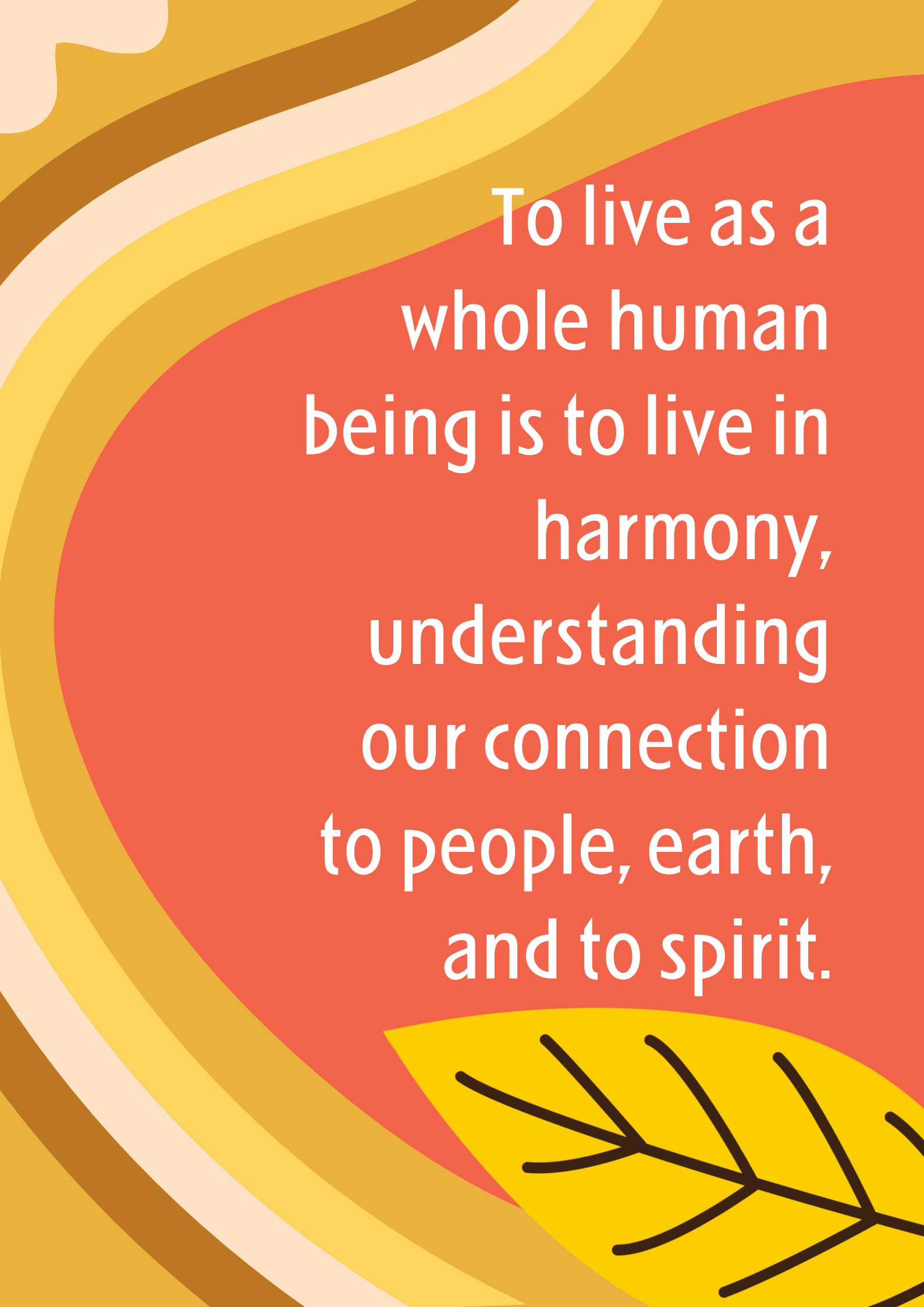


5 Things We All Need For *Thriving* In These Times

Anita Sanchez, Ph.D.



The background features a series of thick, flowing, curved bands in shades of yellow and orange, creating a sense of movement and warmth. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized yellow leaf with black veins.

To live as a
whole human
being is to live in
harmony,
understanding
our connection
to people, earth,
and to spirit.



Anita Sanchez, Ph.D., Nawat (Aztec), and Mexican American, is a transformational leadership consultant, speaker, coach, and author of the 2019 International Latino Book Award for *The Four Sacred Gifts: Indigenous Wisdom for Modern Times*, Simon & Schuster.

Dr. Sanchez bridges indigenous teachings with the latest science to inspire and equip women and men to enjoy meaningful, empowered lives and careers. And is acknowledged as a thought leader in the arena of culture, large-scale change, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recent awards include Conscious Company Media 2020 World Changing Woman award and World Woman Foundation's Woman of the Hour, #SheisMyHero.



People everywhere are grappling with the best way forward for their families' and companies' physical and financial health and survival.

Among the questions we are all asking:

What are we certain about?

What do we do when disruptive change is here?

What happens when it is over?

What are the opportunities and constraints for our future well-being and growth?


What might so radically change that it causes collapse?

Is there an upside to the collapse(s)?

Is there an end to my fears?

What does transformation look like, creating the new?

Some will call this environment we find ourselves in a “VUCA” world:



**Volatile
Uncertain
Complex
Ambiguous**

Our brains are not wired to deal with VUCA world conditions easily. When faced with fear and stress, we are more apt to go into primitive fight, flight, or freeze responses that can trigger panic, denial, control, or fatalism. These are very human responses, and they are not what is needed. What is needed is to remember our intricate interconnection with our bodies, the natural world, and each other.

Most of us have met crises in our personal lives, and in the organizations, we lead and work at. As leaders, we need to move beyond “either or” thinking to “both and” thinking. It is our responsibility to stay present, so that we can face the actual reality, including potentially brutal facts, and so that we can hold the possibility of adapting and creating anew. To be able to more effectively tackle challenges in a VUCA environment, we need to be sure to care for ourselves and for our teams, so that we have the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical strength to consciously lead ourselves and our organizations.

The following five vital needs must be met for human beings to thrive. During a time of turmoil, it is especially critical that we remember, and honor, our natural bodies and essential spirit, to thrive.

#1 Breathe

Breathing is the first (and easiest) place to turn to when you need to regain a sense of control. Professional athletes know that this is a fundamental skill in outstanding performance and effectiveness. However, most of us were never taught how to breathe properly.

#1 Breathe

The first step is to be aware of your breathing throughout the day. Pause and take note of how you are breathing. In stressful, pressured situations, your breathing is apt to become shallow, noisy and fast, or you may hold your breath. When we catch ourselves in these states, we have the power to consciously change our breathing, to choose to bring ourselves to a calmer, more present state.

Second, slow your breath down when you feel overstimulated. To begin, inhale through your nose to the count of six and exhale through your mouth, with your lips and jaw slightly open, to the count of nine or twelve. Continue this breathing until you find that you are more present and aware. You may notice that your heart rate slows and your thinking settles.

Remember that this practice

- *improves oxygen distribution and decreases the stress response

- *can improve physical performance

- *improves our ability to recover by calming our mind effectively, emotions, and nervous system.



Third, in non-stressed situations you can practice steady breathing for a balance of inhalations and exhalations. For example, breathe in through your nose to the count of six and then exhale for a count of six. Or, inhale to the count of nine and exhale to the count of nine. There are different breathing techniques for different situations that you can explore further. The idea is for you to grow a practice of awareness of your breathing and its impact on your ability to be fully present, in gratitude for the gift of your body and the oxygen from nature that sustains it.



#2 Rest

#2 Rest

In a demanding virtual and non-virtual home and work environment, we are required to be in a high-energy state throughout the workday. All too often, we feel that we must be in performance mode constantly. Instead, we need to consciously choose to shift into a recovery process whenever the opportunity arises. Sleep is the most profound recovery process, the period in which we build muscle, recover, and even calm or resolve our emotions through dreaming. Too often, our highly stimulated work state interferes with sleep, degrading performance and mental health.

You can approach sleep as a problem to solve. Getting some physical exercise, even 20 to 30 minutes each day, will aid in your ability to sleep. Stretching before going to bed helps open tight muscles and release stress. Create a plan to get eight or more hours of sleep each day, including refreshing naps. Turn off your media, computers, TV, and phone at least an hour before you go to sleep and avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed. Before you go to sleep, read something positive or fun or calming. Or you can imagine being in your most favorite place that brings you joy and calm. Giving gratitude for all the good people and things in your life, such as health, loved ones, nature, spiritual well being, and more, can be wonderfully calming.



#3 Water



#3 Water

“Mini wiconi”, in Lakota language, means “water is life”.



Life on earth, as we know it, could not exist without water. The amount of water in a healthy adult body varies from approximately 50% to 60% of our body weight.

When stressed and in the busy-ness of the day, we forget that keeping hydrated and drinking water is essential to survival and is a must for our bodies and minds to function. Some of us have become accustomed to chronic dehydration, not noticing the state of our body.

Consult your doctor on how much water you should have daily given your health, weight, and activity.

In general, eight to twelve glasses of water per day is sufficient for the average person to stay hydrated. Lots of green vegetables and fruits also contain water, whereas alcohol can dehydrate us. Finally, good hydration seems to improve the quality of our sleep.



#4 Nutrition

#4 Nutrition

Moving from one task to another while getting work done throughout the day often leads to us reaching for a quick energy boost – i.e., soda, chips, or processed goods. These are not the nutrition that will provide your body with real fuel to help your brain and other body parts to function at optimum levels. Your body needs “real” food, such as colorful vegetables, fruits, lean meat and fish protein, and whole grains. All too often, as we dedicate ourselves to creating a healthy family or business ecosystem, we abandon care for our own body’s ecosystem. This is an opportunity to model for your employees and other leaders what it means to be 100% on your game, by establishing a routine of healthy eating on a regular basis throughout the day.




Your body needs “real” food, such as colorful vegetables, fruits, lean meat and fish protein, and whole grains. All too often, as we dedicate ourselves to creating a healthy family or business ecosystem, we abandon care for our own body’s ecosystem.

This is an opportunity to model for your employees and other leaders what it means to be 100% on your game, by establishing a routine of healthy eating on a regular basis throughout the day.

“There is no separation from human or earth ... we are all part of the circle of energy that flows from the land, through plants, animals, rock, wind, water, etc., and then through human kind ...”

Carol Pettersen
Menang of the Noongar Nation, West Australia



Independent of whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, all human beings need human connection to thrive. In this time of social distancing, we are asked to be mindful of our own health by being in solidarity with the health and well-being of our family, friends, work colleagues, and community by maintaining six feet of distance between us. However, social distancing does not mean total separation or isolation from others. We need to reach out and stay connected.

Community #5

#5 Community

We are each building greater mental, emotional, and spiritual ability to flex and connect in virtual gatherings. Virtual meetings are now for everyone. To gain the essential mental health and spiritual benefits of community, allow a space prior to, or at the start of meetings, for people to share how they and their family are doing. Perhaps share a tip on how you are navigating work at home. Allow for there to be diverse needs expressed, and for responses to these questions. Your willingness to create space for this connection will be deeply appreciated.

In this time of many challenges including COVID 19, the illusion that we are all just individuals, separate and not intimately interconnected, has been dissolved. This microscopic virus bug shows us that we impact each other everywhere around the world. Further, we are reminded that we depend on many others to survive and thrive including grocery workers, health professionals, teachers, co-workers, and others. We are finding ways to give and receive needed support, emotional and otherwise, from family, friends, workers, and nature.



Neuroscience research proves that feelings of unity and belonging imprint emotional and physical health. In research in which college students were shown compassionate acts, they automatically experienced an increase in their immune function, as the happy hormone oxytocin fed their brain and nervous system.

By contrast, when we are feeling isolated and experiencing acts of indifference or threat, the hormone cortisol is secreted into the brain and body, telling our system to go into flight, fight or freeze. Cortisol is not a bad hormone; we need it when we are in real danger. However, if we constantly feel uncertainty or perceived threat, an excess of cortisol becomes seriously detrimental to our physical health and sense of well-being.

Thus, it is especially important today to discover ways to create that needed sense of community using the internet, video calling, and large and small group chats.



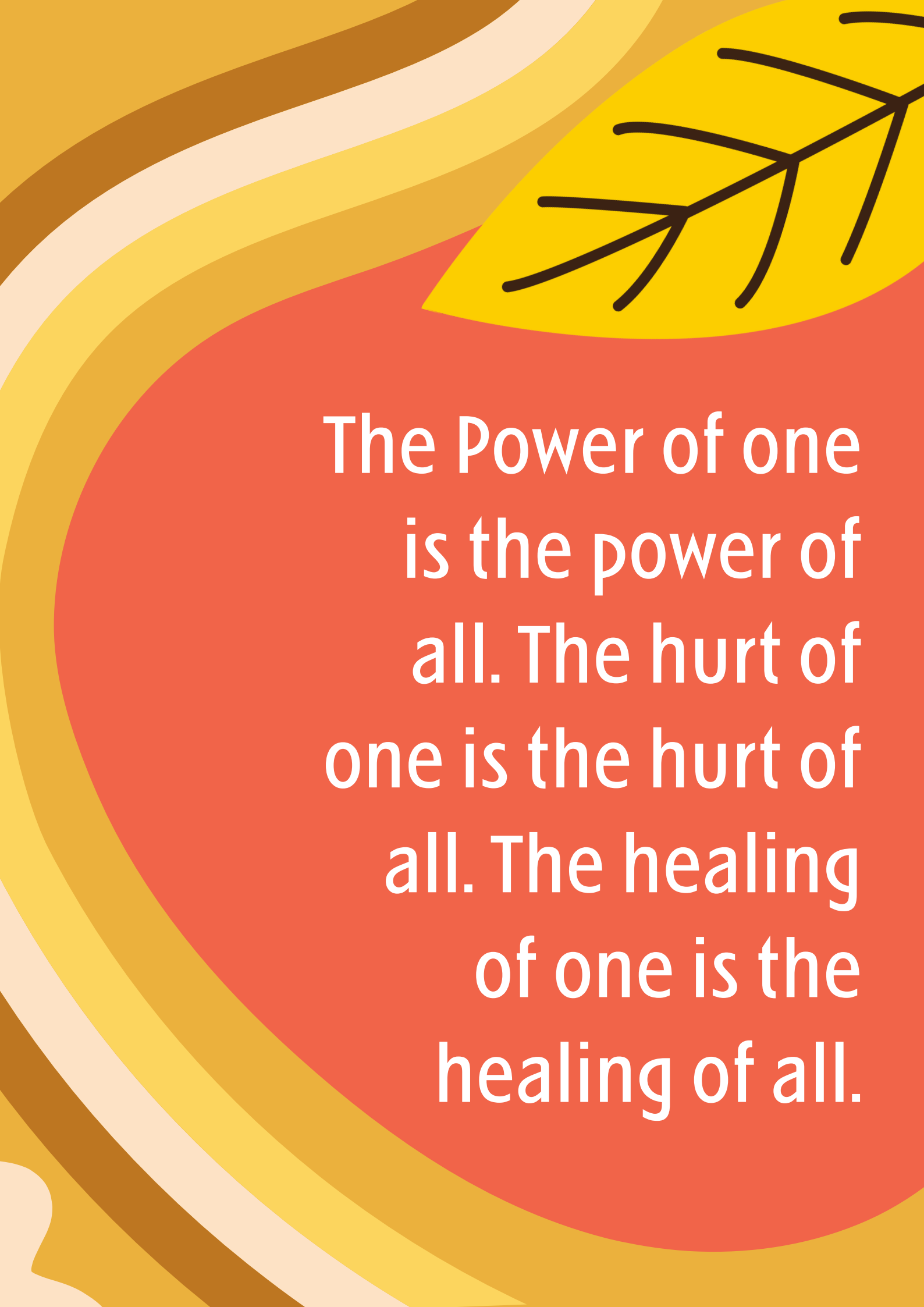
We need to remember that we are living with the impacts of a VUCA era (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous), with all the challenges and the opportunities it presents. Although this is a time for "physical distancing," there has never been a better time for us to take special care of ourselves and to connect our hearts and minds with each other at home, work and in society. While individually we are powerful, together we are a genius, capable of expanding our ability to transform crises into everyday little and large miracles, and better ways of being.

These are the 5 powerful human needs:

1-Conscious Breathing
2-Rest to Recover
3-Life-giving Water
4-Real Nutrition
5-Healthy Relationships
and Community
Connection
are especially critical in this time.


They are foundational to our ability to stay physically healthy, maintain clarity of mind and spirit and have the emotional bandwidth needed to strengthen our resilience and creative energy to help each other, our families, our organizations, and communities to renew and thrive.





The Power of one
is the power of
all. The hurt of
one is the hurt of
all. The healing
of one is the
healing of all.

5 Things We All Need For Thriving In These Times

A group of people are sitting on a beach at sunset. They are all reaching up with their hands to form a large heart shape against the orange and yellow sky. The water of the ocean is visible in the background. A large yellow circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

For more info about her
life-changing self-paced
e-course on living The
Four Sacred Gifts, go to
[www.FourSacredGifts.com
/course-information](http://www.FourSacredGifts.com/course-information)

Anita Sanchez, PhD | ©2021