

NEWSLETTER

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BE KIND TO EACH OTHER

Everybody I know is scared and worried. Scared and worried about the economy. Scared and worried about losing everything from jobs to homes to retirement funds.

Whenever there is a disaster, either a natural one like a hurricane or a man-made one like the economic tsunami, the worst thing is that we have no control over what is happening. We are at the mercy of powerful external forces about which we can do nothing.

But wait. We can't tell the Secretary of the Treasury to give us a bail-out package. But when we are overwhelmed by external events there are things we can do.

Take some deep breaths. Do the obvious like taking a look at your personal finances and finding ways you can cut down on spending. Turn off the TV. It is not healthy to listen to the same dire projections 100 times a day. Talk honestly to your children about family finances. Involve the older ones in planning how to cut down.

There is one more thing we can all do. It costs us nothing and may actually make us feel better. BE KIND TO EACH OTHER. To others in the family. To people you are dealing with on the telephone. To strangers at the market. Reach out with kind words spoken calmly. Make yourself smile.

Even if you can't give as much to charitable organizations as you used to give, give what you can without embarrassment or explanation. Even if you can't afford to travel, stay in touch with friends and loved ones via telephone or the internet or old-fashioned methods like letters and post cards.

Share what you can. In the Great Depression, housewives might not let the "hobo" (an old term for the homeless) in the door but they fixed him a plate.

One woman I know told me she doesn't go out to eat much anymore but when she does she leaves a big tip. Great idea because helping others helps ourselves.

And smiling at others even when we feel like crying actually helps our own mood. Try it.