

August 3, 2020

Dear Community,

It's been two months since we've written, after [weekly letters and resources lists](#) that started in March. This one has been a few weeks in the making, while many of us are collectively experiencing COVID-19 cases increasing in our communities and compounding pressures from and concerns about health, finances, politics, schools reopening, returning to work, and more.

It's important to know that we are not alone, and **there are things each of us can do to feel more empowered.**

## We prepared for a sprint

**We've been living with COVID-19 for more than a third of 2020** and started using the term, "post-covid," when we were focused on flattening the curve so that these "unprecedented times" would come to a close. Those on the frontlines immediately deployed teams and resources, the call was sounded for masks, and we removed ourselves into our homes to shelter- and educate-in-place as shops and schools closed. CARES Act funding was provided to sustain businesses through **July 31**, and **our internal time clocks automatically synchronized to that date as the day when things would be back to normal.**



July 31 and other benchmarks were set—while we were learning about the disease in real time—and became the beats and rhythms to which we paced ourselves as we sprinted to “the end.”

## Recognize the force of momentum



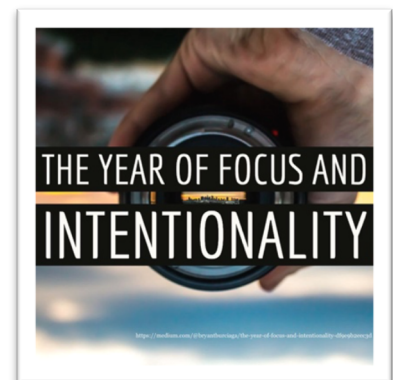
Countless individuals and organizations prioritized health and safety by staying home, wearing masks, physically distancing, and washing hands. When the number of cases decreased or stabilized in our communities, we were rewarded with the phased reopening of restaurants, shops, services, and opportunities for socializing. We set our tempo to match these stages and watched as South Korea, New Zealand, and many European countries rolled through theirs and life started to look more normal for them. *But then our numbers increased...*

### Three things to note:

- We prepared ourselves—mentally, financially, emotionally, physically—for a sprint to the point when we would be done with COVID-19.
- **We started rolling downhill**—like the two bicyclists coming down from Haleakala on Maui—towards re-opening, normalcy, and a conclusion...**and it's now difficult for many to slow, stop, and re-assess** [note the cyclist on the right].
- The more we understand and reconcile that **we are on a long-distance journey that requires pacing, strategy, and collaborative effort**, the sooner we will be able to emerge together into a new chapter that we still have to write.

### One thing each of us *can* do

Because we paced ourselves to be done at this point and the outward signals (e.g., re-openings) reinforced this timeline, the increasing numbers of people getting sick and dying create **cognitive dissonance within us and stretch our patience**. So much tells us to keep marching forward, yet this is not healthy for us, our families, and our communities. It also confuses our brains, bodies, and rhythmic beats.



The **positive news** is that there is **one thing that each of us can do** that will empower and sustain us through fatigue and frustration:

We can each **practice intentionality**—what we focus on, how we react, what we say, and what we do. With so many moving pieces in our lives, it can only help to bring our locus of control inward and to (re)find our *own* pulse and rhythm.

As yoga instructor [Chris Havener](#) reminds us: “If we are in constant motion, we do not know where we are in space.” In other words, unless we slow down and pause, it will remain difficult to see what we are doing and where we are going.

*Pause for a moment to reflect that intentionality in 2020 also means:*

- **Understanding that each of us is interconnected with everyone else** in our local community, each community impacts other ones, and we are all accountable to one another.
- Recognizing that **each of our own actions**—wearing a mask, physically distancing, washing hands, staying home, and remaining patient—**impacts others and us all**.
- Knowing that **each of us can collectively slow the spread of the virus and save lives by living with intentionality**.

## Intentionality Resources

Here are some free (and doable!) resources for increasing our intentionality:

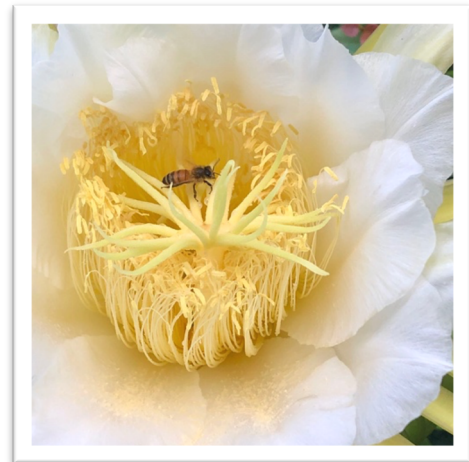
- Take off your backpack of responsibility for a half-hour: **3–3:30 PM, HT, Tuesday, 8/4** - [“Now, Relax: A Live Interactive Online Experience 30 minutes of relaxation and rejuvenation”](#) with Makana Risser Chai
- Practice intentionality: [Monday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday mindfulness sessions for all](#), inspired by art from the National Museum of Asian Art
- Expand your creativity, learn ways to thrive, and *focus* on growth through [lifestyle and other classes on SkillShare](#)
- Take a few moments for this [breathing exercise for yourself or with your kids](#) from [Mallika Chopra](#), author of *Living with Intent* and *Just Breathe: Meditation, Mindfulness, Movement and More*
- Be mindful of where you live and work: [“The Complete Guide to Reclaiming Your Bedroom During COVID”](#)

- **Identify something in your everyday life to use as a signal to come back to the present moment so that your next moment is filled with intentionality.** It can be a red light, the sound of a text message, or the action of putting on your (sun)glasses or mask. You can touch the door jamb each time you enter a room, pause every time you start and stop your car, or take a deep inhale when you turn on a light. Any of the above—or something of your choosing—leads to intentional living, act by act, and moment by moment.

Finally, may we support and affirm each other as we create space for one another to continue to learn and grow. This is a time of tremendous possibility, and we all have the opportunity to live with intent. The following poem is by **Dawna Markova** from *I Will Not Die an Unlived Life: Reclaiming Purpose and Passion* (Conari Press, 2000):

***I Will Not Die an Unlived Life***

*I will not die an unlived life  
I will not live in fear  
of falling or catching fire.  
I choose to inhabit my days,  
to allow my living to open me,  
to make me less afraid,  
more accessible,  
to loosen my heart  
until it becomes a wing,  
a torch, a promise.  
I choose to risk my significance;  
to live so that which came to me as seed  
goes to the next as blossom  
and that which came to me as blossom,  
goes on as fruit.*



To intention, blooms, and endurance ~  
The OSF Team