

# THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

## FINDING MEANING AND PURPOSE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

How many times have we wished for life to just sloooow down? We've asked for time to take a breath, to get back to the basics and enjoy the small things we so often miss out on. Well, it seems we have been given just that. Unfortunately, sometimes the only way to slow down the world is through a crisis.



**How can we transform the sometimes devastating events of a crisis into personal meaning and purpose?**

The background noise is gone. Now can be a good time to discover how you are using your resources, your gifts, and whether you are living your purpose. We are all in unique circumstances. In this pandemic, there is great suffering. Loss of loved ones, freedom, income, and life as we knew it. You may be grieving, angry, or in a state of fear. Not everyone is experiencing a time of self-exploration, and that's OK. There is just as much value (and sometimes more) in taking this time to find the quiet and to try to enjoy the little things in life that direct us there.

## IT ISN'T AN END – IT'S A NEW BEGINNING

Whether it's a personal loss or a global crisis, during these times, we are called to shed our old ways and experience a form of reawakening. As we move through the stages of grief, we often try to suppress our suffering when we should welcome it as part of the transformative experience. Finding our way through the journey builds resilience and strengthens our character in ways that shift us deeper into finding meaning and purpose in the struggle.

We can look back on history and see inspiring examples of strength and resilience in some of the most arduous struggles involving segregation and isolation:

*"Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair."*

**Nelson Mandela**

*"Just as man cannot live without dreams, he cannot live without hope. If dreams reflect the past, hope summons the future."*

**Elie Wiesel** (Holocaust survivor)  
*Nobel lecture, 1986*

*"Those who have courage and faith shall never perish in misery."*

**Anne Frank**



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### Invite More Meaning into Your Life

#### Connect to the Bigger Plan

Our immediate circumstances can have us consumed and overwhelmed with emotion. It can be hard to open our eyes and hearts to seeing something more than what is right in front of us. Happy and fulfilled people have a larger perspective. They see adversity as an opportunity to strengthen a larger vision and live with hope, rather than hopelessness.

- Be an observer, a witness to what you see and hear. Put it into context. Feel and release what you need to while staying focused on the possibilities rather than on the problem.

#### Surround Yourself with Love and Positive Relationships

Surrounding yourself with love means that you are supported, encouraged, and able to express your true authenticity. When you surround yourself with love, you feel supported to start new ventures and take new paths, and dreams don't seem so difficult. Love is a cultivator of meaning and purpose.

- If you feel stuck, look at your surroundings. What or who is holding you back?

#### Accept What You Cannot Change

Accepting our circumstances isn't always easy. If we can let go of controlling the outcome, it becomes easier to adapt and embrace adversity rather than battle it. Failure, disappointment, loss, and change are usually things that we want to protect ourselves and our loved ones from. Allow life to flow.

- Purpose and meaning can't come out of resisting adversity. It will come from embracing it.

#### Connect to Your Spirit: Mindfulness and Gratitude

Leading a life of purpose doesn't have to mean grand gestures. You can find mindfulness in any moment. Stop and listen to the noises around you, feel the sensations, bring awareness to your present state of emotion. Taking these pauses in our day can help you to discover the present moment. By acknowledging the beauty in the pause, you are connecting to your spirit. Your true essence is where purpose and meaning live.

- We get so busy searching for fulfillment and happiness in our material world that we forget about the things that give our lives meaning right now! Practicing mindfulness and gratitude gives you the power to create a peaceful moment regardless of your circumstances. Stop, Pause and Listen.

#### Let Others Inspire You!

**The Long Walk to Freedom:** Nelson Mandela

**Man's Search for Meaning:** Viktor Frankl

**Left for Dead:** Samantha Barlow

**The Happiest Refugee:** Anh Do

**Girl in the Woods:** Aspen Matis

**Mindfulness & Meditation Resource:**

<https://chopra.com/meditation>



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