

Samaj Samachar: Special Edition
September 2020

COVID-19
Personal Reflections



Namaste

In August 2020, the Arya Samaj Women's Forum (ASWF) launched a project that invited personal reflections from women about their experiences with COVID-19. Titled, "*Together we can rise above COVID-19*", the project provided a platform for either literary or creative submissions of experiences and coping strategies that women endured during the pandemic.

In recounting their experience, participants were free to express themselves and share their psychological responses to the traumatic events they experienced. Shared stories are known to be therapeutic and effective as a coping strategy. It also supports the notion of community and resilience as participants wished to create awareness amongst others about what they learned from their experience with the pandemic.

The submissions received over a 3-week period are presented here as a tribute to the brave women who were bold enough to write about their somewhat painful experiences. I invite you into their world.

Dr Serela Ramklass

Chairperson ASWF





This is distressing… by D.R.

I took some time to reflect on the month of July; and what a hectic month it's been! Sadness, negativity and frustration were experienced by my family. We lost a senior family member to cancer and experienced great misery. We had only just begun to recover, and 3 days later, I lost my aunt to COVID-19. She was an essential worker. A joyful lady; she passed on just one day after testing positive. Her immediate family also tested positive. My other aunt's husband had also tested positive for COVID–19 and was hospitalized for 35 days but unfortunately succumbed to the illness. Both my aunt and uncle had underlying conditions. There are also a number of other close relatives who have tested positive.

All this happened within 31 days, and I'm still wondering how I got through this. There are a few points that stuck with me. These were: communicating how I felt - sometimes all the thoughts in your brain just have to come out! Having a bit of privacy or space also helped, and I listened to all my favourite songs to clear my head. The constant hype doesn't help and it's difficult to work with all the tension in the air. When times were really hard, exercise and ballet helped – even just doing a pirouette!

Most importantly, my family supported each other, and we got through this because we're stronger together.





Covid

Namaste

On the 13 July 2020, I had flu symptoms and went to the doctor who sent me to have a COVID

Test. On the 16 July 2020, the doctor called and advised that I had tested positive.

During the first week, I felt extremely sick. My chest was tight, I was light headed, my muscles and head ached. I had lost all sense of taste and smell. I think the fear of the unknown relating to this virus added to the trauma.

The doctor advised that my husband have the test done and he too tested positive.

We now had to take care of each other. We only ate food because we had to take the medication. The medication from the doctor consisted of antibiotics, Flustat, cough mixture and pain tablets. My daughter and son in law bought us Vitamin C, B, Immune Boosters and ACC200. We took the medication daily and sat in the sun for at least 1/2 an hour every day for Vitamin D.

We also took home remedies such as turmeric with hot water and ate raw ginger.

We were blessed with an outstanding support structure; our family and work colleagues checked on us and provided encouragement every day.

Meals and shopping was taken care of by my loving daughter and son-in-law as well as my sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

The love, care and support that we received during our illness is the reason we beat COVID-19.

Together we can beat this.





Covid 19 by GS

The day that we got my husband's COVID-19 results started off like any other. We were so confident that his results were going to come back negative as we all at home just had the flu and it was just a company requirement to have the test done.

When my husband had made me read his results my heart started racing and I was so confused. The reality hit me that no matter how many precautions you take, you never know how you can contract this virus.

It was a tough, tiring and emotional road that my husband, son and I had to go down. I am grateful for very supportive family and friends that got us through the two weeks.





I survived Covid-19

Attending back to back Zoom meetings is accompanied by burnout, so when I had terrible headaches, body pains, a sore throat, and sleepless sweaty nights, I thought it was exhaustion.

I then joked to my family that I think I need to isolate myself, lest I have "Covi Covi," as we jokingly named COVID-19. I spent most of my days in my room. Days went by, and I still felt sick. I started reading more about the virus and people's stories on social media and discovered that I had similar symptoms. That's when I thought I was going to die. Just when I survived Colectomy a few months ago, now I am going to be killed by "Flu." Thoughts started playing in my mind. "I am never going to survive this time." "Covi Covi" has taken many people, young and old. I am going to be part of the death toll.

On the fifth day I started losing the sense of smell and taste. I was so confused by these symptoms. So, I went to my GP. I explained that I didn't have flu anymore, just loss of smell and taste. Surely, he can give me something to bring it back. He then suggested I test for COVID-19. He didn't give me any medication and said that I must go home and continue with my supplements. Driving back from the Doctor, I thought, why is he so relaxed? Could it be, he knows that there is no cure for COVID-19, and I am going to die? Or is he relaxed because I have recovered?

I got home and continued to isolate until the results come out. If I tested positive, will the rest of my family also test positive?

Three days later, my Dr called and informed me that I had tested positive, and I should continue to isolate and take the required supplements and suggested my family got tested if they had symptoms.

I was so calm and accepted the results. My mother then said, "All right, what must we do now? Let's focus! Do what is necessary for survival". That's when we all wore soldier mentality and got ready to fight at war! We were going to fight "Covi Covi" with all that we had.

I can proudly say, I won the war through my mind-set and the support of the family. I kept reminding myself that stress weakens the immune system. I remained positive and my immune system fought and fought. I beat COVID-19.

Ntokozo Mngadi





Hello,

I have been a chronic rheumatoid arthritis patient for the past 23 years. In June saw my physician for my routine biannual check-up. A week later I developed a severe continuous dry cough and also lost my sense of smell and taste.

I went to my local GP, and was put on a course of medication and antibiotics for 5 days. This still did not help, and I was then put on a course of Prednisone. This aggravated my condition and I started experiencing severe chest pains. The GP requested chest X-Rays. The results of the X-Rays read severe bi-lateral pneumonia, with the possibility of COVID-19 infection. At this point my breathing also became difficult as my lungs were badly affected. I was admitted to St. Augustine's hospital where a COVID test was done. Two day later the results came through as positive. I was immediately isolated in the hospital ward.

Although I am a very Spiritual person and have surrended myself to Almighty God, it was very difficult to accept this condition as I felt that I was on my death-bed. I was put on oxygen, given supplements, thiamine, zinc and calcium.

The Nursing staff and Doctors who treated me seemed very sceptical to approach me. I didn't blame them as everybody is afraid of this pandemic. I was very depressed because I was isolated, no visitation was allowed and my meals were served in polystyrene containers and were cold when it reached me.





Four days later, I took a force discharge, telling the Doctor that I will self-isolate. My husband made sure that my meals, which were prepared daily by my sister, were served timeously. I also took a lot of home remedies such as water with bicarbonate of soda, honey and lemon juice as well as a mixture of Sumac powder and Kalonji powder with hot water.

After 14 days of isolation and adhering to guidelines for quarantine and isolation, I was re-tested and my results came back as negative. Since my diagnosis and subsequent recovery, I have not received any visitors and my neighbours seem afraid to communicate with me.

Perhaps people feel insecure to come near me? This has made me feel very rejected and discriminated against.

I still have a lingering cough and I am positive that I will make a full recovery. I have fought COVID-19 and am very grateful to God Almighty.

My message to people out there is that do not take this pandemic lightly.
I would not wish for anybody to go through the trauma that I have experienced.

Thank you
Renee Maharaj





COVID 19, an experience I would never forget by MP

My family had just spent the weekend together and on the 22nd July 2020 my dad and brother tested positive for COVID-19. I was extremely afraid for the health of myself, my husband and 4 month old baby.
Unfortunately, I tested positive. I initially I only lost my sense of smell and taste. As the days progressed, I developed a temperature, terrible body pains and headaches and had no appetite. I felt that I was not going to come out of this. But through the grace of God, I'm now on my road to recovery.
My mum, who had been taking care of my dad and brother also tested positive. She was admitted to hospital with pneumonia and continues to fight this virus. My granny and grandpa also tested positive. They are such strong people and are fighting to come out of this.
God has never left our side and I'm grateful for my second chance at life together with my family.

A tip of advice is:

- → please stay home- if there's no need to leave home, stay at home
- → sanitize as often as you can
- → always have your mask on when you are out
- → Vitamins and Efferflu C Immune Booster have been the meds that have helped me fight this virus

This virus is absolutely serious and it's out to kill. Please take extra care and precautions.





Om

JAI SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Blossoms of Everlasting Love

The curtains opened
Life's stage alight
And here 'I' am
Enacting a pivotal role
A drama unfolding
At a pace greater
Than my perception

Selflessly serving patients
Who would easily be
Stealing my breath
Or sharing a gasp
That I could pass on to
Dearly loved ones

Meaningful relationships
Becoming a distant pleasure
Bereaved mothers
Left in a loneliness
For fear of an invisible threat
Spread by selfish existence
Grasping not why feet
To walk with them
On this grand podium
Nor hands to be their support
Were a falling cause





Weakened eyes filled with compassion
Eternally closing
Solace from costumed garbs
Leaving behind strength to endure
And healing twinkles of smiles

A play no auditioning
Could prepare a caring heart for
Yes, a reality that changed
Every embrace taken for granted
Every casual interaction
Every fleeting memory
Leaving behind a simple message

No act is as grandiose
As painful separation from attachment
Unshackle from unreality to reality
You are one soul
Having no personal
Nor professional title
Do not abandon one
For foreboding of loss
Which is really not yours to lose

Be bold in action
For inaction becomes death
And there is no greater sin
In this gifted platform
Were every prop
Naturally kind
Fragrances purity
To overcome all that it transient
Exhibiting life's true essence
Blossoms Of everlasting love

~ Kershni Rammessir ~





COVID has become a global pandemic over the last 8 month. It is the main conversation in families, on the news and on social media. Everyone is scared to get this virus as most of the news surrounding it is negative.

I have contracted this virus and am living with it; trying to fight it off. At the time of going to the Doctor, I just had a blocked nose and had sense of smell or taste. By the evening, I started feeling extremely sick and had terrible body aches and headache. The next day, I went for a COVID test and the following morning, my Doctor phoned with the news that I had tested positive and would have to self-isolate for 14 days. I took a deep breath to absorb the word “positive”. How did I get the virus? Was I not careful? Did I not keep my social distance? I was fearful and anxious. Will I live or die?

Each day I experienced new, worsening symptoms. I had a raised temperature and pins and needles in my ankles and feet. Some nights I slept like I was dead to the world. Other nights, I would lie awake, wondering if I could breathe. Every morning I would wake up grateful that that my prayers are being answered and that I would see another day. My “Good Morning Son”, became “Son, Mummy is alive!”

Being isolated and not having family around was really depressing and has had a huge impact on my mental health. One of my major challenges was to break the stigma behind testing positive.

To my family and friends, who gave me strength and support, “Thank You” is insufficient. Having people like you around is a blessing and I appreciate you. To Ma, you were so compassionate and generous in spirit. You gave me hope to live. I pray that you will be truly BLESSED.

Finally, thank you to my Son. You chose to stand with me, held my hand and made me even stronger. For this, I salute you!

My advice is never stop praying, stock up on Vitamin C and Zinc, eat healthily and get enough sunlight!

Through this ordeal, I have learned that if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall acquire the capacity to do it. Be positive and every day becomes possible.

I end with an inspirational quote by Mahatma Ghandi;

“In a gentle way, you can shake the world”





There is light at the end of the tunnel...

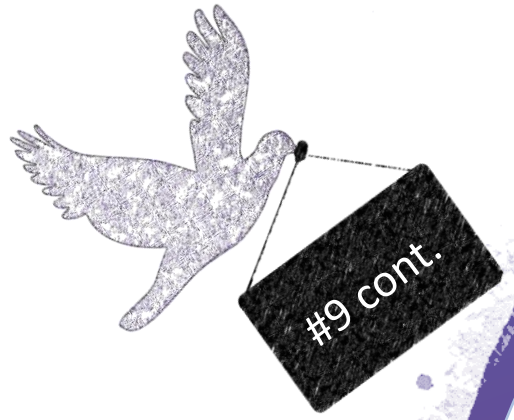
As we celebrate the month of August with Woman's Day, I would like to share my experience of being a young woman, away from home, taking on the responsibility of being headstrong, brave and giving hope to my family. The Corona Virus has changed me as a person; mentally and emotionally.

The news of hearing that my boyfriend and I had tested positive was devastating, but the news that my boyfriend's 84-year old granny had tested positive, was heart breaking. An anxiety attack had followed hearing the news, first it was the shock and then it was the worry of being away from my parents for such a long period of time.

My parents have raised a brave-hearted girl. I knew I could handle this. Thankfully, my symptoms were mild. I had loss of smell and taste and occasional sore throat, headaches and a slight cough. My boyfriend's symptoms were more severe due to his asthma. His chest had tightened up a few times, and this is where prednisone and menthol crystals had helped a lot. My boyfriend's granny had a fever, loss of appetite, coughing, diarrhoea, and a runny nose. All three of us woke up every day experiencing different symptoms.

The one thing I have learnt from this virus is to be prepared and stock up your vitamins.





For 2 weeks, my days looked like this:

➢ Wake up and make hot turmeric water with kulunji seeds, turmeric, honey, and lemon.

➢ Prepare breakfast

➢ Set out bowls of tablets which contained Vitamin B, C, D, E, Zinc, and Echinaforce.

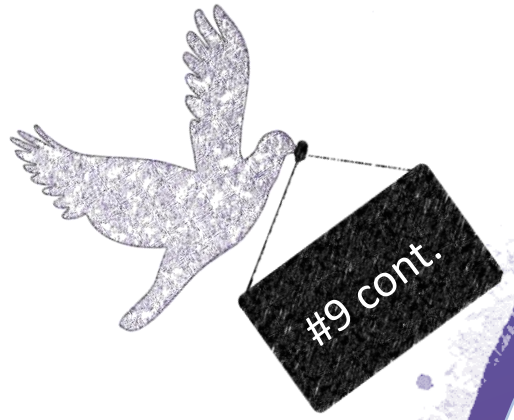
➢ Around Midday, each of us had our share of sliced oranges whilst soaking up sun for thirty minutes.

➢ Sun soaked and warm, I would prepare a tea using oranges, lemons sliced, cloves, honey, black pepper powder, and turmeric.

➢ Following this, we would each inhale the menthol crystals

➢ Prepare supper





➢ At tea time, I would prepare turmeric water another round of inhalation of menthol crystals.

➢ Ginger milk preparation after supper: Boil milk, grate ginger, add turmeric and sugar.

➢ At bedtime, we used a Vicks humidifier as well as a Vicks rub on the chest, back, throat and head.

These responsibilities were shared with my boyfriend and his dad who has helped us through this difficult time. He is a Godsend.

Fourteen days later and all three of us are cleared, well and healthy again. An 84-year old mother, granny, and God's gift to us has fought off one of the deadliest viruses that this world has ever seen.

There is hope. You can get through this. There is light at the end of the tunnel and that light shines even brighter when you have the support of your family, loved ones, friends and colleagues.

Positive thinking and a strong mind-set will really help during this time.

Although anxiety still haunts me from the stress that the virus has caused, I am grateful that we have all recovered and thankful that we are alive.

People who are infected, those who have died from the virus and families grieving are always in my thoughts and prayers.

With love and blessings: Crystal





DYING TO LIVE
LIVING TO DIE

We live on the edge
Teetering on a precipice:
COVID's boon or curse?

Death stalks the living
In living we are dying:
No diff'rence at all!

Life gives death a throne.
To life does death give frailty.
Precious gifts by both

Living and Die-ing
Two playing chase in circles
Merging in one tight embrace

Akin to yin-yang
Each in knowing perfection
Yields to the other...

Nirmala Balkaran





It started as a normal day. I got to the office and started work when I heard the beeping of my phone signalling the arrival of messages. I was busy so ignored it, but something said to me … check …
I sat there in shock … My friend who I travel to work with had tested positive with COVID-19. Emotions battered me all at once …Fear, anger, confusion, concern for my friend, worry for my family. My mind was in turmoil! Could I have taken this home? Was I a carrier? Could I have avoided this? What must I do next?

What if I'm also positive? The implications!
My mortality smacked me in the face and I felt like I had been thrown into a vortex.

I start to refocus. I have to get tested. I don't know where and how. I Google, call the Medical Aid and am advised on the process to follow.
Now the hard part- telling the family. They seem to take it in their stride. We discussed the isolation and quarantine and how to separate the use of the house. The family have to start sanitizing the house, wiping down every spot that I could have touched while I get tested.
I anxiously awaited my turn at the Drive-through testing facility, mentally psyching myself to endure the pain and discomfort the swab being pushed up my nose. When I got there, I was told that it would be an oral swab. The swab goes down my throat and I'm immediately struggling to breathe, I find myself stretching my neck out to get in some air …then it's over! It was only a few seconds but felt like an eternity.
Testing done and the wait for results begin.





I go home to self-quarantine. My family joke that I had been practicing for this for years. It's nice when you choose it. It's a lonely place when you are forced to do it and everyone has to stay as far from you as possible. You want to say I have no symptoms, I don't have it; but you can't.

My mum is old and my worry is for her. If not the virus, the stress of the situation will definitely affect her. I can see the strain on her face and the guilt gnaws at my gut. I have always taken precautions and trusted that the people I am in contact with are also doing due diligence to ensure that this disease is not spread. I'm left feeling angry that our community is taking this pandemic so lightly. I see my neighbours gathering the workers to assist them with their construction. No one wears a mask or if they have one; it's around their necks.

I hear the jokes about Corona and I'm tempted to go full evil on them, but then I realize that they are just a microcosm of the disassociated whole who feel they have immunity to the virus and I am angry again.

My test results are back in 24 hours and I am NEGATIVE. Relief washes over me like the monsoon rains. I am told that it's still early days and I could still develop symptoms, so quarantine continues for me. Now I am even more vigilant about my actions and the impact it can have. I pray that our society and community educated themselves and takes this pandemic more seriously and try to be more responsible citizens.





My husband, daughter and I were discharged from hospital on Thursday 30th July 2020. Recovering at home, being in your own bed and recuperating in your own space is truly a remarkable feeling.

My husband was admitted on 11th July and was on oxygen. He was not allowed any visitors, and this was really difficult for the family. On the 17th of July, a day before her birthday, my daughter was taken by ambulance to the hospital. It was terrifying seeing the paramedics arrive in their PPE. Shortly thereafter, I was admitted to the same hospital, with COVID-19.

I was in mental anguish- even though we were in the same hospital, with the same illness, I could not see my husband. It was very hard to cope. I felt like this was the end. We have three daughters, none of whom are married. They have their future ahead of them, they needed their family. My daughter and I realized that we didn't want to lose my husband and we didn't want to die. We had to fight to get better. We said that we will not go downhill with this pandemic and we started to pray.

With the Grace of God, we are all at home, as a family. My husband's recovery will take time because his lungs are enlarged and he battles to breathe. He cannot walk long distances, and gets out of breath walking from the room to the bathroom or to the kitchen. My daughter now still has body pains and headaches. And I have a lingering cough and have shortness of breath.

My advice to those who think they won't get Covid- you are gravely mistaken.

When you go to a supermarket, you are touch that fruit and buy groceries. You don't know who has touched any of the groceries before you. Yes, you are sanitizing your clothes and at home and you are particular. But really how particular are you? Are you also sanitizing the bread packets? Are you sanitizing the soles of your shoes?

You have to be strong and start boosting your immune system. COVID is out there. It is real. It's a killer virus. Please, don't take this virus lightly.





Fight back

A few moments ago, the sun shone bright,
A breath of fresh air, we took with no fight.
A few moments later, the sky pitch black,
Like possession of the air, a clean breath we now lack.

A few years ago, children were like saints,
Innocent little angels, with very few complaints.
A few years later, children are now in demand,
No! Not for a perfect family, but paedophiles are in command.

A few decades ago, women were given the chance to pursue their dreams,
Oh what beautiful times, a healthy rise in self-esteem.
A few decades later, we are abused and raped,
For our dressing and style, it's even being taped.

Lives are in danger, no matter where you go,
Is it the virus, my elder cousin, or maybe the uncle next door.
Everything has changed, nothing is the same,
But to defeat our demons should be the main aim.

Be safe my fellow South Africans, sanitize and mask on,
Pepper spray and tazors, let negativity be gone.
Defend and attack, our lives are at stake,
It's time to fight back, there's nothing more they can take.

By Tamia Pillay





Statistics are showing that Corona Virus has left families vulnerable, especially children who are orphaned by the situation. This has called the communities to reinvent their African traditional ways of caring and supporting each other. The lockdown period has brought positive and negative consequences in our communities.

COVID-19 with the lock-down regulations have given us time to spend with our families.

The closing of restaurants and other places selling food have forced families to buy groceries, prepare meals and share. This time has taught us to improvise with what we have and also learnt that there are things we can live without still survive. We sometimes go out of our way to buy things and attend places that we could create within our spaces.

It is said that this pandemic has increased levels of poverty in our communities. The lock-down has affected our economy and the many victims were grassroots people. People who survived on self-employment could not operate, people working in places paid per work done did not get any income to put food on the table. In my community I assisted needy families to apply for food parcels and most of them received these.

Stress levels increased in men as they were not used in staying indoors. Many women experienced violence and abuse. Share, care and support amongst women in my community has kept us going.

The pandemic has made us go back to our old ways of sticking together and revived our spirit of UBUNTU. United we stand, divided we fall. Let us stand up and fight this pandemic. We are strong enough to conquer any situation.





the phone rings
and my heart skips a beat
is it another death,
another person for whom we will grieve

will I find my mom standing in shock at the stove,
having lost a sister to this virus unknown
or will she rush into my room,
all confused at the loss of a brother-in-law
who was set to make it through

how do you cope with the devastation around you
how do you function when loss and fear surrounds you

is it the new normal
to just get things done
for you don't know when one of your loved ones
will call to say
i'm the positive one

is it the new normal to distract yourself from the news
because suddenly those statistics are your aunties, uncles, family, friends god forbid,
you.
it's not okay
it's not okay to not be able to grieve
it's not okay for kids to grow up overnight
it's not okay for families to become fragmented
it's not okay for communities to be fractured

but in the end, that's the circle of life, we're told no,
it's not okay,
but it is what it is.

- for those who must continue to function, despite the loss





A VEDIC PRIEST AND COVID 19

By Pt Shardha Rani Philip

Namaste and Warm Greetings

On March 19 2020, the South African President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa announced the National Lockdown and the rules which were to be followed by the citizens due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. One of the lockdown rules that impacted me as Priest and a person of God, who attends regular services, events, festivals and observances held in the name of God and Spirituality, was the complete closure of Religious Places of Worship. Due to this, all my bookings for prayers and 2 weddings had to be either postponed or cancelled.

This did not stop me. I continued to read my scriptures daily, connected with people who needed my guidance and reached out to those who were anxious, overwhelmed, or just needed someone to chat to.

At a time when many people felt disconnected, isolated and afraid, our organisation began to use platform of Zoom to hold Prayer services, which worked well to create a sense of community, identity, religion and spirituality.





During the Lockdown, I conducting various Sanskars and Vidhis (Rites and Rituals) on a range of platforms. I conducted “Griha Pravesh”–new home purchase where prayer is done- via skype. The couple was from Gauteng. I also conducted many other prayers using the various mediums. In addition, I conducted many funerals. This time, it was attended by fewer people. Only the last rites were done at the crematorium. The performance of Covid funerals was a really challenging experience. Only 3 members of the bereaved family were allowed in the area of cremation, which was outside – open air. The Health Authorities were present to make sure all protocols were followed. The procedure usually requires us to perform prayers on the body that is covered in a white cloth. Here, we had to perform all the offerings on the sealed coffin on which we placed the white cloth and then made offerings as per the ante-chamber requirements. Usually, we would conduct a three day prayer where we offer spiritual counselling to the grieving family. In this case of lockdown, we only conducted the 3rd day Havan with the relevant discourses. Extreme care had to be taken to follow all protocols.

I witnessed how a disease like COVID-19 has changed our lives in the way that we think and act. I also saw how merciless this disease. It does not allow grieving members of the family of victims any closure amidst the pain and suffering; leaving one scared, leaving one wondering – WHATEVER HAPPENED HERE?





The year 2020 arrived. A year of mixed emotions with my eldest son going through his final year of school. Excitement felt with matric dances and stress felt with their first quarterly tests.

March 18 came with chaos and fear. Schools shut down completely. We had one week to do our essential needs, then our beloved country went into lockdown.

The Novel Corona Virus was taking over the world. This was a silent war with an invisible enemy. Our Honourable President asked us to stay home. The “new normal” was face masks, hands sanitizers and PPE’s. Teachers started online teaching. Shopping was done once a week.

This pandemic brought our family closer as there was more time to appreciate each other. Positivity helped me go through each day without breaking down. My challenges were being a mother to a Matric pupil, a wife to a Doctor, a daughter-in-law to old and ill in-laws and a daughter to a diabetic mum.

Knowing all of this made me stronger.

Whatever happened to 2020?

The world was turned upside down. We need to thank God for protecting us. I believe prayer and being positive will get us through this.

My prayer is for all those who need it.





Living with COVID-19-sars2

Viruses affecting us today is as old as time, with shapes and sizes only seen under microscopes.

Corona virus is:
A single cell organism and a protein that needs me and you as hosts to survive, to live and multiply. It is an unwanted guest and only a strong person can deal with its shape shifting personality.
1) We can refuse entry by sanitation. Clean all surfaces in and around your home frequently with diluted bleach.
2) Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after touching items. Wear re-usable gloves. Be house- proud in a clean and live in a healthy environment.
3) Wearing masks will create a sturdy barrier to protect you and maintain health. A cloth mask is preferred as it is reusable by washing. This also promotes environmental health with no additional costs. Washing and sunlight kills viruses.
4) Learning to live with viruses, is a truth that we must accept.

VIRUSES and bacteria have been here for eons; billions of years before humans making prevention an absolute necessity. The cure is a mythical aspiration. We can overcome as we have done so in the past. Infections and a flu pandemic decimated populations previously and taught us methods or safe practices to survive.





Medical Sciences Advocates are Mandatory for me as a Nurse

1) Regular blood tests for infectious diseases,

2) Flu shots every season or you stay home without pay.

3) Pneumonia shot periodically as a requirement due to my age.

4) Annual fit testing of N95 mask for many, many years a serious mandatory procedure.

5) The PPE garbing / donning (though serious, we would clown and dramatize. Now it's life saving for those administering nightingales, who are front line in this pandemic.)

The important take-away is that viruses have always been here and are here to stay. Let's get Smart and don't let any viruses, especially, Corona/ COVID-19 invade you, yours and others.

Individually we can create solid barriers for prevention. Maintain a healthy Physical, Psychological and Spiritual lifestyle.





I remember travelling home from an overseas trip at the end of December last year. I remember hearing about a virus that was gripping a city called Wuhan in China. Words like “lockdown” were used extensively. I remember speaking to a cousin in China. On the day we spoke with him, he told us that it has been 20 days since he left is flat. This was inconceivable to my family and I. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that it would reach our shores and touch our lives! Our perception initially was “this a three week lockdown” and we will be done and dusted. But this did not occur. When I look back, I think that I went through a period of mourning; complete disbelief of what just happened. I felt myself swinging through various emotions and perceptions of “I can’t do this” to “I can do this”. At some point the reality that the Corona Virus was here to stay hit home.

I heard a Spiritual Guru saying that we should call it “Karuna” virus and that translates to “compassion”. For me it meant that this virus had entered our lives to teach us to show compassion to our fellow brethren. But I realised that before I did that, I needed to find my centre. I first had to accept the situation. To achieve this I had look at all the things that I could control and I found a lot. I then listed all the things that I could not control. When I explored the things I had no control of, I realised that may others experienced the same. I soon realised that perhaps the whole world felt like this. Worrying about getting the infection, worried how much longer this was to go on, when will “normal” return? was something that was on everyone’s mind. But focussing on this was just feeding into fear and insecurity. When I focussed on the things that I could control, I seemed to become spontaneous, confident and “stable” meaning that my moods were more even. I learnt to engage in activities outside my work which took my focus. In essence, my life and activities outside work increased. Activities like yoga, cooking, baking and spiritual activities became my focus. These undertakings made my day more manageable. I felt energised and this aided me in helping others who were struggling.





"Karuna" virus taught me to first take care of myself before I could be there for others. I have to say that I don't always get it right but I do have a game plan which is in constant development.

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