

Pausing Gatherings at Sunburst

A response to Covid-19

Dear friends,

Life seems to be changing by the minute. What a blessing that we have been given the tools to stay present in each moment, breathe deeply, and feel calm and connected to the true nature of Spirit.

Now is the time to dive deep into all we know to be true and to not let the power of fear rule our emotions and reason.

Based on experiences from around the world, and guidelines issued by the State of California (https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Gathering_Guidance_03.11.20.pdf), Sunburst is choosing to err on the safe side and practice “social distancing” as a precautionary measure to do our part in stopping this virus in its tracks. At the end of this letter is more about social distancing.

This is for each and everyone’s own safety including the safety of those in our communities who are most at risk. This virus appears to be fast moving and highly contagious.

As of today, Sunburst Sanctuary and Retreat Center are closed at least through the end of March. Our weekly Sunday gatherings are paused for the rest of this month, and the Intro to Permaculture workshop that was scheduled in March will be rescheduled for a later date.

To stay strong in our shared practice and spiritual solidarity, everyone is encouraged to take time to meditate from home at the same time as our usual Sunday meditation services, 10:30 – 11:30 am each Sunday. We are also currently exploring options for sharing inspirational messages digitally, and you will be notified when this is activated.

Let us all take a deep breath, stay present in the moment, and affirm that all will be well. We are all divine beings, experiencing this human life together. We have the power to choose fear or love. Let us keep our minds on the divine and send love and compassion to all. While we may not comprehend a divine plan in all that is happening, we can remember Yogananda’s mantra, “God is the doer” and offer love and light to all with the Sanskrit mantra, “Om Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu” (may all beings everywhere be happy/peaceful and free).

We encourage everyone to practice healthy hygiene habits, stay away from others if you feel sick, and stay abreast of health department recommendations. You can find Santa Barbara County’s recommendations here: <https://publichealthsb.org/>

Our teachings and love of the divine will be our raft over the tumultuous ocean of life. Let’s stay close energetically and in spirit through these times. Our spiritual director, Patty, and the Sunburst office staff are available by phone and email if you need to talk: 805.736.6528, contactus@sunburst.org.

RE: Social distancing:

Social distancing works. The concept of “flattening the curve” is now a textbook public health response to epidemics, including the spread of Covid-19. Once a virus can no longer be contained, the goal is to slow its spread. Exponential growth in infections leaves health care systems struggling to handle the surge. But with fewer people sick at once (and overall), services aren’t overwhelmed and deaths diminish. This buys time for doctors to treat the flood of patients and researchers to develop vaccines and antiviral therapies. The extreme measures—now known as social distancing, which is being called for by global health agencies to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus—kept per capita [1918] flu-related deaths in St. Louis to less than half of those in Philadelphia, according to a 2007 paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. <https://qz.com/1816060/a-chart-of-the-1918-spanish-flu-shows-why-social-distancing-works/>