



Wellbeing

COVID-19

The New Normal

If we think about where we are right now, in this time of COVID-19, it can be comforting for many of us to look back at how things used to be – pre-pandemic – when we were able to travel freely, meet together without needing to have science or a government official tell us it was safe to do so, and queuing outside a shop was reserved for those who got to the New Year sales early enough.

But as we contemplate the steps we're now taking out of lockdown, it's important for us to recognise that we aren't returning to the way things were. Things have changed and moved on. Some of what was important a while back we now know is less important and, during the stresses and anxiety of lockdown, we have come to appreciate and enjoy new things. For some, we've discovered joy in the simplest of things.

So, instead of returning to how things were, we are actually, and excitingly, entering a new normal. Yes - some things will be familiar to us, but we will be navigating new landscapes and new ways of doing things.

As we are faced with new circumstances, it can feel unsettling and chaotic. There's no escaping that this is an incredibly disruptive time for us as individuals, and as a wider society, with more uncertainty than most of us have ever experienced before.

But when it comes to our wellbeing, there is something we can do to help ease our anxiety, and that is to view chaos and entering the new normal with a different perspective. You see, chaos is the birthplace of creativity; out of chaos creation comes. Some would even say it's the divine pattern. And, if we embrace the disruption of the chaos we are in right now, it will propel us forward both personally and as communities. From it, we will discover the new normal.

What do we want things to look like the other side of this pandemic? What will we do differently in the way we are working? What do we need to do less of and what do we need to say 'yes' to? What needs to change in what we think and believe? What do we need to be honest about? What injustices do we want to see put right in our communities and wider society?

It therefore matters that we are clear about who and how we want to be. What we have been through with this pandemic has shown us what matters – personally and together. We don't have to simply slot back into the way things were. We can create a new path and a new way, by leaning into the invitation of the chaos and taking small and simple steps which include thinking about our own self-care and wellbeing.

In his book 'Let Your Life Speak', Parker Palmer writes, 'Self-care is never a selfish act - it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others.'

Let's keep this firmly in mind as we make our steady arrival to a new and different normal.