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Welcome to my Autumn 2019 newsletter. In this newsletter, I want to discuss ‘mental health’ in relation to the current state of the world.

Mental health defined by the World Health Organisation “is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”. I think it’s an excellent definition bearing in mind that for many people in the world, realizing potential is keeping their family safe and fed. To my mind, an essential component of realizing our potential is our capacity for compassion. Our compassion embraces ourselves, our family, our community and the wider world including the natural world. It is expressed beautifully in the first stanza of a poem by the Austrian poet Rilke, *I Live My Life*..

I live my life in growing orbits,
which move out over the things of the world
Perhaps I can never achieve the last
but that will be my attempt.

Through our compassion we feel the suffering of the world. And this is where I’m seeing a growing problem in my practice.... more people are feeling burdened by the suffering of the world. As the actor Sir Mark Rylance said when addressing the recent Extinction Rebellion protest in London, “society is breaking down”. It’s not just society of course, the natural world is breaking down. An extinction rate is normal in nature. The current extinction rate is 1,000 to 10,000 times greater than normal; a rate unknown since the extinction of the dinosaurs 66 million years ago. And as the World Wildlife Fund states.... *unlike the mass extinction events of geological history, the current extinction challenge is one for which a single species - ours - appears to be almost wholly responsible.*

In practice, I have to discern at times between what is ‘okay and natural’ and what is a ‘case for treatment’. In relation to the state of the world, I think it is entirely natural and healthy to feel at times.... deeply concerned; sad and angry. When these

emotions and thoughts become embedded though in despair; hopelessness; depression; rage or indifference then there is a case for treatment. There is normally an accompanying lack of vitality. I have seen homeopathic treatment really help. New medicines are continually being introduced into homeopathic practice; we now have around 3,500 medicines. I have found some of these new remedies to be very useful in treating the suffering that is arising from the state of the world.

Aside from homeopathy, what else can be done? Here are a few things I have seen work in practice and for myself...

*Enjoy and celebrate Nature...*walking, cycling, sailing, gardening or just being outdoors; whatever it is for you. Rewild the garden. There is a lot of information online on rewilding.

*Take action...*participate in groups involved in positive change.

*Sing...*perhaps join a local choir. More choirs are including inspiring songs relating to our changing world.

Acceptance. By this I don't mean a passive type of acceptance whereby we don't do anything. Personally, I found the acceptance really helpful that we, Homo sapiens, are a very flawed species. We always have been. We are capable of the most uplifting compassion, creativity and fun and yet can also be so appallingly destructive and greedy. We are an evolutionary work-in-progress.

Love! Despite the problems, there is much to enjoy in life especially in our society where we have such relative freedom of choice. Being with somebody we love, doing something we love energises the human spirit.

As I write this, the rain has stopped, the sun is shining, autumn is beautiful. I hope you're enjoying it.

Best wishes,

Ian