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Thoughts on Hope and Resilience

*"There is always hope and love within the fear, sickness, war, and death, waiting for the right moment to rebirth. So, embrace the fear, cure the sickness, fight the war, defy the death, and sometime, somewhere, somehow, my hope and love are waiting for you to come home." ~
"Lutet," Division 1 Student*

Was anyone else out there steamrolled by the past few days? In my humble opinion, it was a hard week. Much of the national news wasn't good. The pandemic continues to worsen, job losses are at historic highs, and health care workers are exhausted. People feel gripped by anxiety when a trip to Market Basket involves masks, Clorox wipes and social distancing tape on the floor to keep everyone in line and six feet apart. Some folks report feeling an increased sense of isolation and loneliness. We're oversaturated with media and for many people, even mention of the pandemic is overwhelming and depressing. We're all processing a variety of losses, from event cancellations to the tragic loss of human life. And with varying predictions from our most brilliant scientists, we can't quite see exactly what lies ahead.

But for all the uncertainty, I know one thing for sure: people will not stop fighting. Over my thirty years in the field of counseling, I have seen first-hand the spirit and determination of people experiencing, and healing from, suffering. Against incredible odds and despite trauma and hardship, people triumph. I know people whose stories are devastating, who have overcome the most extreme circumstances - and their resilience is nothing short of a miracle. Something that's been clear lately, even with all the negative news, is that during this national crisis, hope and resilience are on full display.

The Maker Team in Ayer is printing 3-D masks for area healthcare workers. Someone I know bought groceries for an elderly neighbor. Another friend sent a pizza dinner to grocery store workers. Have you heard about the new tradition in NYC where everyone stops what they're doing at 7PM to cheer for doctors and nurses on the front lines? And then there's the woman in Ohio who is paying this month's rent for a woman in Los Angeles who lost her job. A local restaurant in Shirley stepped up and is donating lunch to a nearby hospital. Late this week, there were inspiring photos of the Patriot's private plane landing at Logan with over a million masks for healthcare providers across Massachusetts.

Research affirms that in addition to adequate sleep, healthy nutrition, exercise and maintaining perspective, engaging in altruistic behavior is one of the things we can do to build resilience. Doing for others builds resilience and instills hope. One night this week, I was talking with my

college kids who are now at home. We were discussing some positive events of late, including the news that my cousin, who lives in Manhattan, is beginning to recover after 14 days fighting COVID-19. We talked about the power of love and hope in the face of tragedy. We talked about family and connection. We talked about resilience. They mentioned a children's song recently popularized by Jim Carrey and Ariana Grande on the show *Kidding*, and I thought I would end this note with these words:

Hope Is The Song

*Where do you turn
When there's no one to turn to?
When it's so hard to cope
How can you start, make a change, maybe learn to?
What do you need?
Hope
Hope is the song when the world is a menace
Hope is the open door
Maybe getting back up again is
What falls are for*

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