

Keeping resistance simple

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Spirit of Life

While I trust the reliability of planet Earth rotating on her axis, it sure feels like the world is spinning way too quickly these days. As many astute analysts have observed, the new presidential administration's shock and awe tactics are working exactly as intended. The sheer number of nasty executive orders and bizarre statements have left many people shaking their heads, mouths agape,

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asking, "What the actual?!" Wordcount limits prohibit even a dot-point list of issues, so I'll make only three observations to establish context.

- Programs that directly benefit poor, underserved, at-risk, marginalized people are being slashed so more money can shift to benefit billionaires. The global impact on affected populations is catastrophic, not to mention the livelihood of thousands of people who have devoted their vocational lives to serving others in some of the worst humanitarian crises.

- The U.S. has leaned heavily into its aspirations as a colonizing empire. People are resisting. Some are laughing out loud at the absurdity of it all. However, the suggestions that the U.S. should buy Greenland, colonize Gaza for oceanfront property and rename entire bodies of water to promote our own brand ... are coming from a serious place of hubris, greed and power-hoarding (all of which are distracting us from actual humans — and a planet — in desperate situations of peril).

- Prejudice and hate have taken off their kid gloves and are no longer afraid to openly rumble in the streets. As Gulf of Maine Books co-owner Gary Lawless observed in a recent lecture on the history of the KKK in Brunswick, (I'm paraphrasing) if you take the worst propaganda from that time and replaced the word "Catholic" with "immigrant" or "trans-

gender," it would echo exactly what is being said and done right now. We should not take this realization lightly!

These and so many other things are happening concurrently, and it is overwhelming. As many wise and seasoned activists have reminded us, the point of all of this is that we

are overwhelmed. Their hope is that we will feel hopeless and give up. This we cannot do. The chaos, urgency and panic of the present moment can serve to distance us from our

most reliable resources, but only if we let them.

If you find yourself spinning these days, desperately trying to answer the question "What can I do?," a winning strategy might still be to keep it simple. Breathe. Remember you are not alone and that staying true to your own best selves is a team sport these days. Reach out to an old friend or make a new one. If you find yourself despairing about the erosion of trust in our political world, be trustworthy yourself. If you are disgusted by hate speech, ask who might need some loving affirmation and give it to them. Remember that every small action you take to center love matters. When things are too fast and chaotic, slow down and tend to the life in front of you. Listen deeply to people most affected by the "arguments" taking place 24/7, and reflect collaboratively with them. Create art. Laugh on purpose. Smile at strangers. Contribute to another creature's well-being with no expectation of return. These are all small things, maybe, but they are all actions within our power. These are simple (not to be confused with easy) ways of resisting the destruction we see around us with positive, intentional, alternative programming for life.

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