

Out & About with Lori Sunflower

How can Crestone unify better during this time?



Desi Faraci

Crestone can unify by accepting freedom of choice. Did we move here to follow the norm or a "mob rules" mentality if we hold other views than our neighbor? Most moved here because they reject the status quo and appreciate alternate viewpoints. Crestoners go against the grain anyways. Just because we have different opinions doesn't mean we should force our beliefs upon others, then judge and create local movements to punish those who question. We can't expect all to jump on the same bandwagon and conform. I suggest keeping discussions civil and spreading more positive words. Think before you speak (or type on Facebook) and consider if it bullies another person or a business. Local businesses struggle as it is and need more partnership to enhance our community. Let's embrace free thought (whether it is differing political views or choice on masks). We can listen, speak our mind at times but also learn to just "let it be" and take the middle road. Peaceful dialogue should be the goal of this spiritual community. Setting aside our fears is courageous and contagious. Any words or actions that spread should reflect only love and *love only* will unite this community.



Peter May

One of the strengths of the Crestone community lies within its unique diversity, as it is home to so many diverse perspectives. And this diversity of perspectives can be challenging. As I presented at different centers over the years,

I discovered a gateway common to all. What arose was surprising at first, because it was so basic. Being a fire fighter since 1993, it became obvious what to work with: the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space. We all share them. These elements affect all of us. In a sense, these elements of Nature do not care, though these elements do respond, like a mirror. Paying attention to these elements can help us care for our land and soil and water, allow us to more sustainably live here, especially regarding fire, support our gardens, and even nurture the piñon pine trees to produce nuts. It might be important for us now, more than ever, to focus on balancing our external elements, our landscape, together. Perhaps this may show us how to balance our elements internally. We might not all agree in some ways, but perhaps we can come together to support that which supports us every day, the land and soil and all of the elements, outside and inside.



Kathi McCullum

Our lives have been dramatically altered lately and many people are struggling to find balance in their lives. We've been asked to change our lives in ways we never even imagined just a few months ago. The influence of the media, social changing events and regulations have put us on the defensive in many of our daily routines. We've been asked to become suspicious of strangers and even our friends and neighbors. Knowing how to move out of this new reality and get back to life is a real challenge.

A good first step is to evaluate how these new issues may have affected one's thinking and actions. Have I changed the way I see people? Am I fearful of what I used to be "okay" with? Do I see people as a threat when I didn't before all this started? Confronting these possible changes in one's point of view will give an opportunity to clear what is likely unwanted and unnecessary blocks to moving forward to getting back to "normal" and beyond. There is much healing to be done on many levels in the near future and moving forward. With so much uncertainty and fear being promot-

ed, it can make us feel that we are helpless to do anything. Removing the fear and creating the future cannot be done without allowing peace within to be the operating force in our lives. Unity with others begins with unity within.



Lonny Roth

I believe the first thing that will bring Crestone to better unity is a less forceful nature towards each other. It would seem counterintuitive, but the reality is many people don't respond well to forcefulness. It is easier to look each other in the eye when we have the spirit of understanding and good will. There is no way we will all agree on all of the new things happening. The science is shifting daily, as is the news cycle, and the spirit of the country. Diversity of thought was one of the major draws for me when I moved here twenty-five years ago. "Love our neighbor as ourselves," is likely not meant to act out in force so your neighbor will do as you do. In time, new culture around disease and emerging political playgrounds will settle. It is time wasted hating each other. There is no monoculture in nature. We will have to allow each other a little leeway. One of us is the soil, one is the sun, one is the plant, one is the water. We can all support each other in a key way even if we have difficulty in some other differences. Perhaps we have forced the mold and need to change.



Sima Simone

Freedom of speech is critical. Passion for equality and justice is to be commended. Freedom from oppression is worth standing for. Free will and the Golden Rule are at the heart of those principles. The Golden Rule, as we know, is to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," specifically, "refraining from hurting another, their property, and refraining from using deceit in contract." Energies seeking to oppress others must de-

ceive in order to gain a foothold in the hearts and minds of those seeking love and peace. It is beholden upon each of us to allow the process of sorting through the deceptions in order to find the truth.

Differing opinions create an opportunity for the deceivers to divide humanity, or, for humanity to gain deeper insights by digging deeper for the truth. Vigilant focus upon that which humanity needs—peace, prosperity and equal opportunity—will serve to help us remember our values are the same even if our opinions of what is causing the oppression differs. Maintaining the Golden Rule will support us in maintaining our humanity during these intense and emotionally passionate times. Bringing back a system of true justice through upholding the rule of law will give everyone the structural support a society needs to unify itself while ridding itself of historically insidious and gruesome injustices.



Lisa Bodey

"When we know the art of how to suffer, we suffer much less. We are able to make use of the mud of our suffering to grow lotuses of love and understanding."

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Peace starts within. Nurture your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health so that you vibrate at a higher frequency. Your energy and well-being ripples out to those around you which can help to unify community. Ask yourself each day, "How can I be of the best service for the highest good of all?" Spend time in nature, develop a relationship with the elements and cultivate deep gratitude for all of the blessings in your life. Refine your intuition to know what works for you. Appreciate the diversity and contribution that each person makes to this community. Trust that each person is living their life's purpose so that you can focus on walking your own path in alignment and with grace. Develop compassion. Every time you start to have a judgement about someone else's decisions or actions, go back to your practice. Ask yourself, "Why is this triggering me? What lesson is in this for me?" Cultivate beginner's mind and go back to your practice again and again and again.

If you have feedback or suggestions for future topics, please email peaceloreilove@gmail.com. In addition to being the Staff Photographer for The Crestone Eagle since 2012, Lori Nagel is a freelance photographer, graphic designer & web designer. www.sunflowerstudios.us.com.