Radical Love and Hope

Our society feels fractured now-a-days. Families are divided, people are restless and protesting, and it seems difficult to find answers and true leadership. For some of us, this is a new feeling. For others, it’s something we’ve been feeling for a long, long time. Everywhere you look, people are divided and it can be tempting to fall into that, to gather the negative energy all around you. It may even start to feel energizing. However, if we stay too long in the negative we can get stuck.

Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, was appalled by the racism and anti-Semitism he witnessed and his response was to teach a radical love of life. What he meant by this was essentially that to affirm life, for him, is to cultivate a visceral engagement with the creative energy of life so deep and strong that it overflows in feelings of extreme joy. It also means believing in hope. Because without hope, we run the risk of falling into despair. It can seem insurmountable to begin to cultivate radical love and hope when we see frustration and despair all around us.

I like to approach this from a holistic place. We know our physical, spiritual and mental health are linked and work together. If we take care of our physical self, typically we see benefits in our spiritual and mental health. And if our body, spirit, and mind are strong, we are better equipped to handle challenges and obstacles that come our way. I am not saying you need to ignore what’s going on around you or turn away from the reality of a scary and dangerous world. What I’m asking is that you begin to take care of yourself so you are resilient enough to fight back.

Carolina De Roberts writes in her book *Radical Hope Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times* that love and dissent are two powerful forms of resistance. “Dissent is not unrelated to love. They are complimentary forces. In a climate where bigotry is an explicit value of those in institutional power, speaking love is an act of dissent.”

Start by spending less time online. Look up, look around you. What have you been missing? Take a walk outside breathing in the fresh air and taking in nature. Reach out to a friend and connect over phone or a physically distance get together. Taking care of yourself means you will have the energy to take care of others. Instead of feeling drained and defeated, you will begin to feel energized and strong.

If you don’t know where to start or you need a little extra support, don’t hesitate to reach out to MSUM Counseling Services. We offer both individual and group counseling.