Hello and greetings from Mindrolling.

I hope that each one of you, your families and friends are well and taking care during these difficult and uncertain times caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The entire world is now in different degrees of chaos, confusion and suffering and it is a time when the teachings of compassion, wisdom and awareness are more relevant than ever. So many of our learned teachers have addressed these difficult times and provided much needed guidance through their teachings and messages on various platforms. And so, I feel like I can offer no better or further advise than all that has been so eloquently and kindly put forth by our many wonderful teachers.

Today, I am simply sending this message to share some of my thoughts and especially to say that all of you are very much in all my thoughts and prayers at all times.

Many of us are now settling into a different rhythm of life and getting used to words like quarantine, lockdown, curfew, shutdown, isolation, social distancing and so on. We have also been seeing people everywhere feeling the effects of these words whilst also being fearful of catching the virus.

The term "social distancing" is such an interesting term offering us yet another insight on how we label things and grasp onto them, consequently giving the label itself so much power. The terms such as distancing, isolation, quarantine, lockdown etc. feel so restricting and seem like agents of loneliness and inertia. Yet it a way, it can be a time to really stop all the movement around us and to just carefully look around at the world we live in and feel the oneness of shared experience and the infallible truth of interdependent origination.

In one way, the word "isolation" can itself then turn into an agent of openness—a means of feeling interconnected in every way, for better or worse. This can then be a fertile ground for empathy, compassion and revitalizing of our own spiritual path. "Isolation" can simply be "retreat," a wonderful opportunity to reflect and work on accomplishing the knowledge of Dharma which we have accumulated over time.

It seems that not being able to go out can bring about a host of problems and difficulties for many. There are so many ramifications of a lockdown or shutdown that can bring about much struggle and many predicaments. To all of you facing such adversities, we send all our love and prayers and hope that you find the strength, courage and resourcefulness to get through these hardships. Take good care. Remember that the masters have always said that the only silver lining to suffering is that it too is impermanent. This too shall pass.

May you meet with kindness at every turn and may you be a vessel to bring relief and comfort to others!

Many of you have asked me what can you do during your time of being in your homes in a shutdown. All I can say is practice. Practice the teachings you have received so far. Spend time in practice and meditation. So many of you have spoken to me in the past about not having
enough time to do a retreat. Well, now you have time to do more sessions and read and study
the teachings you wished you had more time for. Now is a very good time to quieten the mind
and not let a tsunami of emotions and fear take control. Enjoy the time to be still and silent.
Because from stillness develops openness and clarity. Let us try to cultivate that instead of
giving into fear and letting negativities take hold. Try to spend time in meditation and the
practices to which you feel most connected. And as always, generate bodhicitta and let that be
the basis of any spiritual activity. Supplicate to the buddhas and bodhisattvas for protection and
for wisdom to prevail and learn to wholeheartedly, take refuge.

Also on a practical level, discover something new about yourself. Perhaps this is the time to give
a try to some hobby or interest you always had but never could find the time for. Maybe there
is an amazing chef, baker, artist, linguist or dancer in you. Try not to get too serious and always
keep in touch with your sense of humor. If you are with your partner or family members, enjoy
the time you have with them. Love and support each other and be generous and patient. They
might end up being your best targets for the six paramitas in application!

And most importantly, throughout everything, always examine your own mind. The last few
weeks also gave me a glimpse into the minds of some of the practitioners I know. There were
those whose sense of refuge and working with their own minds was strong and were able to
take this challenge in their stride. It was heartening to see how careful and aware they were
whilst also being able to extend their help to others and settle in quiet practice.

And then in contrast, there were those whose minds chose to contract in self-cherishing and
allowed fear to take over. It is important that all that we heard and studied be applied in times
of difficulties and confusion. If the first thing we drop is empathy and understanding of the view
of Dharma, when challenges arise, what good is any spiritual practice?

Yesterday, I read the story about a 72 year old priest in Italy who gave up his respirator for a
younger patient and died. While not many may have the courage and compassion for such a
great act of kindness, yet we can all do as much as possible to make it a little easier to
breathe—both for ourselves and all those around us.

I encourage each one of you to generate the inspiration and clarity of mind to transform this
challenge we face today into an opportunity to accomplish the Dharma and bring compassion
into action. Let us all join in building a force of awareness wherein compassion and wisdom are
not mere clever words but manifests as our innate true qualities. Take care of yourselves and
take care of those around you. Laugh, rest, enjoy silence and non-movement and be at ease
within the basic nature of your own mind, that which is simply like the vast boundless sky.

Jetsunla and I send every one of you our thoughts, prayers and every best wish. We especially
pray and keep in our thoughts all those who are ill and those who have passed away in these
last few weeks. We urge you to be mindful of your social responsibilities and refrain from all
those actions that consequently affect others and spread the infection. We also remind you to
be vigilant within your communities to ensure that those who need help with food and other
basic items are helped to the best of our abilities. Whenever fear or anxiety takes over, turn your mind inwards and be aware of the presence of Guru Rinpoche and recite single-pointedly the Seven-line Supplication.

Please take very good care and know that we are thinking of you. I will try to remain in touch as often as possible.

KR