It is said that in the Chinese language, the word "crisis" is represented by two symbols: “danger” or “challenge”; and, “opportunity”. I often use these symbols to reframe milestones, endings, or new beginnings. I turn to these now as a way to try and understand, and perhaps, choose to experience differently, this time of questioning and not knowing.

Undoubtedly, there is nothing simple about where we find ourselves right now. There are no easy answers, no platitudes that patch the holes in our hearts as loved ones get sick - or worse yet, die. When we don’t know what might happen next week or next month or...tomorrow.

No, platitudes do not suffice: the “new normal”; this too shall pass; rise and shine, when life hands you lemons, make lemonade! All, possibilities. All, easy, trite responses to deep, hard questions. Questions, that at their base, seem to me to be rooted in two key human emotions: love and fear.

A crisis feels like fear and often incapacitates those who live there. Love often feels like opportunity - sees the situation as a potential for growth and new learning. New lessons on this human journey toward wholeness we are all on.
Working the Wheel, cont. from p. 1

It seems to me, the dangerous opportunity beckoning to each of us right now is the invitation to bring our very best selves forward; it is an invitation that requires us to contribute in new and creative ways. To choose as Seth Godin puts it: to react, respond, or initiate.

How are we choosing to show up? Be? Contribute?

Can we flip for ourselves the light switch of this “crisis” so that when we turn on - when we center ourselves by all means possible and necessary (meditation, prayer, walking, journaling, healthy food, lots of water, adequate rest, connections to friends and family), we can seize the opportunities to grow, love, rise, relate, initiate, and yes, even make lemonade. Hopefully, in ways that are like loving the questions themselves, that let us live into the answers we help create. And that are not based on fear.

Crisis? Dangerous opportunity?

The beauty is that in every moment, we get to decide. Love or fear? (I choose love.)

Loving the Questions Themselves

I want to beg you, as much as I can . . . to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

Power of the Plank

ONE MOVEMENT - SIMPLE & EFFECTIVE

This classic core-stabilizing move is simple, yet effective. The plank is generally considered to be really safe for most people and is also highly effective when modified.

You can start with your knees and forearms on the ground while still engaging your whole body in the posture. Start by lying on your stomach and raise yourself up so that you’re resting on your forearms and your knees. Your elbows should be stacked underneath your shoulders. With all variations of the plank, it is important to align your head with your neck and back at all times.

Start with holding your plank for three to five deep breaths, or 10-15 seconds. Each day you can work to increase your time or try a new variation of the plank!
The Silver Lining:
*Noticing the Beauty in the Details*

This week, we are turning our attention to visual representations of hope, beauty, and the details around us that are begging to be noticed. Maybe it’s a sunset, a tree in bloom, or a person on a bench . . . This week, the OSEW staff’s “beauty in the details” are presented below. Moving forward, we invite you to submit an image you’ve captured recently that has stopped you and caught your attention. Tag our office on Instagram @PeabodyOSEW with the hashtag #PeabodySilverLining. Each week we will highlight some of the most compelling submissions. Please include your name and what the photo represents for you. Happy Snapping!

**Food for Thought (and Energy!)**

![photo of dandelion by Courtney Mullane](image)

![photo of feather by Meaghan Mundy](image)

![photo of cardinals at a feeder by Sharon Shields](image)

![photo of cherry blossoms by Eliza Blades’ Mother: Caroline Yetman](image)

**Banana Bread**

Start your day with this delicious banana bread recipe!

**Total Time:** 1 hour and 10 min

**Ingredients:**
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 5 tablespoons milk (substitute almond milk, etc)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter, margarine, or oil of your choice
- 1 cup mashed bananas (about 3 bananas)
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

1. Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a large bowl, cream sugar and butter or margarine. Beat the egg slightly, and mix into the creamed mixture with the bananas. Mix in sifted ingredients until just combined. Stir in milk and nuts. Spread batter into one greased and floured 9x5 inch loaf pan.
3. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for approximately 50 minutes or until top is brown and cracks along the top.

(Source: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/6765/4h-banana-bread/)
Having a Gratitude Attitude
Hasina Mohyuddin, Ph.D.
Director | Peabody Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

Express Your Gratitude. Now it is time to take your skills and use them to outwardly express your gratitude to people in your life for whom you are grateful. Your task is to write a letter expressing your gratitude for who they are and how they impact your life. Consider including up to three examples of what you are grateful for and details for each of the three examples (their impact on you). Then, share this letter with the person after you’ve written it.

As we continue in week 5 of social distancing, in addition to coming to the end of the semester, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Our usual systems of support have been disrupted and we are all trying to manage ever-shifting expectations. Although there are many ways in which we can deal with these situations, one that has helped me personally is adopting a Gratitude Attitude.

According to Dr. Robert Emmons, the feeling of gratitude involves two stages (2003):
1. The acknowledgment of goodness in one’s life. In a state of gratitude, we say yes to life. We affirm that even in challenging times, life has elements that make it worth living and make it rich in texture. The acknowledgment that we have received something gratifies us, both by its presence and by the effort of the giver.
2. Gratitude is recognizing that some sources of this goodness lie outside the self. At this stage, we recognize the goodness in our lives and who to thank for it, i.e., who/what did something so that we could be happy?
3. Having a Gratitude Attitude is also one of the key concepts in Narrative Circles (see upcoming events, p. 5). Here are two Narrative Circle exercises you can use to practice gratitude today.

Find 5! For this activity you don’t have to move - in fact, don’t. Just sit where you are and think about 5 people, items, emotions, sightings, etc. that you experienced today that you are grateful for. After you identify your items, jot down a couple thoughts about why you are grateful for each one.

Benefits of A Gratitude Practice*

PHYSICAL
Stronger immune systems
Less bothered by aches & pains
Lower blood pressure
Exercise more
Sleep longer/feel more refreshed

PSYCHOLOGICAL
Enhanced self-esteem
More alert, alive, & awake
More joy/pleasure
More optimism/happiness

SOCIAL
Stronger/deeper relationships
More helpful, generous, empathetic toward others
More forgiving toward others
Feel less lonely/isolated

*based on several studies
**Upcoming Online Events**

**Office Hours - Office of Student Engagement & Well-Being**
- Thursday, 4/16 | 2:30-4 p.m.
- Friday, 4/17 | 9:30-11 a.m.
- Tuesday, 4/21 | 2:30-4 p.m.

**Narrative Circles** | Session 4 - April 17, 12 p.m. | Session 5 - May 1, 5 p.m.
Sponsored by the Peabody Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and open to all professional and graduate students, please RSVP for the final two sessions. We will send an email with a secure Zoom link. Each session will last about 90 minutes.

**Meditation Mondays** | April 20, 11-11:30 a.m.
Co-Sponsored by the Peabody Office of Student Engagement & Well-Being and Center for Student Wellbeing, we invite all Peabody faculty, staff, and students to a free guided meditation every Monday. Join HERE.

**Iris Book Club** | April 22, 12-1 p.m.
Co-hosted by the Office of Student Engagement & Well-Being and the Peabody Library, this semester’s book is Life’s Great Question: Discover How You Contribute to the World by Tom Rath. Includes an online assessment about your unique contributions and how you can apply them personally and professionally. The first 15 people to sign-up will get a free Kindle copy. RSVP to karen.swoopes@vanderbilt.edu to reserve your copy. Join the call HERE.

**“We’ve Got Game(s)” Happy Hour** | April 23, 4-5:30 p.m.
Put your “game” face on and come join the Office of Student Engagement & Well-Being and the Peabody Library staff for a celebratory end-of-the- semester afternoon of games, giggles, and good times. Hope you can make it! Join HERE.

**SilverCloud** | VU's new online tool for mental health and wellness to:
- build resilience
- help manage anxiety or depression
- develop skills to manage stress
- promote good sleep hygiene

Based on cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness and positive psychology, these action-oriented modules build self-awareness and self-management skills for emotional health.

Sign up here

Feedback or questions:
Contact us at PeabodyOSE@vanderbilt.edu

If you are a student in need of additional support or resources, please feel free to contact the Peabody Assistant Dean of Student Development and Support Services:
Monique Robinson @ monique.robinson@vanderbilt.edu

Be sure to follow us @PeabodyOSEW