

Staying (somewhat) Sane during this Pandemic

Written by Sharon Baker

Tuesday, 09 June 2020 13:18



Growing up, everyone in my family was unhealthy, unhappy, AND deranged. Go ahead, laugh. But it's true. So thanks to our global pandemic, I'm again wrestling with the same issues that plagued me as a kid: loneliness, anxiety, confusion, panic attacks, and eating at 4:30am. Usually, I sneak into the kitchen for yogurt and bananas, instead of Dunkin Donuts. Well, maybe just one little chocolate glazed?

My heart goes out to anyone sick in a hospital, fighting for their lives. And to all the doctors and nurses risking their lives to save others.

I'm blessed that my problems aren't serious. So here's a lighthearted list of tips for anyone restless and bored.

HANG OUT WITH OPTIMISTS

My comedic husband Kenny begins every morning with "the funny of the day." Here's this morning's joke: "There will be a Weight Watchers meeting Monday evening at 7pm. Please enter through the Wide Double Doors."

Ha Ha. And yes, I've put on four pounds. But it helps to laugh, yes?

Then there's my always sunny artist friend Missy Gentile. When her art classes were cancelled, she launched a new business called "Be Well." She finds and paints river rocks with encouraging statements like "Do Small Things with Great Love,"

"Trust the Timing of Your Life," and my favorite, "Keep your Attitude in the Altitude." Her day glow pink, turquoise, and lime rocks decorate every room and keep me smiling. (Page 1)

Other friends who uplift me are author Carole Longmeyer and artist Caroline Carpenter, gal pals living in Beaufort, South Carolina. Every Friday, we meet on a gorgeous riverfront bluff, and relax six feet apart in beach chairs. We sip cocktails, share positive happenings from our week, and eat homemade sandwiches. I'll bring brownies, Carole brings red velvet cake, and Caroline bakes pecan pie. (Why I've gained those four pounds.)

Our "Fabulous Friends Friday," is the only social occasion, and the highlight of my week. But two upbeat hilarious friends are better than fifty "downer" buddies, so find your Optimist Tribe. If you can't meet in person, there's Face time and Zoom.

HANG OUT WITH MOTHER NATURE

Having killed hundreds of flowers, I've never considered myself a gardener. But Kenny dragged me to a country garden center, where we looked like bank robbers in our masks and rubber gloves.

Next thing I knew, the back seat overflowed with magenta hibiscus, white Mandeville, and the most adorable yellow gerbera daisies. Now I'm mother to needy flowers who beg

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for expensive fertilizer, water, and endless pruning. But what else am I doing?

Our exquisite flowers attract cardinals, blue birds, emerald hummingbirds, monarch butterflies and double winged dragonflies. I 've become quite addicted to my garden and you might too.

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The other place I steal away is to the beach. Twenty minutes from my front door, is the soothing Atlantic Ocean.

Last Sunday we watched toddlers building ornate sandcastles, willowy teens sporting bikinis, and a grandma flying an orange long tailed kite, next to a squadron of pelicans. Mesmerizing. Hope you'll discover Mother Nature near you too.

HANG OUT WITH MYSELF

Too much time during the day, gave me the courage to throw away a bad one-act play and revise it into a two-act comedy called "Birthday Party at the Dalai Lama's Palace."

I'm submitting this play via all the playwriting websites. I also wrote a 10-minute play about teenagers addicted to social media, because I'm addicted to social media. And a radio play about two women who find healing at the beach, because that's my healing place too. That play is called "And Now for Some Good News from Pollyanna" because well, you know my nickname is Pollyanna.

I've found a new best friend: YouTube. I can watch documentaries on everything from where to dive with manta rays to how to paint like Matisse.

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I'm also practicing self-care: giving myself bad manicures, and blow-drying my Diana Ross curls into a strange grey rooted hairdo. And just because it's 2pm, can't I luxuriate in a lavender bath? Some days I throw on a bit of eyeliner and lip-gloss so I don't scare myself in the mirror.

Yesterday, I tried on my favorite lace cocktail dress, added pearls, and sparkly pink flip-flops. As I waltzed into the living room, Kenny asked: "Well, pretty lady, just where do you think you're going?"

"Over to Dunkin Donuts," I flirted. " Picking up one little chocolate glazed."

"Bring two," he smiled.

Stay sane, my Friends.

As an award winning travel journalist, Sharon published 5 travel guides and 300+ personal essays on global adventures, under the name Sharon Spence Lieb. Her articles appear in Town&Country, The Denver Post, and Thai Airways magazine. Now remarried as Sharon Baker – and living in Bluffton – she is crafting stage plays for audiences worldwide, and is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America. Email her: sharonspencelieb@gmail.com