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***What Happened to My Friendships?***

***Five Steps to Navigate The Social Distancing Crisis***

by

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## **Play and Explore**

“It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them.”

~ Leo F. Buscaglia ~



### **ACES TEST<sup>36</sup>**

To get your ACEs score, give yourself one point for each yes you answer to the questions below. (One point per numbered question.) This version of ACES quiz is a variation on the questions asked in the original ACEs study conducted by CDC researchers.

1. Before your 18th birthday, did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? And/or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Before your 18th birthday, did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? And/or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Before your 18th birthday, did an adult or person at least five years older than you ever touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? And/or attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

4. Before your 18th birthday, did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? And/or your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

5. Before your 18th birthday, did you often or very often feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? And/or your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

6. Before your 18th birthday, was a biological parent ever lost to you through divorce, abandonment, or other reason?

7. Before your 18th birthday, was your mother or stepmother:

- Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
- Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?
- Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

8. Before your 18th birthday, did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?

9. Before your 18th birthday, was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

10. Before your 18th birthday, did a household member go to prison?

Remember, this inventory doesn't take into account the positive resources you had in childhood. If you had people who cared (teachers, grandparents, neighbors), then the ACEs you experienced could have been tempered by this support, making you more resilient.



### **Gratitude Walk**

*“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson ~

The gratitude walk is about finding calm, peace, and positivity in each moment; bringing our mental, physical, and emotional energies to a higher level; and/or taking time to re-train our brain to see the positive things in every moment. The most powerful time to do this exercise is when you are feeling negative, hopeless, down, or when it feels stupid to do the walk. Just like exercise with the body, the brain grows the most when it is trained at the most stressful point. If walking is difficult or if you have difficulty finding time to walk, find a way to incorporate whatever it is you are doing with your body—sitting in a chair and swaying back and forth, sitting and moving your feet as if you are walking, washing dishes, folding laundry, etc., into the rhythm of your appreciations. The most important thing is to speak out loud while moving your body. Walking in nature has a potent energy and is ideal, but there is power in finding gratitude in every moment.

### Allowing Gratitude

1. Start by becoming aware of your thoughts, emotions, and body sensations. Do not judge; just notice what is coming up for you.
2. Begin walking or performing your task attentively.
3. Softly say out loud every little individual thing that you are grateful for, even if it seems insignificant or silly. It can be that you have a bed to sleep in, that you ate dinner that afternoon, that the sun is shining (or not shining), etc. It can be about you, family, life, world, your higher power, etc.
4. Allow the energy of those little things to encompass you and uplift you. If you find yourself stuck, take gentle note of it, then move on. Be grateful that you have awareness of where you are stuck and that you can work on it in the future.
5. When you feel your session is complete, give yourself gratitude. Thank yourself for taking the time to appreciate life (or whatever word/s come up for you).

“Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not;  
remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for.”

~ Epicurus ~



### **Self-Forgiveness/Self Love Walk**

*“Walking is the exact balance between spirit and humility.”*

~ Gary Snyder ~

Find a quiet space where you can walk, uninterrupted if possible. Note that this exercise is intended for forgiving and learning to love oneself. This is often the hardest thing for individuals to do. You may also use this to forgive others, but only after you have experienced self-forgiveness. One must love and honor self to truly love and honor others.

### **Finding Self | Grounding**

1. Stand still and feel your body (please sit if you cannot stand). Try to relax and let go of your thoughts as much as possible as you tune into your feet on the earth, the pressure of your clothes on you, the temperature, and whatever comes into your awareness. Just witness it and be open to calm, peace, and love.
2. State your intention silently or out loud to forgive yourself for all that you regret, judge yourself for, or wish had been different. Say that you love yourself or, if that's difficult, that you are open to loving and accepting yourself.
3. Look up and acknowledge there is sky and space above you, and that you are part of a bigger system.
4. Reach down and touch the earth that supports and grounds you.

### **Statements of Self-Forgiveness**

1. Start walking slowly. If walking is difficult, sit in a space and do something that is rhythmic, such as patting your lap, tapping the table, shaking a shaker, hitting a drum, etc. As you do the activity, softly state to yourself each of the things you have done for which you now forgive yourself.

- a. Start with "I forgive myself for..." and finish the sentence.
- b. Continue until you have forgiven yourself for everything that comes up, even if it seems small or silly, and even if it doesn't feel totally genuine at the moment.

For example, "I forgive myself for not listening to my friend when she needed me. I forgive myself for snapping at my coworker. I forgive myself for sleeping in when I wanted to get up and work out. I forgive myself for thinking negative thoughts towards the girl at the store..." You can forgive yourself for big things or small things. For things you said or didn't say, did or didn't do, etc.

Once this portion feels complete, pause and tune into yourself again and say, "I forgive myself for everything I have done." Breathe. Notice what has changed in your mind, body, and spirit.

### **Self-Love**

1. Start walking slowly again.
2. Say out loud softly, "I choose to love myself as I am."
3. As you walk, speak every little and big thing that you appreciate about yourself, even if it seems silly. In fact, saying things about yourself that you take for granted (breathing, heart pumping, brain functioning) can be very powerful.

4. When you feel done, say, “I love myself as I am.”

When that is done, once again tune into yourself and notice what has changed in your mind, body, and spirit. State your intention to continue with self-forgiveness and self-love in the days to come. Say that you love yourself or, if that’s difficult, that you are open to loving and accepting yourself. Look around and acknowledge everything around you with gratitude. Reach down and touch the earth with gratitude.

“A person learns how to love himself through the simple acts of loving and being loved by someone else.”

~ Haruki Murakami, Author ~

