

Catching your breath

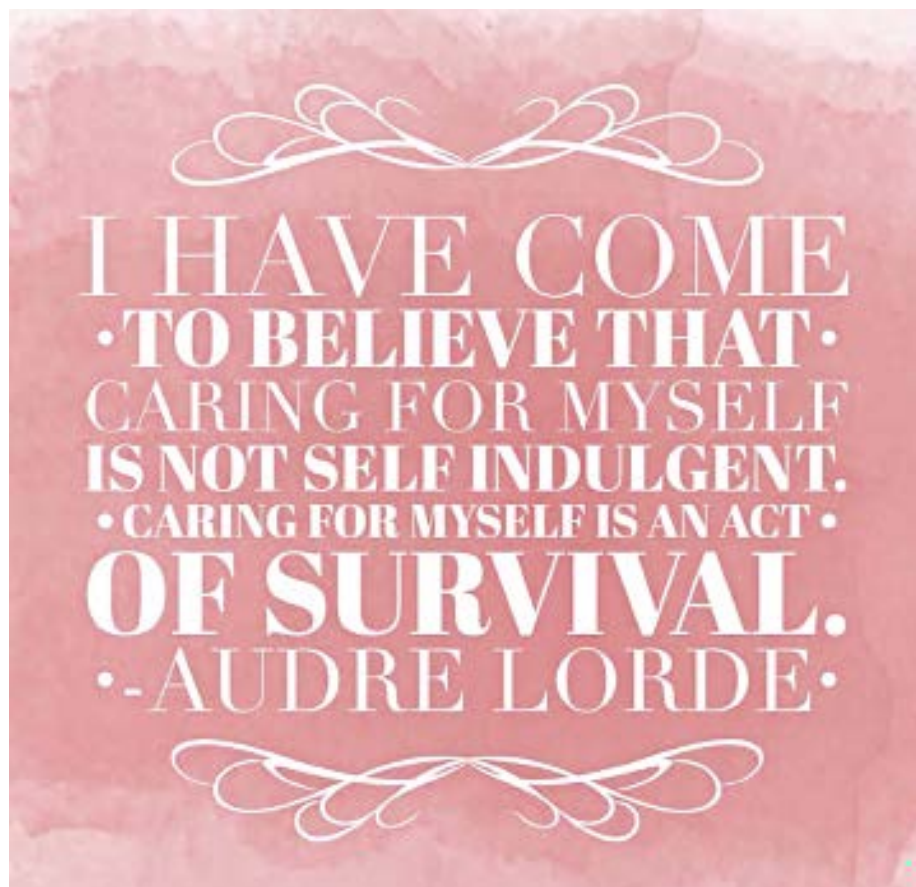
Attending conferences, seminars, talks are always a big deal for most of us; we must not only be at our intellectual best, but also at our fashionable finest. After all, first impressions are the lasting ones, they say.

But all that has changed today, for Covid-19 is a threat so strong that press conferences, daily meetings, conferences are all done online from home; to the extent that you are now even signing contracts virtually.

While these have been sorted, there are few quirks of working from home. Suddenly, in the middle of a meeting, your cook asks you for the day's menu, your two-year-old wakes up screaming from a bad dream, your ever-angry tween rocks the house down with loud music or your husband cannot find his glasses for the umpteenth time, which he apparently looked for everywhere except on his head. Or, just when your conference call begins, your adorable pet dogs start howling all at once, showing solidarity with the mongrel on the street, but these are part of our new normal and every one of us working from home is facing these.

Some of us are even cheating by turning off our video button and not showing our faces smeared in homemade face pack, or how you are actually disguising your shorts or yoga pants by putting up a poker face and donning a decent scarf during the course of the call. Some of us are complaining that we are actually working longer hours now, while some of us feel that working from home is almost like an earned leave — no work but full pay, until your inbox is full of your boss's threats to meet the deadline.

One thing this quarantine has taught



me is how good it feels to have a breather during the span of my 24 hours, instead of constantly rushing from point A to point B, I can actually slow down because I have no place to be, no meetings to attend, no getting stuck in traffic.

I am forced to take it easy and savour the little moments of pleasure that I can now find during my daytime. I can now, with full

attention, finish reading my new books that were not touched since I purchased them, listen to my favourite songs, finish watching those unwatched series on Netflix, cook my special meals, brew a cup of my special orange pekoe tea or even try that new Internet craze, Dalgona.

Most importantly, I can now do a home facial with yoghurt and lemon juice, I can

shape my nails or colour my grey temples with an easy peasy technique. I am now cleaning my closets and rearranging my furniture, airing out the plants, trying to propagate my succulents, pursuing my long-lost hobby, planning my Ramadan offerings. The idea is to contemplate what note-worthy, stimulating and interesting things you can do to enrich your daily prescribed life.

This first week of Ramadan, let us be grateful for what we have and share our bounties with friends, family, even foes; and not forget the less fortunate ones in our society. During this time of social distancing, let us make a few extra iftars for the day labourers, who have no jobs now, for the little boys who used to carry our groceries in the bazaars, for those tiny girls selling flowers or water bottles at traffic stops.

It's best to give our patronage to people who cannot beg and ask for things because they are the most hard-hit ones. They had been laid off from work and their dignity does not allow them to go look for alms. Stay at home and do something worthwhile for others and yourself this Ramadan.

— RBR
Photo: Collected



HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

New relationships can begin. Don't dramatize matters. Avoid spending irresponsibly. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Don't put unnecessary pressure on others. Look into career choices. Do the things you enjoy. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Keep your thoughts to yourself. Call up a good friend. Expect opposition at home. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Spend time with your partner. Someone wishes to steal your credit. Secret affairs can be upsetting. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Don't force your will on others. No need to look for excitement. Think before you act. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Prove your worth. Steer clear of gossip. Avoid friends or acquaintances with bad habits. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Make sure to complete any pending work. Keep your ideas to yourself this week. Make property investments. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Plan a vacation for the future. Don't let situations go out of hand. Stick to your own projects. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

New relationships will through work. Follow through on your ideas. Stay out of the way. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Comfort is a necessity. Check your motives. Channel your efforts into getting rid of bad habits. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Real estate investments could be advantageous. Don't blame others. Take care of your health. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Plan your investments properly. Don't get involved in secret affairs. Have your loved one's best interests. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.