

THE COMMUNITY & MENTAL WELLNESS COFFEE CHAT WEBINAR SERIES



***Coping During COVID-19: Positive Pandemic
Coping Skills for Adults***

- ▶ **Fear** is the reaction to a present danger in the environment.
- ▶ **Anxiety** is the anticipation of some potential threat in the future.
- ▶ **With the pandemic we have both fear and anxiety happening simultaneously which can lead to negative experiences and outcomes for our mind, body and spirit.**
- ▶ **Coping** is a way to deal successfully with difficult situations by using creativity, imagination and determination, but coping can be also be difficult depending on the nature and degree of the problem you are dealing with.


**“WHEREVER THERE IS FEAR, THERE IS GREAT OPPORTUNITY.
WHERE THERE IS GREAT FEAR THERE IS GREAT OPPORTUNITY.”**

ANDY STANLEY

STRATEGIES

- ▶ Two types of coping strategies:
- ▶ **Avoidant coping** strategies are unhealthy, unconscious ways to move away from the stressor but only help in the short term. We do not acknowledge, or we ignore or deny the problems which soon returns. Examples are over reliance on alcohol, drugs, binge eating, internet or gaming addictions, compulsions, risk taking and at its darkest self- harming behavior. They distract but do not resolve the stressor, continue to have negative effects and do not help build skills.
- ▶ **Active coping** strategies are generally seen as positive as they help us recognize or be aware of the stressors so we can make conscious attempts to reduce them and to build lasting skills that can be used over and over with increasing positive affect now and in the future for similar types of stress.

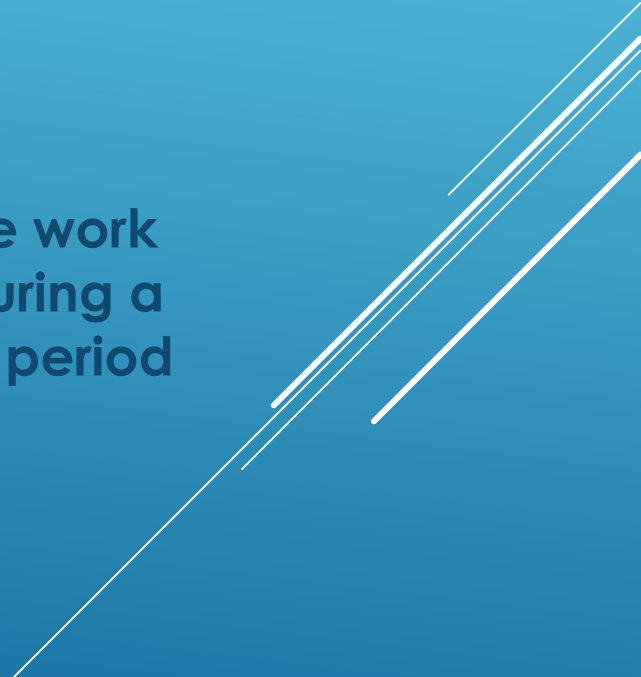
STRATEGIES

- ▶ **Problem Focused** Strategies- active things we can do to reduce stress
 - ▶ **Emotion Focused** Strategies to handle the feelings of distress that result from the outside stressor
 - ▶ **The best coping strategies incorporate both problem and emotion focused types.**
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- ▶ **C** = Coffee
- ▶ **O** = Oreos
- ▶ **P** = Potato chips
- ▶ **E** = Energy drinks

DON'T LET THESE BE YOUR
FOUR FOOD GROUPS!

STRATEGIES

- ▶ The best coping skills are also the ones you enjoy,
 - ▶ That bring you joy
 - ▶ You look forward to and,
 - ▶ Do not dread!
 - ▶ For example, just because you know your diet needs some work as above, do not set upon a path of total transformation during a pandemic quarantine. Aim for small changes over a long period of time.
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- Three parallel white lines of varying lengths are positioned diagonally in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

- ▶ When thinking about what type of coping strategies to explore, consider your preferences and tolerance for adopting new behavior. What is most concerning to you? Where does your stress live in your body? Are there particularly negative thoughts or behaviors you want to address? There will be a webinar on self care for caregivers coming up on June 12 where we will explore this topic more thoroughly.



- ▶ **Duration:** Rule of thumb, start with two new coping strategies to try at any given time. When trying to decide, consider the duration of the task. Can it be done in 5 minutes or less? How much time do you have or want to devote to a new skill?
- ▶ **Intensity-** For instance, watching clouds drift by for 5 minutes is much less of a time commitment and less intense than starting cooking healthy every day or ridding your entire house of junk.
- ▶ **Slow the Roll:** Find a good place to start to make changes. Slow gradual adoption of coping strategies will result in a more satisfying experience and no guilt allowed!



SO, HOW DO WE COPE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES?



Note to self:

No matter what, no matter how hard or painful or awkward or scary the situation, all you can really do is show up as yourself. So be the SELFIEST SELF you can be. The most you. The truest you. You will figure it out, you magnificent mess, you.

Nanea Hoffman

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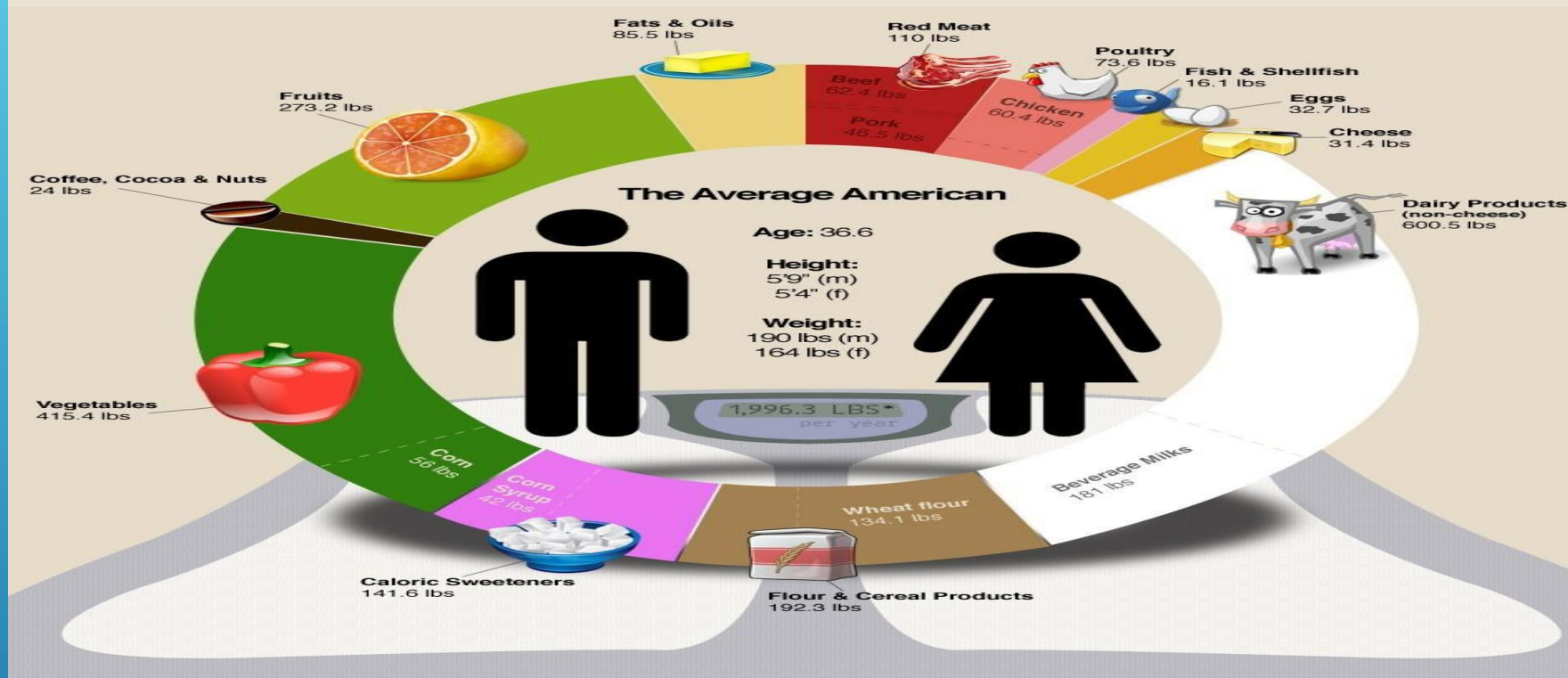
BE KIND TO YOURSELF

MOVE MORE

- ▶ **Whether** actual exercise routines, dancing, swaying to the music, stretching, gardening, playing bongos or just a walk around your neighborhood, moving is necessary for health and well-being.
- ▶ Start small- 5 minutes of stretching, getting up from your chair or if you have mobility issues, you can find exercise routines that can be done from a chair or couch.
- ▶ Check out Saratoga Center for the Family's website for a gentle stretching routine or utilize YouTube videos.

WHAT ARE WE EATING?

What the Average American Consumes in a Year



*includes food bought/served but not eaten (leftovers)

That includes: (every year)

French Fries
29 lbs



Pizza
23 lbs



Ice Cream
24 lbs



Soda
53 gallons
(about a gallon/week)



Artificial Sweeteners
24 lbs



Sodium
2,736 lbs
(47% more than recommended)



Caffeine
0.2 lbs
(90,700 mg)



And 2,700 calories
a day




ve
visualeconomics.com

SOURCES:

<http://www.fda.gov>
<http://www.usda.gov/factbook/chapter2.htm>
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ahs/nhsr010.pdf>
<http://www.the-star.com/business/article/780147-demand-for-spuds-drops-as-americans-eat-fewer-fries>
<http://wellness.blogs.time.com/2010/06/26/nine-out-of-10-americans-eat-too-much-salt/>
<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art8005.asp>
<http://www.fricanospizza.com/>
<http://www.scumdoctor.com/nutrition/junk-food/french-fries/Average-Number-Of-French-Fries-Eaten-By-Americans-Each-Year.html>
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0104742.html>
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0813/is_3_26/ai_54271814/

FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

- ▶ **P**ick one day or one meal and try something new and pack it with nutrition. Remember to eat the rainbow but go slow and improve nutrition one meal at a time.
 - ▶ **S**LOW DOWN: Meals are not races. Savory tastes, smells, textures
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- ▶ **Prescription:** Take two 2x a day for 5-15 minutes:
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation exercises
- ▶ Adopt one new yoga pose
- ▶ Try a guided meditation (available on our website)
- ▶ Watch the moon, star gazing, cloud gazing, walking in nature.
- ▶ Taking a bath
- ▶ Do deep breathing exercises- many found on YouTube such as The Honest Guys, nature videos or a phone app such as the **Calm** app or **Breathe** app. Or check out thepath2success.com for many ideas.



KEEP
CALM
AND
RELAX

JOURNALING/WRITING

- ▶ Try long hand script or writing, perhaps a lost art, is superior to typing or texting to evoke a more natural emotional connect to your thoughts and feelings as you go through your day. Spend 5 minutes a few times a day.
- ▶ A variation would be to write a long hand written letter to an old friend or someone you, "have been meaning to get in touch with "forever".
- ▶ It gives you an opportunity to use that pretty stationery in the back of your desk (admit it, you know you have some)

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH OTHERS

- ▶ Human beings thrive on social connectivity. We are not meant to cope in isolation. In fact, the reptile brain which controls the fight, flight or freeze response gets activated when we are isolated for any length of time. Back when we were hunter gatherers, being alone, cut off from your tribe, left you vulnerable to attacks by predators. Our brains still connect isolation with anxiety, even if there is not an immediate threat. This is particularly important in the time of COVID 19 when we feel both a real threat and danger.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH OTHERS

- ▶ Don't immediately scoff at or roll your eyes at the thought of a Zoom happy hour or tea parties; Netflix or Google hangouts for movie nights or just to chat. Humans are social animals, we need connection to others to flourish, for mutual support and encouragement in these trying times. Be inventive and cook or sew, paint or bedazzle with a friend by FaceTime or Skype.
- ▶ From the minute we are born, touch by others is vital to our development, health and welfare. Don't forget to hug or snuggle on the couch to watch a movie with the people you are quarantining with even those ornery teenagers!

CLOUD GAZING



IS TIME TOGETHER




PERFECTING YOUR IMAGINATION






Walk through a park (social distancing) planting a garden, sitting quietly in your yard. Pick one of following activities =can be done alone or with your partner or children.



EXERCISE #1 - sit quietly and identify 5 different things you see, 4 different things you hear, 3 things you smell, 2 things you can touch and 1 statement of gratitude for the natural world. With less cars and planes operating, the air is cleaner, there are more animals and birds visible.




EXERCISE #2 – Sit quietly on a grassy surface or near a garden, look down and look at nature in miniature for 5 minutes with the curiosity of your childhood and then look up- look at the sky- see the clouds moving through your field of vision for 5 minutes and think about being part of the larger world. Remain calm, practicing deep breathing while you move through the exercises.



SPEND TIME IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

AROMATHERAPY

- ▶ Perhaps this seems too “New Age-y” but sense of smell is one of our 5 senses and is closely tied to memory and can aid in calming the mind and body.
 - ▶ Try Lavender soap or essential oils, light a candle, incense.
 - ▶ **G**o outside and inhale the smell of Lilacs currently in bloom
 - ▶ **G**o to garden shop or floral dept. of your grocery store and smell different flowers any time of the year.
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SELF-CARE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

- 1) Follow a balanced diet
- 2) Exercise regularly
- 3) Use mindfulness techniques
- 4) Scream into a Pillow
- 5) Try crying while eating cake over the sink



IS COPING A LAUGHING MATTER?

HUMOR




- ▶ A guaranteed fun way to unwind. There will be a blog post soon devoted wholly to the many benefits of humor and laughter on the SCFF website. Just a sneak peek if you are not sold on humor during a pandemic-
- ▶ A study done at Loma Linda University showed that older adults performed significantly better on a short term memory test after watching 15 minutes of funny videos and had significantly lower levels of cortisol (stress hormone) than the control group.
- ▶ Other studies at the Univ. of Maryland found laughter protects against heart disease and a study at Vanderbilt Univ. found 15 minutes of laughter burned 40 calories.
- ▶ The internet is just loaded with humor- memes, comics, comedy shows, try reading the book by David Sedaris [Me Talk Pretty One Day](#)


MUSIC SOOTHES THE SAVAGE BEAST

- ▶ **M**usic is an international language. Listen to music or make music. Try a different type of music- use a music app such as Spotify or Pandora giving you many choices. Drag out the home Karaoke machine.
- ▶ **S**ome music inspires, give rise to dancing, smiling, relaxation and emotional connection to earlier times in your life- “I love that song!” “I remember when I heard than song for the first time!” Belt out a tune you love anytime- in the shower, on a walk or when cleaning.

LEARN NEW THINGS

- ▶ Think small - do **not** plan to learn a new language in 10 weeks of quarantine unless it's something that you have wanted to accomplish.
 - ▶ Learning new things uses parts of your brain that distract from anxiety, requiring concentration to complete and create a sense of accomplishment.
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HELPING OTHERS

- ▶ **H**elping others boosts your level of happiness, health and sense of well-being.
 - ▶ Clean out closets and donate to a shelter.
 - ▶ Getting your kids involved will increase that feeling even more.
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Note to self:

When you are whizzing through your day and your body is full of stress, a good way to slow your galloping mind is to take one moment to be thankful, even for a tiny goodness. Gratitude anchors you to the present. Then you can jump back into your regularly scheduled chaos with a bit of calm in your heart.

Nancy Hoffman
SWEATPANTS & COFFEE
SWEATPANTSANDCOFFEE.COM

SHOW KINDNESS, GRATITUDE AND LOVE
TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS

CONSCIOUSLY TURN OFF

- ▶ With no commute time, our normal transition time has been cut off and the boundaries between work time vs. home time blurs particularly if you are also the primary teacher to your children or caring for other loved ones in your home.
- ▶ If you are already in a helping profession, make sure you consciously “turn off” and “turn on” alternative activity that bring you joy. If you talk all day, find quiet time- purposely not speaking for a period of time or spend time drawing, painting, doodling, coloring or bird watching, star gazing, reading, writing poetry or journaling.

You know you're suffering from
information overload when



N ISE TO SIGNAL

Rob Cottingham - socialsignal.com/n2x

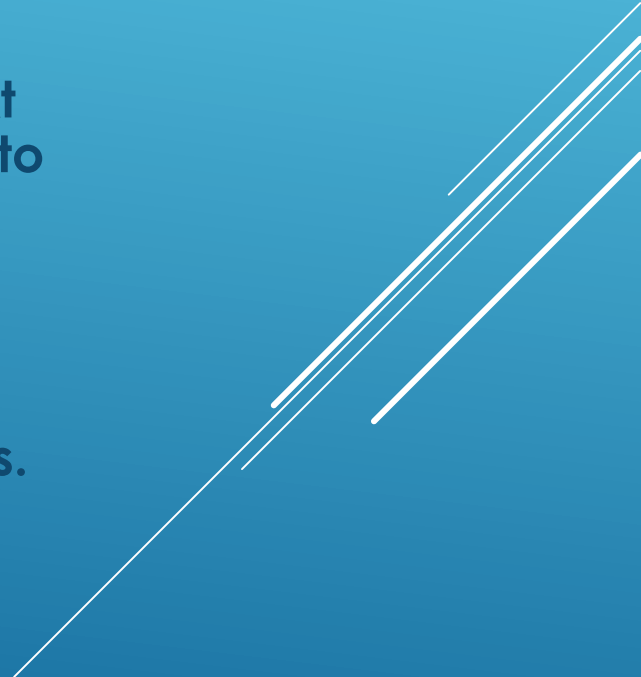
Author/Copyright holder: Cambodia4kids.org Beth Kanter. Copyright terms and license: CC BY 2.0

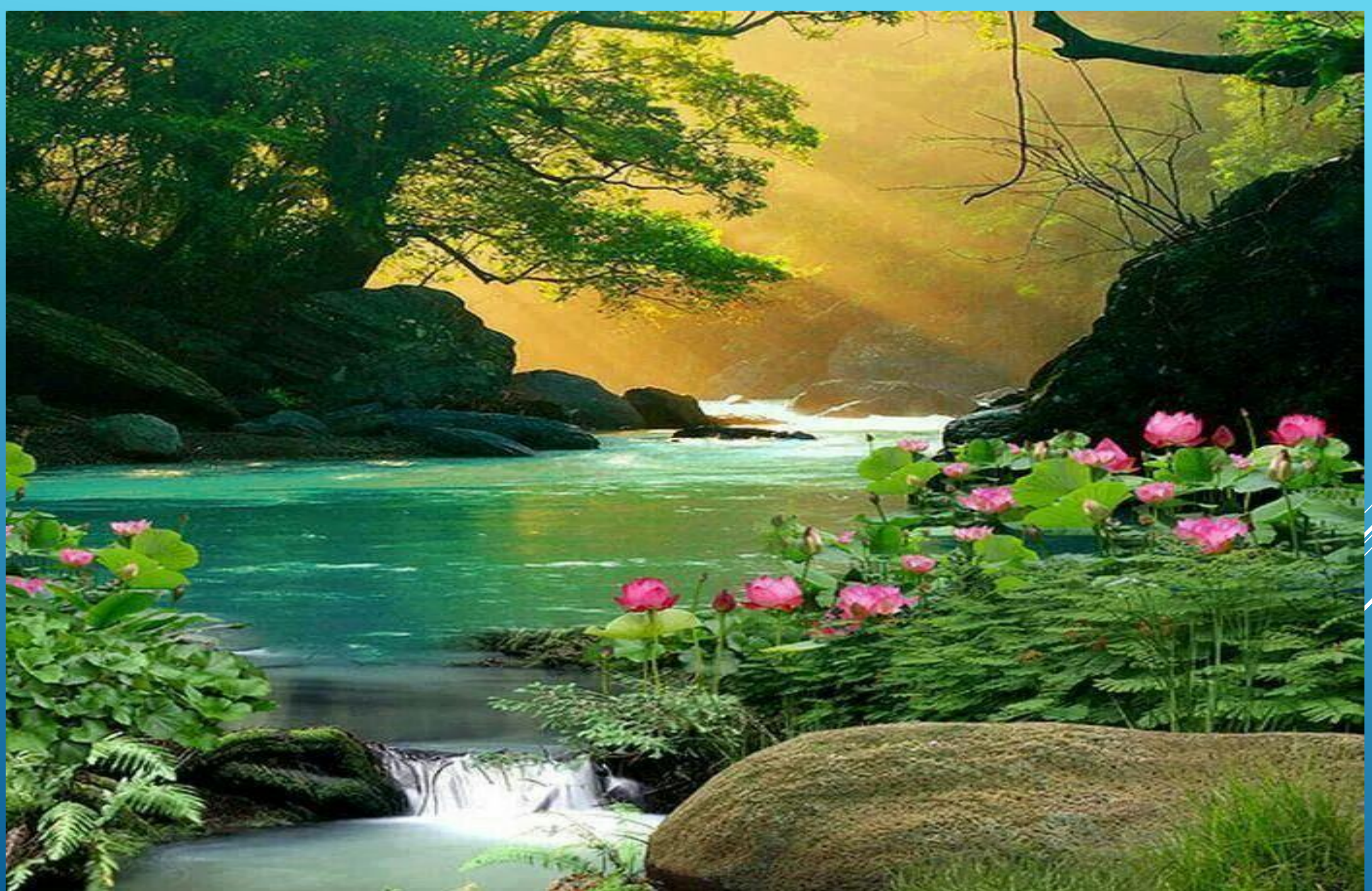
STOP INFORMATION OVERLOAD

STAY INFORMED BUT DON'T OBSESS

- ▶ **C**onsider turning off notifications or limit/unsubscribe to some.
- ▶ **P**ick two reputable sources to get your updates and limit how much time you spend each day with news. We often fall prey to information overload. We feel guilty if we don't stay right up to date. Human beings cannot process the amount of limitless information available.
- ▶ **I**t is news reporters' job to grab your attention, push information at you and keep you engaged, however it is not your job to absorb it all. We have control and know when to disengage.
- ▶ **T**he surge of available information can adversely affect your wellbeing, but also affect your decision making, innovation and productivity. Try a 24 hour news diet and measure your level of anxiety 1-10 at the beginning and at the end of the period.

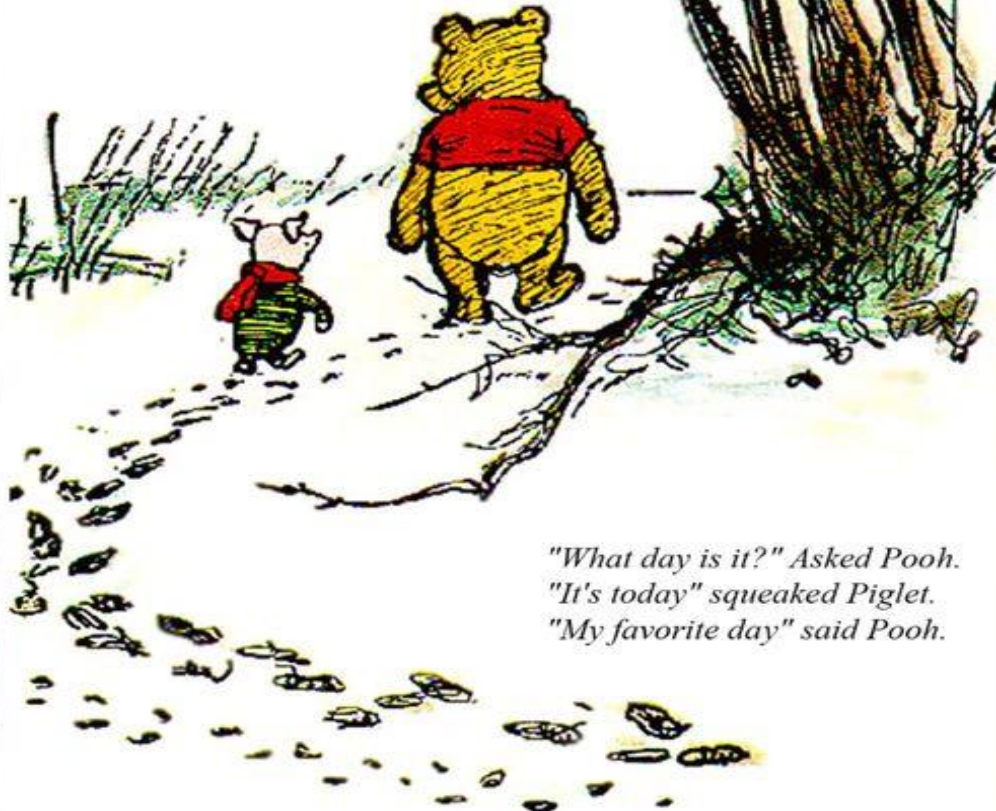
FREEDOM FROM TECHNOLOGY

- ▶ Feel free to ignore information on the internet or notifications,
 - ▶ Feel free to take action without all the facts on the internet – cannot achieve anyways
 - ▶ Know when enough is enough.
 - ▶ Release information overload pressure. Your email inbox/ text messages and social media are not allowed to tell you when to respond. Rid self of inbox anxiety
 - ▶ Learn to skim messages, grab 2 points and let the rest go.
 - ▶ Apply filters to your platforms.
 - ▶ Respond to all communication platforms in 5 sentences or less.
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- ▶ **Sit** still, listen, engage in deep breathing; move inward to explore the thoughts and feelings that come without judgement. If negative emotions arise, do not move away from them, invite them in as they are part of you.
- ▶ It is our urge to avoid negative emotions that keeps them firmly in place. Unacknowledged feelings can appear as physical symptoms, headaches, illness, sleep issues, nightmares etc. Once you have explored your emotions, think of them flying away and being replaced by a warm light.

Winnie the Pooh Day



"What day is it?" Asked Pooh.
"It's today" squeaked Piglet.
"My favorite day" said Pooh.

Most humans are never fully present in the now, because unconsciously they believe that the next moment must be more important than this one. But then you miss your whole life, which is never *not* now. And that's a revelation for some people: to realize that your life is only ever now.

Eckhart Tolle