

Finding Your Inner Compass

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in These Troubling Times

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There are many concerning events happening in our world, in other countries, and in our country. Many are feeling overwhelmed, saddened, worried, and deeply disturbed. Some people don't know what to do, and some worry much of the time. Some feel alone if not lost in the labyrinth of all the constant, negative information in the media.

We each need to find our way and a clear path that will give us hope and nurture us. Here are some suggestions. First, either stop watching or reduce your time watching the barrage of information on TV and on our APPs about wars, natural disasters, major conflicts, etc. The visuals we see again and again seem to penetrate deeply into

A second suggestion is to listen to music you enjoy, watch TV programs that make you laugh, or watch beautiful programs about wild places and wildlife. You have lots of choices. Make conscious choices about what is best for you.

Another suggestion is to turn your attention to your local community and find ways to participate and be of service. You can volunteer with a nonprofit and meet good people who also want to be of service. Choose a group or organization that gives you pleasure through your mutual interest in their goals. Focus more on the needs and work of different groups

help at the library. Maybe you enjoy children and can volunteer at a nonprofit to care for children after school. Your work in your community will help

you to feel valued, and it will help you to make a positive difference in your local area.

Another idea is to find time for pleasurable activities with your friends and family members. Even if you are an introvert and like to be alone a lot, in these times, we all need positive support and interaction with those we love. The bonds of friendship and family can be very nurturing and emotionally supportive. However, the "connections" need to be in person—not on cell phones. You can't hug someone or pat someone on the back on a cell phone. You want to physically be with the person in the moment, hear his or her voice, look at the person, and laugh together. We all need each other, especially those we value and love.

The last suggestion is about how much you value yourself. Some say that every human being has two purposes in life. One is about his or her personal growth, which often comes about as we live our lives and the choices we make over time. The second purpose of every human being is to share their unique gifts and talents with others. Yes, we all have different abilities and skills, and when we share them with others, we make the world a better place. When we follow our heart's longing and our intuition,



our psyche and contribute to depression, gloom, and sadness. You can choose to stay informed but listen to the radio and programs that have a mix of information instead of watching visual disasters.

in your local community where you can contribute to making positive change. You may have special skills or natural talents that would be helpful to a particular group. Perhaps you enjoy books and could

we usually discover what those gifts and talents are and, in return, we will feel valued. The more we help others in ways that feel good and are easy to do, the more we will realize our life's purpose.

Scott and Pete are two older men in their seventies. Scott's wife died several years ago and his grown children live far away. Scott was a mechanic at a utility company. He retired in good health, eager to enjoy being outdoors. Pete, who lives in the same small town, is also retired. He worked for a well-known express delivery company for many years and enjoys being physically active. He was divorced many years ago and lives alone. The two men met each other while fishing. They found they had a lot in common—especially the outdoors and living a healthy life. They were not members of the same political party, but they respected each other's different points of view. Gradually the friendship deepened, and the two men had fun and liked to do many things together.

Often after a morning of fishing, they went over to the town's one-and-only grocery store where they would get their morning coffee. There was a comfortable wooden bench outside the store where they usually sat and talked. No one knows how it happened, but gradually, Pete and Scott found themselves helping some of the customers in the store with their groceries. Martha, a mother with the two little children, often needed help, as did Tom, an older man who had difficulty putting groceries in his car. Another customer, Nina, who was in a wheelchair, needed help with heavy bags of dog food.

The two men came several times a week to enjoy their free coffee and help the customers. The grocer, Mr. Brown, really appreciated their help as much as his customers did. Mr. Brown was competing against a national supermarket that had recently opened in the county and his prices were higher. However, his customers were loyal to shopping at his store because of the help Scott and Pete freely provided. Others in the small town were also coming to the grocery store because of the friendly atmosphere that had been created.



Nina, like Pete and Scott, was also a thoughtful and caring person. She grew upon a farm with lots of animals. There were chickens, ducks, cats, dogs, sheep, horses, and even a donkey. She loved caring for the animals, and she seemed to have a special talent training their family dogs over the years. As a young woman, she opened a dog-boarding facility and taught classes to teach people how to work with their dogs. She was busy and successful until she had a major car accident when she was 40 years old. It took Nina quite some time to recover emotionally from the loss of her physical ability to continue her work with dogs.

About two years after her accident, Nina was contacted by the head of the county animal shelter and was asked to work with them. Nina accepted with reservations, not sure she could help at their facility. She gradually discovered that she was needed and valued. Nina helped people who were coming to look for a dog find the right kind of dog for their home and lifestyle. Nina

was also able to identify solutions for behavioral problems with different dogs. The animal shelter developed a positive reputation and received many donations. Nina learned how valuable her abilities and past experience training dogs were even in a wheelchair. Actually, she was called the “dog guru” by many of the locals.

What is *your* heart's longing? Which direction do you want to go with your abilities and skills? ■

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