

## Member's Quarterly

Fall 2022 Edition

### Perspective

## Staying Connected in Strange Times

*The key to staying sane*



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**S**omeday the pandemic will really end and we will get our lives back- perhaps not 'normal', but a new 'normal'. What did we learn about isolation and being alone within your family bubble for extended periods of time? We learned more than how to make sourdough bread or perfecting our Wordle skills.

I learned that while physical isolation and separation may have been absolutely essential at various points, social isolation was horrible. I really missed my friends, my family, my yoga group and my book club. At the onset, I was almost lost being alone, except for my immediate family, for any more than a week or so. What did I do about it? First, I tried using the telephone. Since most of my work involves being glued to a headset all day, that didn't do the trick. Also, I could only manage one conversation at a time.

Then came Zoom. I know all about Zoom fatigue and the disconnect that many feel when watching others through what appears to be miniature TV screens. I also know that some use Zoom all day the same way I use my phone. For me, somehow Zoom worked. My friends set up regular meetings via Zoom; my yoga instructor taught daily classes. Some who were more technologically challenged had to be convinced and trained, but once they were, they embraced it.

Zoom wasn't perfect and not the same as connecting in person. However, it broke the loneliness, boredom and loss of connection I was feeling. I found a way to stay sane by staying connected while the whole world was going crazy. I also did other activities and routines that kept me healthy physically and emotionally through these stressful times.

This included trying to eat healthier. In some ways, that was easier and harder at the same time. Easier, because I was home and had time to cook and harder because it was so easy to overeat and order takeout. What's that got to do with staying sane? There is a direct correlation to how we feel physically, mentally or emotionally and having a good diet helps us stay on the healthy side of that equation. The BC Women's Health Centre says that eating healthfully improves our physical and mental health and our quality of life. Good food gives us energy, improves our mood and makes it easier to maintain a healthy weight.

I also did yoga three times a week with my favourite teacher and my old yoga gang. Believe it or not, virtual yoga is still going strong today. Yoga, like meditation and breathing exercises, is as vital for your mind as it is for your body. The great part about classes on Zoom with participants you know is that this also filled an important social component. For ten minutes before and five minutes after class, we had a chance to chat and catch up. This was not solely exercise, but also social interaction to ease the emotional stress and break the isolation. I also found some excellent fitness apps and countless videos on YouTube.

All of that and regular Zoom calls with groups of friends and family carried me through, safe and sound. In fact, I liked some of these things so much I plan to continue them in the future. I may not do as many Zoom calls. It's hard to hug people on that platform and I seriously missed the hugs.

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### **Perspective** continued

It's now fall and while a lot of the world has opened up, it may not be indefinitely. Those who attended gyms and yoga studios are still not all rushing back due to health and safety concerns. Thankfully, the summer months allowed us the opportunity to get together outdoors, even with those who had health issues.

I understand that the pandemic is far from totally over. We have all developed new skills and habits that would not have happened without the lockdowns.

It's important to stay connected in person or virtually. I am a firm believer that no person is an island. We must strive to cultivate new ways to stay connected and in touch so that we all stay sane!

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