



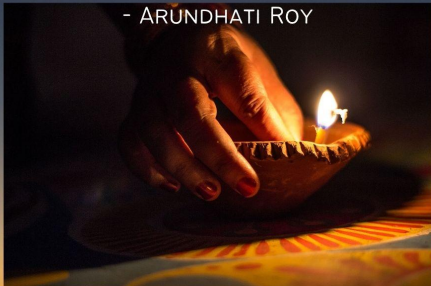
Resiliency & Self-Care Newsletter Fall 2021, Issue 9

"NOTHING COULD BE WORSE THAN
A RETURN TO NORMALITY.

HISTORICALLY, PANDEMICS HAVE
FORCED HUMANS TO BREAK
WITH THE PAST AND
IMAGINE THEIR WORLD ANEW.

THIS ONE IS NO DIFFERENT.
IT IS A PORTAL,
A GATEWAY BETWEEN
ONE WORLD AND THE NEXT."

- ARUNDHATI ROY



Each year it seems to arrive just a little later, but sure enough, autumn is here! The chill in the air, the evening that comes sooner each day, adds a sense of urgency to prepare for the darker half of the seasonal calendar. And with yet another season to consider health and safety precautions to take for ourselves, our families, and our communities, careful thought and action continue to be important tasks.

This time of year, the midpoint between autumn and winter, also brings a sense of remembrance, honoring, and releasing. Some cultures celebrate Dia de los Muertos, All Souls Day, or Lantern Festivals as a way to connect to ancestors. It is a poignant, tender time, and more so now given the pandemic numbers so hard to comprehend.

Ceremony and practice, whether held in community or in private, help sustain hope. They connect us to who came before, who we are now, and the future we imagine for those who come after. I often think of the quotes from [Arundhati Roy](#) and [Zandashé](#)

[L'Orelia Brown](#) currently circulating on social media. They, along with other musings, have inspired the offered resources below.

This episode from Truthout's Movement Memos podcast series shares a framework to help us see ourselves, our activism, and our campaigns and movements in terms of natural ebbs and flows: *"In the coming years, we are going to have to practice our skills and our politics in*

ways that we probably can't fully imagine right now, because we live in unprecedented times," says Kelly Hayes. In this episode of "Movement Memos," Kelly and organizer Carlos Saavedra talk about burnout, building power, and how our pandemic exhaustion could give way to an era of breakthroughs."

[Podcast: From Burnout to Breakthroughs, Weary Organizers Can Come Back Stronger](#)

In this conversation, conflict resolution strategist and author Priya Parker explores with "On Being" host Krista Tippett the how and why of coming together: "Virtual or physical, this time of regathering offers a threshold we can decide to cross with imagination, purpose, and joy."

[Interview: Remaking Gathering: Entering the Mess, Crossing the Thresholds](#)

As educator Sean Michael Morris expands on the idea of "critical resilience," he writes: "Resilience is not persistence. It is not grit. It is creativity, criticality, engagement, and imagination. The resilient person knows when they are tired, knows when they can't take another step—and what makes them resilient is not that they take the next step, but that they reimagine what stepping looks like, they recognize the power and usefulness of being tired, the reason for it. Resilience is productive, generative, and blasphemous."

[Essay: Critical Resilience](#)

For practices to try, Mindful.org curates a selection of [12-minute guided meditations](#) facilitated by leaders in the mindfulness field. Here are just a few of many to explore:

[R.E.S.T.—A Guided Practice for the Tired and Weary with Rashid Hughes](#)

[A 12-Minute 4-7-8 Breathing Meditation with Dr. Ni-Cheng Liang](#)

[A 12-Minute Meditation for Remembering That We Belong to Each Other with Ruth King](#)

And, getting back to the basics of simply following the rise and fall of the breath is also a wonderfully restorative practice:

[Video: RELAX AND BREATHE: Do Nothing for 10 Minutes](#)

[Video: "How to Breathe": Yoga in ASL with Beverly](#)

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I took great heart, as I hope others did, too, in what keynote speaker Libero Della Piana shared during this year's statewide virtual Grassroots Gathering kick-off:

"Crisis creates both threats and opportunities. It changes the terrain in which we operate. We're in an age of crisis. We don't just face one crisis. We're facing crisis on top of crisis on top of crisis in a way that feels overwhelming and it can be demoralizing. Another thing that I wanted to reflect on is, in the earlier breakout session, we were talking about, "What are we proud of?"

One of the things that came up was, someone said I haven't been able to do much because of COVID except take care of myself and take care of my neighbors and to do these things. And I was like, boy, that's a lot to be proud of actually. In a moment of crisis, these issues, the basic issues like, are you healthy, are you taking care of yourself, your mental health, your physical health? Are you looking after your neighbors? Are you connecting with family? These become much more important things that sometimes we take for granted, where we say they're not important or they're not organizational, they're not changing policy. But I would say in a crisis, we go back to basics.

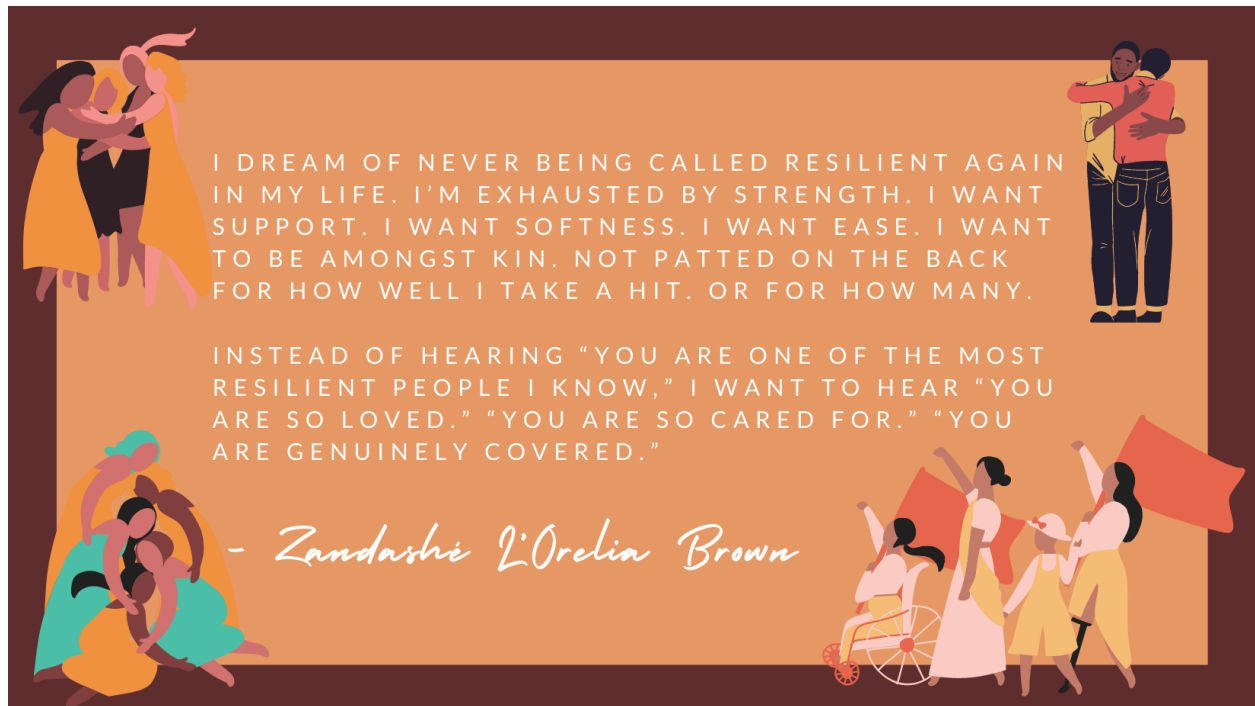
... How we respond to a crisis and how we react in this moment, I think it's important to both allow space for us to do that kind of healing and that work and to also understand that some people need to take a break. Some people need to tend to family. Some people need to tend to themselves and that the pace of our work to make change may shift. It may slow down at times because of crisis, but it also may speed up because of crisis, because of the urgency at the moment."

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This season, [give yourself the space and practices to lean into](#) what is coming up for you. Is it a time to go within and restore? A time to seed new plans and campaigns? Or a time to reap the rewards of good work and care?

Remember, no one is meant to go it alone. Reach out to those in your circles and your Chapters. Open up to wisdom shared here and from disabled organizers on the power of

[interdependence](#). Share where you are at in this moment, and your hopes and ideas, too. We need each other in multiple ways to vision and work toward the future we want to create together.



Until next time, take good care, and all the very best from the Self-Care and Healing Justice team,

Ronna Wertman
Virginia Organizing volunteer, and

Meghan McNamara, Lead Organizer
Portsmouth/Norfolk

<https://virginia-organizing.org/>
