

Be still, and know that I am God!

—Psalm 46: 10

Live in harmony with one another...If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

—Romans 12: 16 and 18.

An old man sitting beneath the tree sees serpents of decay and of suffering.

An old man sitting beneath the tree sees power in your stillness and your harmony.

—Xavier Rudd

Robin has been telling me to stop saying, I'm getting old. You *are* old, she says. Well then, I'm an old man who sees both decay and suffering in the world right now, as well as power in stillness and harmony.

In some spiritual traditions, power in stillness is called equanimity. Some people cultivate equanimity by paying attention to their breath. The in-breath is linked to our sympathetic nervous system, which arouses our alertness. The out-breath is linked to our parasympathetic nervous system, which calms us. Bringing our in-breath and our out-breath into an easy unforced balance, we can experience calm alertness. Do that for ten breaths and you'll begin to feel the effect. Do it longer, as a daily practice, and the effect will become more pronounced and stable. You'll be calm and alert, rather than frazzled and distracted. The power of your stillness will soothe others.

With equanimity, you're well-equipped to live in harmony with others. Without equanimity, conflict is more likely. All this is to say, if there was ever a time to cultivate equanimity, now's that time. May you find time to be still and know God. And as you spend more time in close quarters with those who share your home, may your equanimity help you live in harmony with them, and with your neighbors too.

I don't think I'm alone in saying these are stressful times. Not only is toilet paper flying off the shelves, guns and bullets are too. Some people are stocking up, because they're afraid. We reflected on fear recently—on how we can experience fear without letting fear become our lord and master. I pray for the people bowing to fear now, because that's a serious form of suffering. I've bowed to fear before, so I know that suffering. I'm praying I don't do so again anytime soon. I'm praying the same for you. Let's keep praying for each other. Let's find time to be still and know God. Let's seek harmony with those living under our roof and with our neighbors next door.

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