



The tragedy
of life is
often...not
in our living
above our
ability, but
rather in
our living
below our
capacities.

Benjamin E. Mays
(1894 - 1984)
Civil Rights Leader

Work requires energy. As we labor, we expend physical, mental, and emotional resources. We need rest to restore our drained strength. While our energy is finite, our capacity is infinite. We rarely fully are what we're capable of fully being.

We have the capacity both to feel and act at the same time.

We have the capacity to hold fear and act courageously. In this pandemic, there is plenty to fear. We fear the virus – the damage it does to the human body and the death it exacts. We fear reactions to the virus – the damage they can do to our social fabric or the uncertainty they may create. We can hold our fears while we act with courage. We can give our best to those we serve and find the best in those we serve with. We can be fearful and still choose to pursue healing.

We have the capacity to hold anger and act empathetically. In this pandemic, there is plenty to anger. We feel angry at choices others make, at stances taken and consequences experienced. We feel mad that what others do impacts us in significant ways. We can hold our anger while we act with empathy. We can recognize the frailty of being human, the paradox of free will. Our anger need not rob us of our capacity to care nor our commitment to an identity of compassion. We can be mad and still show love.

We have the capacity to hold sadness and act hopefully. In this pandemic, there is plenty to grieve. Loss on top of loss overruns the natural pacing of our grief. Some of us have lost confidence in our ability to change our tomorrows. We can hold our grief while we search for moments of grace; we can be sad while we nurture seeds of future beauty. We can lament and still shape hope.

We don't choose our emotions but we do decide our behaviors; feelings and actions can peacefully co-exist.

What feelings am I struggling with? What actions can I do while I also respect my emotions?