

Help Texas Today

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No doubt you, along with the rest of our nation, are more than well aware of the devastation that hit Texas, particularly parts of the Gulf Coast and Houston, over this past weekend. When faced with the horrific images and narrative of disasters, we are instantly reminded of two things, regardless of our belief system.

- Everything that exists, material or mental, is impermanent
- Nature possesses one powerful and unpredictable force

The emotion that often then arises is a sense of helplessness or powerlessness and the question of, "*What can I possibly do?*" Well, I'm going to help you out here, because there is

something you can do. In fact, there are two things you can do and by doing them you will not only shift your own energy and emotional state but also those whose lives your actions impact.

1. Make a financial donation, whatever you can afford, share what you can, but do it now. Don't wait! Texas Monthly suggests this excellent list of Donation Centers by topic. If that feels overwhelming, may I suggest one of these straightforward options? The Red Cross or Team Rubicom, a nonprofit who deploys volunteer vets trained in search and rescue.
2. Commit to spending 5, 10, or 15 minutes a day practicing Tonglen meditation. Tonglen is the simple practice of sending and receiving. Learn how directly from Pema Chodron in less than 5 minutes. You and those whose lives you touch will benefit from your practice.

Like most of the families in south Texas, we took some time to prepare Friday for what promised to be a whopper of a storm. We stocked up the kitchen, bought our supply of Mary candles and flashlight batteries, filled a reserve water supply, and secured the house and outside garden for the high winds expected. And when early thunderstorms threatened, I closed up the office and saw that Aaron and Aubrey got out the door and home to their families. Then we all settled in for a weekend of watch and wait. Having had the past 10 years of experiences with Texas drama, I know it would be an all or nothing deal. Here, politics and weather all always extreme.

The steady downpour began about 3am Saturday and, with only intermittent pauses continued, until just this morning. We had high winds and heavy rains with the downing of whole trees and limbs, but, unlike Houston, Austin sits on rolling hills. We have our problems with low water crossings and in populated areas south of the city along the river, but there is no way the entire city could ever flood. What the towns along the coast and Houston have experienced is devastating and will be

for weeks and months to come. So, I ask you each today as you sit in your dry comfortable setting, to take action. Share what you have in the form of a financial donation and set aside time for meditative moments throughout your day.

“Generosity is the most natural outward expression of an inner attitude of compassion and loving-kindness.”

– *Dalai Lama XIV*