

Additional Suggestions for Finding Calm in the Political Storm
by Ann Marie Love, Ph.D.

The following techniques maybe helpful when life gets too chaotic, especially during the "political storm."

1. Canceling Cable TV. Karl and I did this when our youngest went off to college. We were tired of the cost, the levels of violence in regular programming, and how often we were "settling" and watching or re-watching a tv show we didn't enjoy. Consequently, we have heard *no political ads!* This will cut the ugliness out of your life, quickly.
2. Limiting Exposure. Many people find that they can get all the news they need in one newspaper or one exposure to a news show per day. The newspaper is far less graphic, and for that reason particularly sensitive souls often prefer this method for catching up on the news.
3. Taking a Media "Sabbath." Sabbath, of course, means "to rest." A friend of mine takes a break from email and Facebook once per week. She then uses her time to immerse herself in nature.
4. Tonglen Meditation. Rabbi Chava recommended this to us after the Kalamazoo shooting. This methodology helped me quickly and quite profoundly at a time when it felt there was nothing I could do to help. There is a short video on Youtube 7/24/2009 with Pema Chodron teaching the technique.
5. Getting the Big Picture. Sometimes the maddening thing is how responsible we feel for everyone and everything around us. When I visited the Grand Canyon, I was reminded just how well this canyon had done, without my help, for millions of years. It made me feel like a very small part of a very small segment of time. I remember this when I consider letting something as insignificant as my hair put a crimp in my day—or anyone else's!
6. Emotional Freedom Tapping. Some people get great emotional and physical relief from tapping meridian points in a particular pattern. There are many free instructional videos at thetappingsolution.com.
7. Humor. Listening to comedians, watching puppies in a pool for the first time, or reading Erma Bombeck columns—whatever makes you laugh will change your blood chemistry and make you feel better.
8. Crying. Crying creates a cleansing situation not entirely unlike a shower for the brain. Again, the brain chemistry changes, and you will release some frustration.

9. Exercise. Research has shown that yoga and other non-aerobic exercise can also raise endorphin levels. This helps combat depression and keeps us healthier.
10. Inspirational Reading. Whether it is Thich Nhat Hahn or Winnie the Pooh, we all have someone who inspires us to be our best. Our subconscious mind is most amenable to paying attention and accepting a new message when we first awaken or right before bed.
11. Spending time with people who share your passions, be they political, spiritual, artistic, etc.
12. Physical Touch. Hug, be hugged, or book a massage. Our skin is our largest bodily organ, and it responds well to warmth and affection.
13. Time with animals. Kalamazoo college, hospitals and nursing homes bring in kittens, puppies, or adult animals because cuddling them decreases stress and makes us feel more hopeful.

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