

## Creating a Peaceful Shared Space

*I'm 25 and moved in with my brother who is 10 years older when my school shut down because of COVID-19. He just started working from home and watches TV news on and off all day. I told him I hate all the negativity of the news, and it's hard for me to study. He said he wants to know what's going on and I should, too. He also doesn't want me to have friends over because of the virus. I feel I can't say anything because I'm not paying rent, so I stay in my room with my headphones on. I feel trapped and miss my freedom and friends. But I have nowhere else to go. What should I do?*

Living with another person, especially during this time of isolation, has its challenges to be sure. But you have a place to live and a family member to interact with. Many don't have these luxuries during this pandemic. Within you is the transformational power to refocus on what there is to be grateful for and share that with your brother. This will provide a magic key to a more peaceful and mutually beneficial coexistence.

Start each day with spiritual practice. It is the only path to true inner freedom. Tune your headphones to guided meditations, calming music or nature sounds. This will create an energy of peace within you that will permeate your shared living space.

Ask your brother if he'd be willing to create a "Conscious Co-Habitation Contract." Start by each of you writing down the qualities of home most important to you, such as comfort, privacy, peace and cleanliness. Include what you desire in your interactions: good communication, respect of each other's space, etc. Then share. Discuss the nonnegotiable things and where you're willing to compromise.

The goal is to honor yourselves and each other. Perhaps he can wear his headphones when watching the news. Maybe you could make a meal to share once a week.

Siblings have a special lifelong bond that can be one of life's greatest gifts. May you both make the most of that gift now and through your lifetimes. ❀



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