

“Start Reacting Today?”

The following is a devotional adapted from a communication with Margaret Marcuson (margaretmarcuson.com).

My husband recently showed me a Facebook ad that showed up on his tablet. It said, "Start reacting today." People are reacting all over the world to the covid-19 virus. I've been one of them from time to time through these days, and you probably have, too.

“Sadness does not sink a person; it is the energy a person spends trying to avoid sadness that does that.” - Barbara Brown Taylor in *Learning to Walk in the Dark*

We know that one of the effects of prolonged isolation can be depression or just sadness. I appreciated this quote that happens to be from an author that our adult education class has read and discussed. I find it a helpful reminder.

Last week I shared some ways to stay positive with you and asked you to send me the ways you are keeping yourself calmer and more centered through this time. Here are some of the wonderful ideas you shared:

1. "Donate (even if small gifts) to non-profits on -the 'front lines' of this crisis. Food banks, organizations like Meals on Wheels, those who provide homeless services are under tremendous pressure right now. For many, the normal sources of food have dried up."
2. Learn Yoga.
3. Watch fun or inspiring videos sent by friends, then forwarding to others. (double benefit)
4. Call people who live alone every day with "the joke of the day."
5. Keep to a routine.
6. "Practice thankfulness, both for what we have, and for all those who are working and putting themselves at risk to serve those of us who are able to shelter in place."
7. Have a project to work on. (Example: "Today it is finishing grooming my dog Sam.")
8. Time in prayer and meditation, including breathing
9. Exercise: walking, jogging and "adding a little dancing along the way."
10. "Enjoy morning coffee in bed, because I can."
11. Try new ideas: "This week it's a zoom happy hour with the congregation in Friday at 5 pm."
12. "Practice affirmation of others when close quarters are getting in my nerves."
13. "Recognize when I need time alone and going outside or going into my very small walk-in closet to pray in secret, just like Jesus said."
14. Enjoy good food and wine.
15. Keep hydrated.
16. Pace news consumption.
17. Voice/facetime with colleagues & significant others.

18. Listen to music.
19. Do some prayer/meditation that includes breathing.
20. Laughter.
21. "Pay attention to the voices of people I trust & admire (include Marcuson!)" (Note: thanks!)
22. Get outside.
23. "Social media can be my friend, but limit exposure."

Finally, here's one lovely quote from reader David Meadors:

"One thing I'm trying to do each day is go for a walk in a park that's about 2 miles, and there are beautiful trees, squirrels to watch, and the birds are singing in the trees. I also try to spend at least some time drinking coffee just outside of our house and listening to the birds sing. It always lifts my spirits!"

Blessings, Margaret