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How I react in a crisis?

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The famous playwright Galsworthy says in his popular play *Strife*, that crisis always brings out the best and worst in people. I notice it is the same for me.

Recently, Chennai has been battered by inclement weather, resulting in many becoming homeless. Communities have come together, people who have not known one another have opened their homes to shelter strangers. In all this, I have been examining the way I sometimes tend to behave when in a crisis.

Most often I notice that I set aside my pettiness and immediately rush to help when called upon. Yet, I do this only in war times, when there is turbulence. What then is it about me that I do not act in similar fashion in peace times?

I realise that when all is peaceful and calm, my ego kicks in and I feel the need to self-protect, to safeguard my perch and feather my nest. If only I can tell myself that I do not have to prove a point, that I am not in competition with anyone, nor on probation to prove my worth, but that I am capable of genuine affection, compassion and love that can be shared without expectation of compensation, it would so much easier to offer myself without thought of recompense.

Ralph Waldo Emerson says it so beautifully when he writes, "To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."

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