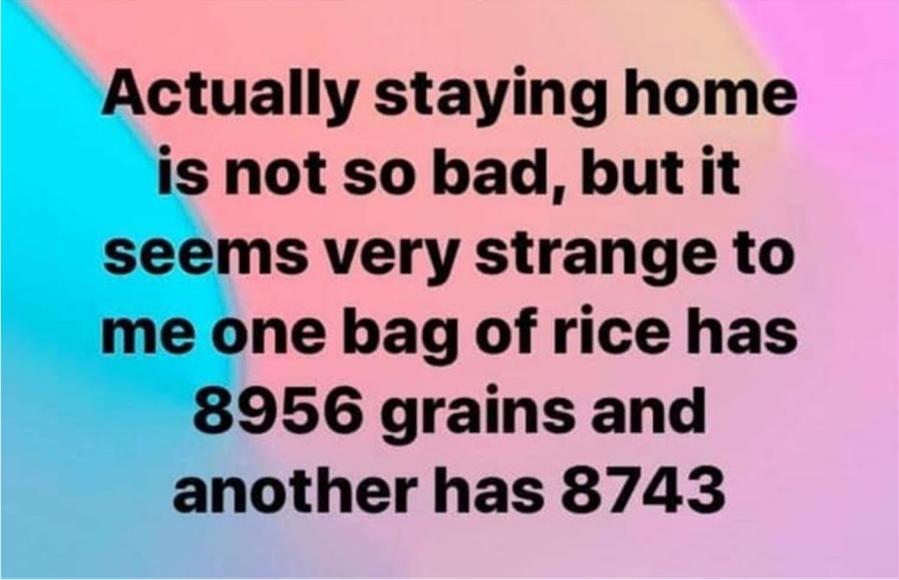


Ten Tips for Coping Well with Covid:

for couples, families, friends, and colleagues

#1 Laughter may not actually be the best medicine. but it helps.



**Actually staying home
is not so bad, but it
seems very strange to
me one bag of rice has
8956 grains and
another has 8743**

#2 Taking Turns

In normal communication, couples share their feelings back and forth. However, in times of relational stress or external crisis like Covid, both members of the couple sharing their upset often time leads to emotional overload. It is really important for couples to learn how to take turns around expressing their feelings about this crisis. So that one person can be really attending to the other emotionally. In other words, taking turns by having two of you paying attention to one of at a time. When it looked like I was dying of Stage 4 cancer, Kate and I alternated mornings having a turn. Each of us feeling heard and held by the other as we discussed our particular fears and vulnerabilities.

#3 Ration Watching the News

The pervasive relentlessness of this news can be overwhelming and yet we have a hard time putting down our phones. Designate times of the day to check the news and practice not tuning it in all day long. And particularly don't tune into the news in the evening before bed or first thing when you wake up.

#4 Chosen Silence is better than Frozen Silence

Covid is on our minds 24/7 whether we're talking about it or not. Choosing

together times when talking about it' is off limits feels connected. When we as a family were going through my chemo, we would designate whole days and even a weekend or two in which talking about cancer was off limits, but we all knew we were thinking about it. But we as a family we're teaming up on not dwelling on it. It helped.

Also, someone you're close to might want to talk about their fears and feelings and you really can't handle the subject in that moment. Or vice versa. It's important for you to be able to say no kindly, but directly when you aren't able to be emotionally responsive to each other and schedule a time for later.

#5 Grieving alone hurts - grieving together heals

Zoom or FaceTime calls with families and friends and colleagues isn't the same as being together. But it is vastly better than holing up alone. Reach out, connect. Hold virtual sanitized hands. Exchange safe virtual hugs,

#6 Do Meditation/Exercise/Yoga

It is Important to schedule several times a day for healthy self-care as if your life depends on it. It does. As one of my friends says, "I am meditating like my hair is on fire." Release some of your anxiety with this highly effective

[Progressive Muscle Relaxation exercise](http://media.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/p_muscle_relax.mp3)

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#7 Taking care of yourself through caring of others

At times of extreme stress, we may forget that often what nurtures us the most can be caring for others. Consider the folks you know that may need a hand. Offer it. And it will make you feel better. Also, when people offer to help you, let them. You'll feel taken care of and they will feel good about themselves.

#8 Practice Tender Loving Care

More than ever, we all need special attention and nurture. Take turns receiving small tender gestures of love and support like a back rub, favorite meal, doing a partner's chore, giving one's partner time to sleep in and not get up with the kids. This works best if each of you ask for one clear doable behavioral gesture each week, schedule it and do it. It's a way of reminding each other that we are there for each other. All of us need to feel we have someone whose got our backs

#9 Being Afraid Well

Most of us try to manage our fears by stuffing them and trying to ignore them. That won't work and your fears will keep assaulting throughout the day.

Instead, set aside some time each day to turn toward your fear. Name all of your fears, write them down, acknowledge your feelings with self-compassion and tenderness. If you aren't afraid, you are not paying attention. :)

Also, don't be afraid to make room for your children's fears as well as your own. There's no real reassurance. But you can model for your kids that it's possible to be strong and steady and afraid at the same time. It will be a gift to them.

#10 "Be kind for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle." Philo of Alexandria, 1st century AD

This quote is framed and on my desk. It reminds me to open my heart to all people including those with whom I have considerable differences. Let us all strive to transcend the boundaries of politics, tribalism, and different ways of coping. Blame doesn't stop stop blame by blaming blamers and as MLK said, "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Only with love." Each of us has very different coping styles that could have caused conflict and judgment. We came to recognize that truly embracing each other's different coping styles was a key element in staying close.

Bonus "From Us to You"

<https://youtu.be/3eXT60rbBVk>