley mostly from the produce aisles!

## 5. Practice Sleep Hygiene

Clean sleep is a deep, untroubled sleep of 8+ hours. Poor sleep patterns can lead to serious health issues and mental health problems. A good sleep cannot be underrated! Don't you agree? For a variety of reasons, older adults wake up more often throughout the night and get less sleep than they need. I've included an article in this email if you'd like to check out some tips on getting a better night's sleep.

Next week, I'll send you another 5 tips for wellbeing and healing. Many of these things are very obvious but we tend to disregard the importance of the basics when we're stressed.

Look after yourselves beautiful people! If we're patient and calm, 'this too shall pass'. Australia is the best place to be right now and most of us are doing all the right things to keep each other safe.

Next week we'll explore ways to use this lockdown time wisely for personal development.

Keep shining your light! In peace and health,

*Joni Coots*

*To heal the world,  
we must heal ourselves.*

-SANT RAJINDER SINGH JI MAHARAJ

