

Take a breath with YES



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Wellness Tip of the Month



Integration of
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increase positive
well-being

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Well-being
insights to
enhance your
work and life

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Tend/Befriend vs. Fight/Flight/Freeze

It's important to know that this COVID-19 crisis is a traumatic event. Although trauma can feel like a heavy and scary word, trauma can be a useful word to use because this can support us to make sense of how our minds and bodies are reacting to something.

A response to trauma in this current situation can look very different between different people. Panic buying and hoarding are trauma responses, and so is denial, defiance, or avoidance. Other responses can include difficulty focusing, irritability, heightened sensitivity, feeling emotionally overwhelmed, feeling numb, or feeling helpless.

Many of these reactions relate to the flight/fight/freeze reaction that happen when we face trauma, stress, or a threat. One of the first steps in dealing with this is noticing these reactions as a response to trauma rather than going into a downward spiral of thinking that something's wrong with you or that you're weak and can't handle this.

When it comes to people going through a traumatic event together, we wanted to bring you some hope and good news too. ***In addition to the fight/flight/freeze response, there's a lesser known response called tend-and-befriend.***

Research has found that tend-and-befriend is a common response to trauma or stress and involves nurturing behaviors, actively tending to one's family or community, reaching out to help others, and/or strengthening one's relationships or social network.

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If you've felt a stronger pull to connect with your friends and family or felt a stronger urge to help, nurture, or care for others (including yourself), this is the tend-and-befriend response. Listen to it when it's there. It's a good thing that can come out of all of this.

This doesn't mean you need to be tending to and befriending others all the time. This also involves tending and befriending yourself. And, make sure you allow others to tend-and-befriend you so they get a chance to do this too.

Each day through this COVID-19 crisis, fight/flight/freeze reactions and tend-and-befriend reactions can happen simultaneously and it's likely you'll experiencing a mix of this reactions.

Not everyone responds to trauma in the same way, and observing our own reactions can help us understand our needs and what we need to do to manage our stress.

Currently, see how tend-and-befriend can help you get through this.

You can tend-and-befriend yourself by being patient with yourself and giving yourself grace. This might mean not putting so much pressure on yourself or allowing space and compassion for what you feel.

You can tend-and-befriend others by reaching out with warmth and kindness. This might mean a heart-felt phone call, or could simply be offering a smile during a difficult time.

We can tend-and-befriend each other by keeping our souls connected and moving forward through this together one day at a time

Ami Kunimura, April 1, 2020

[Let's go deeper into it!](#)
[Click Here](#)

This is a guided meditation to explore the joy of befriending yourself fully



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(a 501c(3) organization)

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If you need support, you can reach us at 516-799-3203