

## Letter: Virus reminds me what life should be about

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During this pandemic, it's easy to be fearful. While we should all take the necessary precautions to protect the most vulnerable among us, we can also look at our time away from school and work as a blessing.

When news of the virus started spreading, I was afraid. But then I realized this could be an unexpected gift to be together, reconnect with my teens and immerse in the fresh air and sunshine that comes every spring. It could be a time of rejuvenation, a reminder of what truly matters, a time to slow down and appreciate all that is good around us.

Then it hit me: These are things we should be doing all the time.

We get so busy with to-dos and must-haves that we run ragged, overscheduled because we think we are superhuman. In normal times, common sense doesn't sink in.



A man carries a toddler on his shoulders as both wear protective face masks to help prevent the coronavirus outbreak walk on a street in Beijing, Wednesday, March 18, 2020. As the pandemic expanded its reach, China and South Korea were trying to hold their hard-fought gains. China is quarantining new arrivals, who in recent days have accounted for an increasing number of cases, and South Korea starting Thursday will

increase screenings of all overseas arrivals. (Photo: Andy Wong, AP)

We should always get enough rest, eat healthy foods and exercise. (Obesity epidemic, anyone?)

We should always wash hands and drink water.

Spending time in nature is a better pursuit than vegging in front of screens.

At any time, not just during a pandemic, if a person is sick, they should stay home until they're better. Why make others sick?

Of course, many workplaces do not provide ample sick leave or flexibility to care for a sick relative. A societal problem demands a societal solution.

Instead of freaking out about the coronavirus and its impact, we should shift focus on what this says about how we live the rest of the time, with concern for what we have allowed to happen. The American way of living and working does not set us up for good health or a calm state of mind.

One of my closest friends grew up in Dublin, Ireland, and now lives in London, England. When she began working at 22, she received six weeks of paid vacation. It was standard — along with bank holidays that extend the time working adults have to rest, restore and reconnect.

Work should not be our end-all, be-all. We should focus on building a balanced life, with time for enjoyment and fellowship.

Resisting group gatherings might force us to reconnect as humans, remembering what life is truly all about.

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