



# Present tense. Future still unwritten.

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**COVID-19 attacked our physical, mental and financial health** through the loss of loved ones, favored routines and employment. But staying at home also meant we were present when video of George Floyd's killing by Minneapolis police flooded our screens.

The centuries-long acceptance of discrimination, inequality and state-sanctioned killing of people of color finally eclipsed the bright lies America tells itself. We are not a country where anyone can succeed through hard work, education and personal sacrifice. Instead, options are stacked against many.

Today, protestors are holding the line and telling authorities how high to jump. Here's how to prepare for the new world:

## **If you're white, stop virtue signaling:**

The best way to be an ally isn't your Facebook post: "50 Ways White People Can End Racism." It's to admit what you've done wrong, ask for forgiveness and change. You can do that best by regularly attending diversity and inclusion workshops. Face and excise your behaviors that contribute to racism. Reading is nice, but a book only advances knowledge. It doesn't help you develop the wisdom to understand how you personally contribute to racism or how to stop. And, please don't ask people of color what you should do to end racism. Shoulder that burden yourself.

**Unmask your ego:** A mask might protect you against COVID-19, although it's useless against self-righteousness about wearing a mask. Wear a mask because it's practical for you. A psychologically and spiritually healthy person doesn't need to prove moral superiority.

**Let's choose change. By healing ourselves and working together, we can construct a new world that is beautiful, honest and inclusive.**

## **Think safe relating, not social distancing:**

Paul Gilbert, a clinical psychologist at the University of Derby in England, thinks anxiety is heightened by the term, "social distancing." He suggests "safe relating" as a reminder that we're adjusting how we connect.

**Embrace the wrinkles in time:** Don't know what day it is? Welcome to Kairos, or what the ancient Greeks called God's Time. If you've lived by worshiping the clock, Kairos can heal that addiction. Allow an hour to flow into a day and a day into a week. In the process you will rebalance your internal clock, balancing your body, mind and spirit.

## **Tithe for justice:**

Religious organizations encourage congregants to tithe to fund clergy and business operations. Consider tithing to GoFundMe accounts benefiting the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others. Or donate to bail funds, the Innocence Project and Fight Fair.

**Change the face of God:** Protestors have toppled statues of racist leaders. Should religions also examine their contribution to racism? By promoting images of a Middle Eastern savior or virgin as Caucasian, for example, certain religions embed the collective unconscious with the notion that divine beings are white. The damage created outweighs any argument for maintaining the status quo.

The present moment may feel tense, but only because the future is unknown. Let's decide what the future holds. Let's choose change. By healing ourselves and working together, we can construct a new world that is beautiful, honest and inclusive. □

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