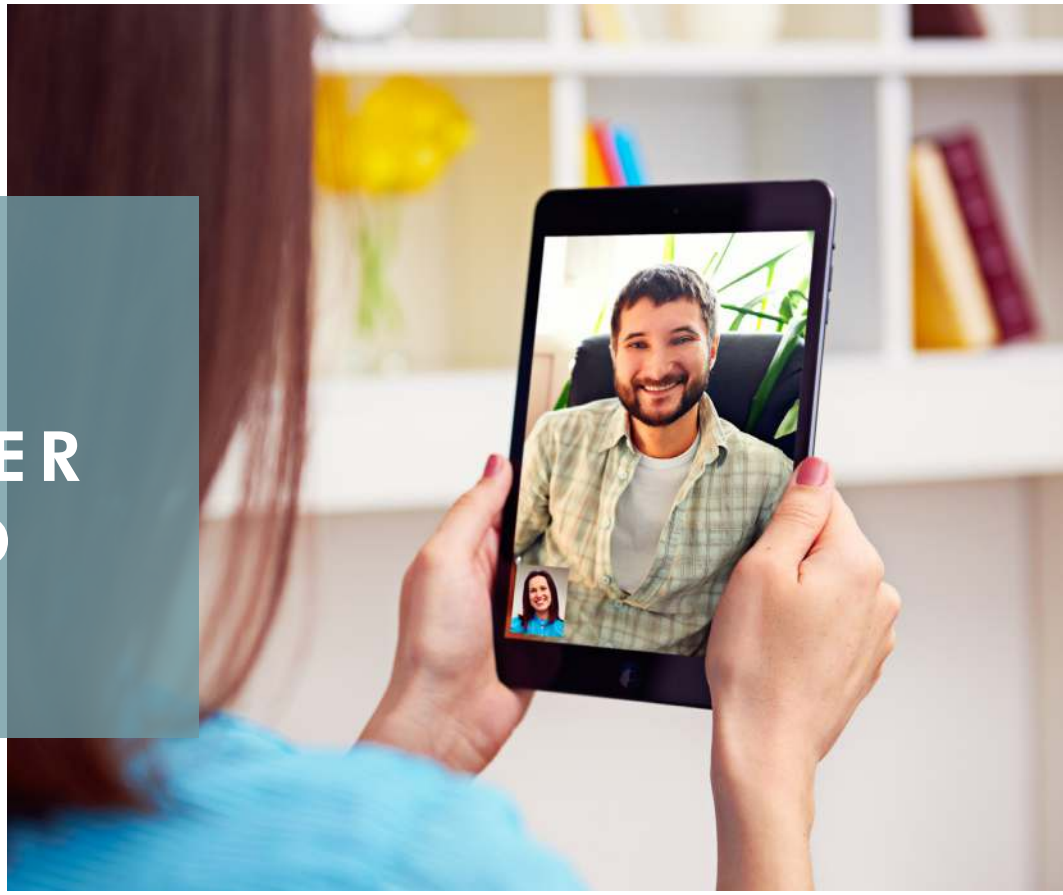
BEING AN INFLUENCER FOR GOOD



Stress, anxiety, fear, and grief are all higher than normal during this global pandemic, and everyone is suffering from the same circumstances. In other natural disasters, they may be isolated to a specific location, and, while many people may feel impacted by what occurred, you can generally say that those in the geographic location of the disaster were impacted the most. In this case, people around the world are being impacted by this. Collective suffering is high, which also means collective need for kindness and gentleness with each other is high.

Social scientists have studied how we influence each other and found that people adopt behaviors that are endorsed by others, especially those who are nearest to them. So the old saying *misery loves company* is true. However, this also runs true for joy, respect, and kindness. Some days it can seem like the world is cold and unforgiving; however, through small intentional micro-moments of love, kindness, and joy, it can feel better. Here are some ways to intentionally and positively influence those around you.

1. As you find yourself feeling grateful or hopeful, find an intentional way to share that with others.
2. If you notice that someone is feeling down, reach out to that person and share kindness and compassion.
3. If you find yourself in the middle of a tense conversation, address it with kindness. You can say, "This conversation feels very tense, I believe because <insert the reason>. Is that a correct observation? What can we do to alleviate that?"
4. Connect with your friends, coworkers and family to share ideas on ways to help find happiness during this difficult time. Sharing your ideas with each other allows you to connect and help each other with new things to try out. Some ideas may include journaling, coloring, crafting, cleaning, reading, etc.

When you're interacting with other people, you can influence the culture of that experience by choosing calm, gentle, and kind language. Be intentional about lifting others up, which in turn, will lift you up as well.