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The Coronavirus is Changing You Emotionally

If you are a mentally healthy person who has been paying attention to your body, you are aware of a steady rise in your feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, irritation, anger and depression.

Just about everybody has heard how the coronavirus affects your body physically. What you may not have been hearing is how it is affecting you and your loved ones emotionally.

We have been asked to self-isolate. We are being “aided” in this goal by the sports franchises, retail stores, restaurants, nursing homes, and retirement communities all shutting down.

The good news is that the coronavirus is not creating your symptoms of anxiety, powerlessness, anger and depression. It is your beliefs, thoughts and ideas that are creating them.

**You feel the way you do right now
because of the thoughts you are thinking at this moment.**

David Burns MD psychiatrist.

In the medical field they have a term for what we are talking about “The Worried Well.” These are the people who need to be tested even though they have no symptoms and have never had contact with anybody who has. They do not recognize that they have the power to change the way they feel. **You have the power over your mind -- not outside events!**

Realize this, and you will find strength. Marcus Aurelius 121 A.D. Roman Emperor

Self-isolation, by itself, can create a whole new range of its own symptoms! The resulting economic backlash of jobs lost and companies

going out of business is resulting in a heightened atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

Isolation can create feelings of being trapped, helpless, controlled, and pressured. From these emotions we get the term “cabin fever,” a term most associated with Alaska. “Cabin fever” has even been used in criminal defense in cases of murder. The feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, trapped, controlled, pressured, etc., can create anger.

In order to prevent emotional symptoms that can develop from the coronavirus, it is very important that you be aware of where and how the emotions are created.

During this time, you can also expect to see feelings of anxiety and fear. Fear always has an object. In this case, it is the fear of the unknown. How long will it last? Will it take any of my loved ones? Will I have enough supplies (money) to last out this pandemic? Will I lose my job? Will I lose a loved one?

Anxiety most often is the result of living and worrying about what is going to happen in the future. A client of mine told me that, “Don’t tell me worrying doesn’t work! 90% of what I worry about never happens.” Hoarding, “stocking up” much more than you need, is a result of your ability to live in the future and imagine the catastrophic.

Boredom and confusion are two more things that can create feelings of anger. It was a dreary winter afternoon; the TV was out and suddenly my three kids were in a free-for-all slugfest. I asked my oldest daughter, “What was that all about?” Her response was, “We were bored!”

Confusion can create anger. I remember years ago being very confused by my income tax. I just threw everything on the floor and started yelling!

There are some solutions:

- Being aware of what you feel. You cannot make decisions about feelings that you are not aware of. The more you are able to identify

and label what you are feeling, the more options you will have about how you express those feelings.

- Share your feelings (not your judgments) with someone or someone's who accepts you for who you are, feelings and all. The verbal rule says: Feelings expressed verbally (out loud) as intensely as felt, will be experienced and then are free to change. This expression of feelings is not to change anybody or anything. It is simply to get the feelings out of your body by venting.
- Be a listener. Listen for the feelings that others have, especially your parents and your children. Do not try to talk people out of their feelings. Allow them to vent them and then acknowledge that you have had similar feelings and that we will get through this challenging time.
- Do not expect or look to others to make you okay. You are the only one who can change your feelings by changing your expectations, and beliefs.
- Listen to the messages that you are giving to yourself. "I can't stand this isolation. I have to get out and be with people (even if it kills us)!" Instead replace these kinds of powerless statements with, "I am a creative, innovative and energetic person. I can figure out all sorts of things to do if I choose to."

Replace your feelings of powerlessness, anxiety and depression with the concept that "This too will pass, and I will be stronger for having gone through it."

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Dr. Downing's e-book: "Taking Control of Your Life: How to Drastically Increase Your Emotional Education (EQ)" is available at:
<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/360432>