

## 5 Coping Strategies for COVID-19



Please get out a pen and paper and for each strategy, challenge yourself by asking: **HOW CAN THIS APPLY TO ME?**

It's easy to dismiss all of this because we are facing so much uncertainty. My hope is that you take away at least one strategy that can help you cope better and ultimately move forward.

So today, we're going to talk about a few things you can do to cope. This is not about a quick fix, but this is also not forever.

**Remember:** *“Put the oxygen mask on yourself first.”*

We need to realize that it's the **uncertainty** that is the most damaging to us. In the field of behavioral finance, which was described in the Spartan Planning newsletter, there is wide agreement that:

**Our stress peaks** when uncertainty is at its highest. What that means is that facing uncertainty is often far worse than knowing with certainty what the specific negative outcomes will be.

Right now, we are facing a massive amount of uncertainty and we're trying to figure out how to get certainty, but we are bombarded with a wide range of information, opinions, angles and it's hard to sort it out.

# So what are some ways to cope?

## 1 Give voice to — acknowledge — your reality: Name it: And describe the impact it's having on you:

It literally kills us to hold things in. In my work with clients over the years, it has been amazing to see the RELIEF on their face — and in their words — simply by naming it, giving voice to it, articulating it. Peer groups can offer that, friends, colleagues, other parents.

## 2 Create some sense of control

We all want to feel like we have control and stability in our lives but at times like this, that sense of control can be threatened. We can't control the virus, we can't control the economy, we can't control what other people do.

We get caught up in our heads with stories swirling about what's going to happen — to us — our health, our job, our paycheck, our bills. And then we inevitably swirl on what that means. And before we know it, we've painted a comprehensive picture of misery and doom and that's what we lock into. Dwelling on that won't help keep you healthy and strong or creative.

**We can stop it by pausing to challenge the belief.** Is that really what's going to happen? Are there other possible outcomes besides doom? Are any of them at least plausible? If so, can you PAUSE and allow for the possibility of one of them instead? Even if just for a few minutes. That's all it takes to open up new pathways in your mind.

### Other things for control include:

**a. Reflect upon the healthy or productive routines** in your life before all of this and try to find a way to either keep them as is — daily walks through the neighborhood — or adjust them so the core routine is still present. Just having a couple of routines can provide a sense of stability.

**b. Pick one small thing that you can build into your day – every day — that brings you joy.** Maybe it's blasting Love Shack and dancing in your living room. Maybe it's calling a friend; maybe it's using one item that's been in your pantry for 3 years in your lunch or dinner? Pick something and do it.

**3 Remind yourself of who you are and the strengths you've relied upon in the past to successfully navigate previous crises and use them — liberally!**

When we face periods of stress and uncertainty, it's easy to forget who we are because we get caught up in the chaos around us: News reports — changing hourly; Remote work — or no work — or too much work; You may not have been through **THIS** crisis before, but you've most certainly faced others. What worked well for you then? What can you reapply now?

**4 Reach out to others.**

Everyone is feeling the pain of this disruption in our lives. Everyone is trying to adjust to a new normal. Take some time every day to talk to someone you care about, someone you work with. Our Rotary club met on zoom — 50 of us — We need to feel connected to others.

**5 Implement the slight edge.**

You pick one thing that you can work on for even just 5 min/day that will make you, your life, your career, or your business better/stronger. Over the next week, that's 35 min. Over a month it's 2hrs/20 min.

Personal, professional, spiritual:

Take a free online class, take a walk around your neighborhood, do 100 jumping jacks, read 5 pages in a book. Clean out a drawer in your kitchen. Drink a glass of water. Document a system at work. Pray, do a lectio divina, read a daily tip book — many good ones out there.

**This is an opportunity to survive — and to position yourself to thrive!**

**Victor Frankl:** *“ When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. ”*

**Let's take this opportunity to change ourselves for the better.**