



wellness  
LOUNGE®

SPRING 2020

# The COVID-19 Pandemic

Experts Share Their Thoughts  
and Wellness Tips

How to Grow a Wellness Garden

Inside the World's Oldest  
Operating Pharmacy

Diagnosed with ADD at 33:  
**My Journey**

Can Yoga Help Kids? **Yes,**  
and Here's How





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# letter from the editor

Charu Suri



Dear readers:

Bringing out a wellness publication during a pandemic is arguably the most challenging thing I have done in my writing career. With hundreds of thousands of people around the world grappling with Covid-19, I had a tough decision: should this issue still continue to focus on other important health issues including bi-polar disorder, grappling with ADD and even the benefits of attending a silent retreat?

The answer is: absolutely.

While the coronavirus pandemic has greatly shifted the wellness dialogue in recent months, that doesn't mean these other issues don't exist. In fact, it is more important to address issues that aren't being endlessly covered in the news, and to realize that being truly well means being aware of various ways to heal: from the benefits of an Ayurveda retreat to planting a wellness garden.

This issue has many facets: you'll discover what's inside the oldest pharmacy in the world (once the shutdown is over, I hope you'll be able to visit this gem in person, in Florence).

Like you, I've had a hard time shifting my focus away from the coronavirus. It's the reality we are faced with: the constant sanitization that has uprooted my life and transformed my house into a Clorox repository has left me exhausted at the end of the day; the endless grim news has left me emotionally exhausted.

But it is also irresponsible not to give you some uplifting news and success stories during a time that we need them the most. And that is the thinking behind this issue: I hope you'll laugh, cry and enjoy these inspired and uplifting stories that tackle everything from focusing on your gut health, to dealing with the mess in your home.

Wishing you a truly great wellness journey in the months ahead, during these exceptionally challenging times.

*Charu Suri*



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# Spirituality And Mental Health

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**Spiritual Wellness on Social Media has Increased.**

*Using your social media and apps as tools for spiritual wellness can be a powerful way to connect with yourself and enhance the relationships in your life, oftentimes for the better.*

# SPIRITUAL WELLNESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA HAS INCREASED: THIS IS A GOOD THING FOR MENTAL HEALTH



By Christabel Lobo

The introduction of yogic philosophy to the United States can be attributed to Swami Vivekananda, who, in 1893, left India with the intention of spreading raja, jnana, karma, and Bhakti yoga to the masses. His approach served as inspiration over the next several decades for other South Asian teachers to not just bring teachings of spirituality to the West, but the physical practices of yoga as well.

Fast forward to today, and the wellness industry is thriving beyond traditional yoga and meditation. The Global Wellness Institute estimates the current wellness market is valued at an astounding \$4.3 trillion and includes everything from wellness tourism and workplace wellness to healthy eating and even wellness-focused skincare.

And, that's not all. As people look for alternative ways to improve their sometimes-challenging access to mental health services, yet another more recent phenomenon has joined in on the wellness bandwagon: metaphysical wellness. Apps like Co-Star and The Pattern generate daily hyper-personalized horoscopes and natal charts, allowing you to connect not just with yourself and your friends, but the entire world as well.

Popular accounts on Instagram such as @moonomens and @spiritdaughter that focus more on spiritual guidance and astrology, as well as more light-hearted meme accounts like @glossy\_zodiac and @mychemicalcapricorn have thousands of followers, who are looking to feel more connected to themselves. A quick Instagram search shows that over 3.8 million posts make use of the hashtags #crystal-healing, #astrology, and #tarot.

## SPIRITUAL WELLNESS ON THE RISE

“Spiritual wellness practices, like meditation, therapy, tarot cards, and astrology, are starting to trend because, from a macro perspective, we’re living in a world where, collectively, we feel out of control,” says Maisy Bristol, a professional tarot reader who offers digital tarot readings via her Etsy site and on her Instagram account, @tarotbymaisy.







This year, she started #tarotpy, a new self-care series that links the tarot to mental health. “I’m interested in exploring just how deep we can get with ourselves by using tarot cards. A lot has happened over the past couple years that has affected the country in such a way where we’re grasping for some sense of understanding in the world. And the best place to start is with ourselves.”

And, while seeking out New Age therapies via your phone may seem counterintuitive to the principles of digital detox, striking a balance is key to your digital wellbeing. “Digital detox is so new to our generation but super important,” explains Shannon Taruc, a spiritual coach and host of the podcast series, *Café Confidence*. When it comes to social media, Taruc believes the first step is to recognize any accounts that negatively affect your wellbeing. “If you find yourself constantly judging your life and comparing yourself to a post, then it is best to unfollow that account, or it will just make you feel like you are not good enough.”

## WHEN THERAPY IS TABOO, SPIRITUAL WELLNESS CAN BE A START

According to the CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics, approximately 3.9 percent of adults in the United States admitted to experiencing mental health issues in 2018. Women, on average, are more likely to deal with mental health problems than men. For women of color where therapy is often considered taboo, that number is unfortunately even higher. Following mental health accounts can be a form of digital wellness and one of the methods we can use to help develop a healthy and useful relationship with technology.

“I was raised in a Filipino family, and Asian culture does not talk about going to therapy much,” shares Taruc. She sought out spiritual wellness methods through YouTube as a means of coping with her stressful job in technology sales, which she eventually ended up quitting. Today, Taruc helps her clients get over breakups and achieve inner happiness by learning how to apply the law of attraction in their lives.

“What’s really amazing is now younger generations like Gen Z are looking for positive and mindful content,” says Taruc. In the past two months since starting her TikTok account, @shannontaruc, she’s garnered over 15,000 followers by merely posting spiritual wellness videos. “I get comments from my followers saying things like I really needed this today, thank you.”

But, those turning to apps and social media need to realize that while tarot and astrology can be great tools for self-awareness and emotional wellbeing, they shouldn’t replace the role of a therapist. Rebecca M. Farrar, M.A., an archetypal astrologer who runs the Instagram account, @wildwitchofthewest, sees astrology as a tool for more self-awareness and healing. “I encourage most of my clients to see a therapist in addition to my service as I believe trauma in particular needs a stable guide with many years of training for navigating trauma—both personal and collective such as in the case of women or PoC,” she explains. “Astrology is an incredible tool for uncovering places where trauma may still exist, but, ultimately I believe the healing process is best served through one-on-one work such as with a therapist who has a license and clear ethical boundaries.”

Using your social media and apps as tools for spiritual wellness can be a powerful way to connect with yourself and enhance the relationships in your life, oftentimes for the better. But, at the end of the day, all it really comes down to is whether or not these metaphysical, New Age-y practices make the most important person in your life feel good: you.

- **Christabel Lobo** is a freelance writer and Hatha yoga teacher currently based between Mysore, India and Washington, DC. Her writing has appeared in *AllRecipes*, *Lonely Planet*, *Zagat Stories*, *National Geographic Traveller India*, *Byrdie*, *LIVESTRONG*, *Fodor’s*, and more.