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Community Members,

Throughout this COVID-19 pandemic, and all the ensuing tensions, and the death of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, and the ensuing demonstrations, one of the most helpful recommendations for surviving in difficult times and to relieve stress is to step back from everything and take a deep breath. Nice... deep... breaths. That's a way to pause ourselves, to push our own "Pause" button, if you will. There is so much to be anxious about. All the demonstrations, marches, and calls for action seem like so much "piling on" in a time in which we are trying to get ourselves up and going again after being shut down for over two months. Unfortunately, the timing of both the pandemic and the horrible death of George Floyd are events outside our control. They are things that are happening to us, and make us feel a loss of control. To pause, really pause, is to acknowledge with our breath that control is really only an illusion after all. Breathe deep. Nothing is forever. This, too, will pass. And our hope is that it's passing will be akin to moving from death to life, new and better!

I have shared with you before, I believe, that I have a special needs grandson living in Wenatchee. Logan will be ten this August. He is basically nonverbal, though his dad, (my son Micah), and a very innovative speech therapist, are making huge strides. Logan and his Papi (me) have a very special bond. I have been blessed to be living close to him most of his life, and have been able to provide some respite care for his mom and dad. This has solidified this bond. The gift that Logan gives to me is the gift of LIFE. Life that is basic, that is about love, about connection, about living in the now. Logan, and many others like him, will never be "productive members of society" in the classic sense. He will never be a successful entrepreneur. For some, caught up in their lives of doing and making and climbing, his might be viewed as a worthless life. But I would offer it is quite the opposite. Because he is not caught up in the struggle to succeed, he is able to give his gift freely to all who might encounter him. It is the gift of perspective. He, and many others with special needs, if we will see them, if we will allow ourselves to encounter them, offer our culture a great big call to "Breathe". If I can say so, it is the gift of both not taking ourselves too seriously, and not taking our current experience too seriously. It is the gift of lightening our load, by seeing through their eyes a load that is boiled down to the essentials.

In the spirit of that truth, I would like to share with you the following video. I received it from Catherine Kilty of Tierra Village. If you want to feel uplifted, hopeful, encouraged... breathe this in. I can't watch it without choking up. Dare you to try!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNfMs2ZWvzM>

Hang in there! Stay safe! Support each other! And breathe deep!



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