

we're all new to this

**words of comfort
& encouragement
during the pandemic**

ali davenport

**adapted from
soul survival guide: pandemic a-z**

Back in June, I shared a free piece of writing – ‘soul survival guide: pandemic a-z’. It was my way of doing something.

This pocketbook captures the heart of that work.

For free downloads of this piece and the ‘pandemic a-z’, visit my website:
www.soulsurvivalguide.co.

Ali Davenport
September 2020

i.
The pandemic
has torn at
the fabric of our lives.

What's underneath?

Well, it's just us,
in all our raw
human-ness.

We're the same as we ever were.

If there's anything to be learned
from this shared experience,
it's what it means
to be human.

ii.

We might be asking
big questions.

It's a very human thing to do.

But there's something to be said
for being able to sit
with the question marks.

Asking questions
but not expecting answers.

iii.

It's all so huge.

The uncertainty's
difficult to accept.
But we can allow it,
at least. Letting it sit.

It takes energy to wrestle
a beast this big
& we're going to lose.

Better to focus
on ourselves
& questions we can answer,

working out
what's right for us,

while remembering,
this is all new.

iv.

You don't have to do
anything special.

It doesn't matter
if the books
you've been meaning to read
gather dust on the shelves,
you ditch that online course
or re-decorate another time.

So, your cupboards are disorganised.

The wonder might be
you're getting through
each day.

v.

None of us really know
what we're doing.

We're just muddling through,
making mistakes
& making do.

If we can just get into the
groove
of doing what we can,
trying our best,
being a bit hit & miss,

it's easier to accept
that it's

messy.

We're messy.

vi.

Life was never certain anyway.
We always lived in houses
on sand.

No one can say for sure
what will happen; we
just have to see
what each week brings. It's
uncomfortable.
We like our routines
& to know where we are.

But we can't put our heads
in the sand anymore.

One of the only
certain things about life,
is its uncertainty.

vii.

Nothing is set in stone
or inscribed in indelible ink.

There is no right way
to feel right now.
There is no right way to think.

viii.

Humankind
has never been
through a time like this.

We've had global pandemics before
but never against the backdrop
of climate change
& massive threats
to our future.

The disaster movie feels real.

It's enough to survive.

Seriously,
if you're surviving,
you're amazing.

ix.

You're doing your best.

You're human, you'll get it wrong,
mess up; wish you'd beaten
different paths; bitten your tongue.

It's what we do.

You're tired, no doubt
of this crisis
that's hijacked our lives.

So
be kind to yourself.
Take time to rest.

Offer self-compassion a chair
& let it sit.

You're doing your best.

x.

In many ways,
it's the human story.

We might wonder at times
how we'll cope

but we tend to work it out,
finding strength
we didn't know we had.

At the end of the day,
we can endure much more
than we think we can,
as Frida Kahlo said.

xi.

No matter how bad things get,
we'll keep on keeping on,

getting
out of bed,
putting
one foot in front of another,

breathing.

This takes courage.
Not bells & whistles heroism
but making the choice
to keep going

each day
& committing
to that,

to keep on keeping on.

xii.

The loss is phenomenal,
loss of all kinds; of life,
contact & connections,
livelihoods & independence;
plans, dreams & celebrations;
relationships that haven't survived

& the more profound,
existential losses; the sense
that life
will never be the same;
that our time, maybe, is marked.

To feel loss,
in all its colours,
is to be human.

No one is immune.

How necessary then
to show compassion
to ourselves
& each other at this time,

acknowledging the loss
& the grief left in its wake.

xiii.

People are going to break the rules
whatever we think
behind our masks.

We might play the judge
& point the finger
but we can't control
how others behave.

No one's getting a medal
for being righteous.

We can only look to ourselves.

xiv.

So much to take in
& it just keeps coming.
Information overload.

It wasn't even
on the mental horizon,
now it dominates our lives.

It can all be too much.

Switch off
& up the self-care.

Unplug

&

breathe

xv.

With lockdown
our lives shrank.

But this is the scale
where thankfulness shines

in the small things:
our children's laughter,
a meal made with love,
a surprise bloom
discovered
in a garden tub.

Our days can brim
with small treasures
when we're open to receive

thanks; a balm
to these uncertain times.

xvi.

Pressing pause
opened up the hours.

We stopped awhile
in the space.

Gave up the rush.

If we gain anything from this,
may it be the joy
in just

being.

Whatever that means
for each of us.

xvii.

The crisis cut
through the layers of our lives,
taking us straight
to what matters most.

If we hook into the heart
of whatever that is,
we can secure ourselves
in the shifting sands,

stand steady & strong
in the uncertain winds.

xviii.

Sometimes
it's felt like Groundhog Day,
on repeat.

But each day
is still unique

with potential.

It isn't always easy
but we have to keep on
finding meaning
in the days.

xix.

The pandemic
cracked the bedrock.

Life is not what it was
or seemed,
less sturdy than we thought.
It's shifted the ground
& shaken our roots.

But there's still comfort
to be found & courage
to sustain us
through the unsteady days.

We'll endure, for now.

We'll keep on keeping on,
heads down with grit,
knowing that this
is the human deal.

That while we might
lose sight of
hope
in the fractured earth,
there's restoration in the stuff
that matters
& gives meaning to our lives.

That just to survive
in itself,
is enough.

So be uplifted.

Raise your eyes
where you can
& rest
between the clouds
where the light gets in.

xx.

We don't have
to feel hopeful
to live

hope

fully.

Copyright © Ali Davenport 2020
All rights reserved
Published by Ali Davenport
ISBN: 978-1-9164542-3-1