



Giving ourselves, others grace during the pandemic

For many of us, 2020 has been a year unlike any other. We have had to change our routines, our plans, and our lifestyles. We have felt angry and scared. We have felt uncertain or even numb. Some days we have not even been sure how to feel or what to do. All of this is OK. You are not alone. However, this year has certainly made us feel alone at times. None of us saw this crisis coming, and none of us could have properly prepared for it. When the first headlines came to us, it still seemed far away. We had no idea it would soon affect us all so personally in such a short time. There is not a single person in our country who has not been changed by all of this. However, we are all still trying to process it. We may not be able to care well for ourselves right now, let alone provide care and love to others. Social distancing has even caused us to lose out on the basic human need of touch with many people this year.

Most of us are in survival mode right now. It has been hard to just keep it together some days. What does it mean to give yourself or others grace right now? Giving grace means admitting that people have needs. It means seeing that we sometimes need to slow down and think about those needs. Here are some questions to think about to help give grace to yourself and others:

1. What needs can be met right now?
2. What can be done to address those needs?
3. What things are out of control in my life?
4. What things can I let go of or put off right now?
5. How can I reward myself when I accomplish things I need to do?
6. Who can I talk to about what I am feeling?
7. Who can I reach out to for help?

None of us are superhuman. We also cannot compare ourselves to others. We just have to do the best we can, but also know that some days that might not be much more than getting out of bed or taking a shower. Here are some tips for giving ourselves and others some grace:

- Do not put undue pressure on yourself.
- Do not lecture others about how to keep it together.

- Remember that some people may experience long-lasting trauma from this pandemic while others will not.
- Any and all feelings you have are OK. There is no right or wrong way to feel. It can change from day to day and even from hour to hour.
- It is OK to fall apart from time to time as you are trying to process everything that has happened this year.
- It is OK to laugh, be happy, and to share happiness on social media. Sometimes when others are having a rough time around us, we feel like we should hide something good that has happened to us. It is OK to still feel and share our joy and our good experiences.
- Readjust our expectations and our to-do lists. If you are finding you are not able to accomplish daily goals, scale back.
- Prioritize the one most important thing each day. If you can get more done, that is great! But if you can't get more done, do not get angry with yourself.

The things we are all experiencing right now are huge and overwhelming. They may be affecting us more than we even realize. We are all having to restructure our everyday lives in ways we could not have imagined. It is absolutely exhausting. Our bodies and our minds are just tired. Give yourself some grace. Remember you are doing the best you can. Look for the positives in each day. Respect yourself, and remember that you are human.

References

Harder, A. (2020). Giving Yourself Grace. Retrieved August 2020 from HopeNet at <https://www.hopenetwichita.org/2020/giving-yourself-grace/>.

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