

# a little negativity goes a long way

(& other unusual beliefs for keeping it together)

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reflect & share

What's giving you  
optimism lately?





**Who am i to offer you  
advice on resilience?**



**“One person’s nightmare  
is another person’s Tuesday.”**

N. K. Jemisen

# 5 tips for keeping it together

01

## **scrap optimism**

a little negativity goes a long way

02

03

04

05

## scrap optimism...

“The death rate in the week between Christmas, 1944, and New Year’s, 1945, increased in camp beyond all previous experience...the explanation for this increase did not lie in the harder working conditions or the deterioration of our food supplies or a change of wealth or new epidemics. It was simply that the majority of the prisoners had lived in the naive hope that they would be home again by Christmas.”

Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*



## ...embrace delusion

“You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end – which you can never afford to lose – with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

Collins, *Good to Great*, quoting POW  
Admiral Stockdale





## revisiting our reflections

Given what you just learned, what belief about yourself can be your foundation for optimism?

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bend, don't break

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# resilience is flexibility

“Palm trees...are  
aerodynamic marvels.”

from “How Palm Trees Stand Tall in the Face of a  
Hurricane,” *The Guardian*, 17 Sep 2017



# reflect & share

In what 3 ways have you already been flexible during the pandemic? What is 1 way you might need to “bend” next?



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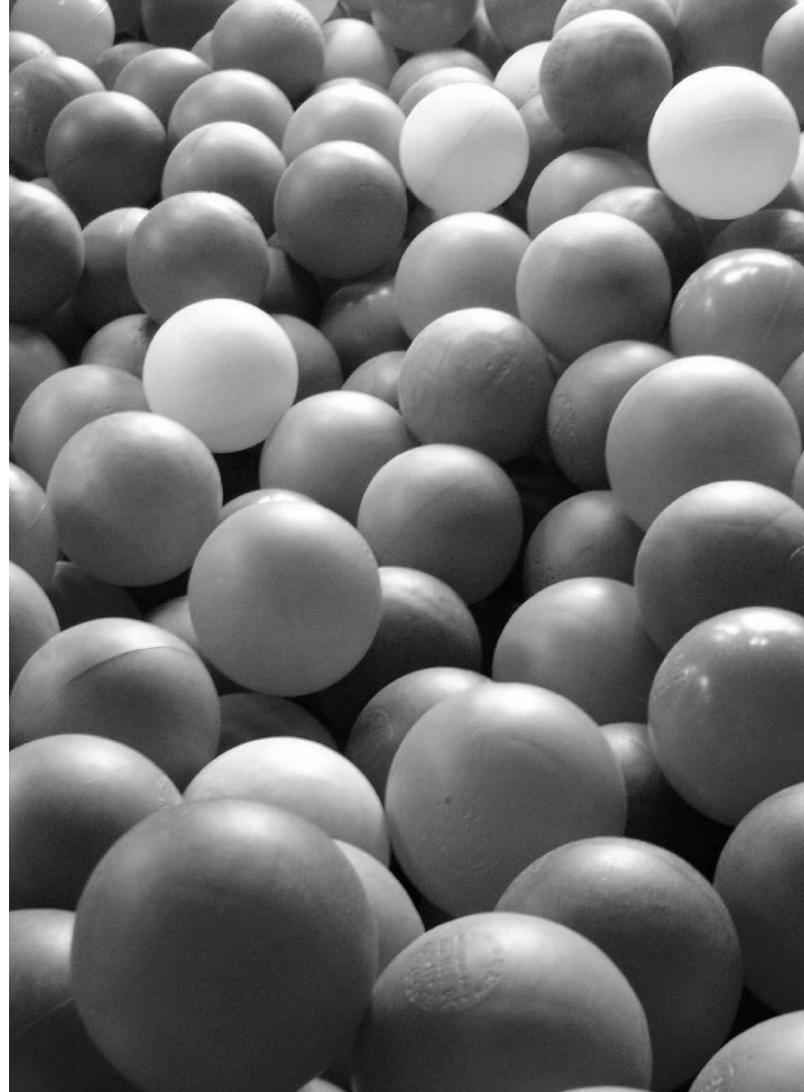
learn to quit

04

05

## drop a ball...

“...people who quit their unattainable goals saw physical and psychological benefits. They have, for example, less depressive symptoms, less negative affect over time...They develop fewer physical health problems over time.”  
(Wrosch et al., 2007, *Giving Up on Unattainable Goals*)



## **...but not glass ones**

“[Staying busy] is the single most important goal of traumatized people throughout the world.”

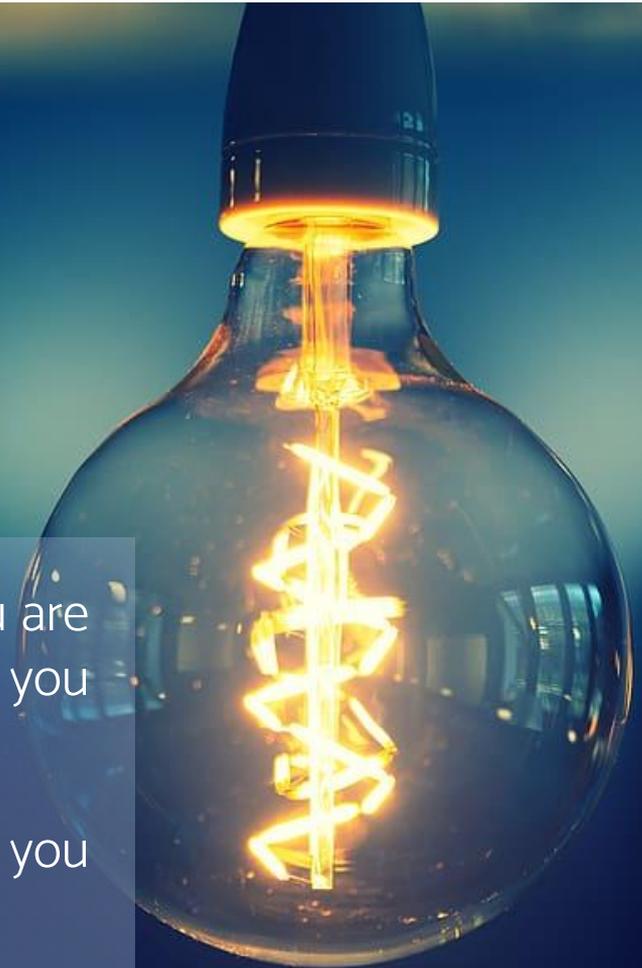
Richard Mollica,  
Harvard psychiatrist



# reflect & share

What is one “plastic ball task” you are planning to do this week, that you can let drop (and bounce)?

What is one “glass ball task” you need to juggle this week?



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(and not just your pandemic mask)

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## keep your mask on

Psychologist M. Ephimia Morpew studied a series of accidents in which scuba divers were found dead with air in their tanks and perfectly functional regulators.

Why did this happen?



# reflect & share

How do you usually respond to your emotional lows?

What response to your emotional lows would better serve you during this pandemic?



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## **nurture glimmers**

small wins are still wins

# nurture glimmers

glimmer /'glimər/

*noun.* 1) shine faintly with wavering light

*noun.* 2) ordinary moments to remember;  
anything that inspires our gratitude;  
small successes;  
hope.



## nurture glimmers

"...scientists say the brain has a 'negativity bias.' In effect, it's like Velcro for negative experiences, but Teflon for positive ones. The unfair and unfortunate result is that negative experiences get captured in emotional memory instead of positive ones, gradually darkening your outlook, mood, and sense of self. To overcome the negativity bias...make your brain like Velcro for the good stuff of daily life..."

Rick Hanson, psychologist, *Taking in the Good*



## reflect & share

What has been a “glimmer” of the pandemic, your week, or your day?

How can you (& your family) nurture glimmers in the months to come?



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**“If you didn’t have a candle, you lit a piece of wood.”**

Aron Bielski, 93,  
reflecting on how he and 1,250 other Jewish refugees  
(who fled Nazi terror and established a community in the forests of Eastern Europe)  
welcomed the weekly Jewish tradition of Shabbat.



## resources

### **any book or newsletter by Dr. Rick Hanson**

Dr. Hanson combines psychology with mindfulness in his books on resilience and rewiring the brain for happiness

### **“What Makes Families Resilient”**

This interview by Dr. Froma Walsh, the go-to researcher on family resilience, reviews her key findings

### **“Building Your Resilience”**

This article by the American Psychological Association includes many research-backed ideas, including seeking professional help/therapy, which is particularly important for caregivers to consider

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*Not to be Ministered Unto, but to Minister*

