



## Nurturing Relationships While Social Distancing



Since very few public places are open for social connecting, people who live alone are more physically isolated than ever. Those of us who share our home with family members or friends are faced with a new 24/7 level of connecting while at the same time, are cut off from our supports outside the home. But wait a minute! While this all sounded so bad when we were first asked to practice social distancing, we are seeing some examples of deeper levels of connection than many of us have experienced in our lifetime.

Let's learn from the actions many have taken during this pandemic about how to best nurture our relationships. A survey of social media stories points to some time-honored truths that have risen to the surface in the past weeks.

*Italics = actual social media posts*

### 1. Connection takes time and presence

As the pace of our lives has slowed, we are noticing our environment and the people in it.

*"I have noticed that people in cars are waving to me when I walk much more than ever before."*

*"We played a game together last night for the first time in years! My daughter won. When did she get so smart?"*

### 2. There are many ways to connect

Friends, teachers, family members have discovered that parades can be organized by anyone and are a great way to celebrate and connect.

*"I took a FaceTime-walk with my grandchild yesterday. He was excited to explore with me."*

### 3. Simplicity opens doors to authenticity

*"I usually spend time getting ready for work thinking about how I will look to others. We have started videoconferencing all meetings and I can see my face constantly. I have learned to be more accepting of the way I look and find myself much more comfortable bringing my true self to the conversation."*

# COVID-19: Compassion in Action

## 4. "Vulnerability drives connection"

This quote from Brené Brown points to the truth that many have discovered as they reached out to neighbors or friends with less self-consciousness that their offer might be rejected. We have found the courage of vulnerability and made new and deeper connections.

*"I made and delivered meals to neighbors. Some may decide not eat them due to worry over germs, but I know they will accept my gesture of kindness."*

*"I just went to a virtual "happy hour" with two friends I haven't seen or talked to in ages. We had such a good time; we plan to do it once a week!"*

## 5. Pursuit of perfection stifles opportunity to act

Parents are trying all kinds of activities with their children when prior to the pandemic, many were heard saying, "I don't know what to do with kids." Or "I am no artist."



*One woman found a unique way to bring smiles to neighbors!*

Teachers who had some hesitation around online learning are bringing their expertise to the kids they care so much about.

*"I've been an educator for the past 6 years. I am dual-certified in K-12 Special Education and have worked with children with mild autism, specific learning disabilities, dyslexia, other health impairments, and children who have experienced trauma. I will build a YouTube channel and offer free videos online to help you help your child learn. We are in this together and we are stronger together. Stay safe and take care of one another."*

*"I am sending handwritten cards to thank our colleagues. My handwriting is not so good, but I decided it was good enough to show my gratitude."*

## 6. Everyone needs love and we can all give it

*"I picked up my meal from a local restaurant tonight and was so touched by the gratefulness the business owner expressed. I knew I wanted to help and left feeling uplifted by his gratitude."*

*"For those feeling down and stressed, if you're comfortable, message me your home address and I'll mail you a letter, drawing or something silly."*

This has been an opportunity for perspective shift for our world. We have become curious about other's ways of thriving and are considering shifts in our own. This may end up being a time of incredible growth in emotional intelligence! Please continue to use social media to share the many ways you see people increasing our emotional connections while we practice physical distancing.