

Quarantine Crazy? 11 Tips for Survival

By Phyllis King

The number one thing I notice my clients doing right now is trying to act normally. I appreciate the presence of mind that wants to refrain from hysteria and panic. There is nothing normal about what is happening right now. There's an elephant in the room no one wants to address. Our lives have been taken over by the government. But for essential workers, we are on house arrest.

It is completely normal to feel out of sorts, to have mood swings, and to feel a bit lost. In a period of about 72 hours, most of us were taken from our "full speed ahead" lifestyle and thrust into a lifestyle that mirrors the pace of a tortoise. Add into that the restrictions to move freely in our lives, and it's no small task to find a sweet spot where you can feel calm and comfortable. It's a daily pursuit.

If you have been less than disciplined training your mind to observe your thoughts, rather than respond to each one, you are really getting a run for your money right now. All your *schmutz* is coming to the surface. To help manage the *schmutz* I created 11 tips to help smooth out the uncomfortable rhythm of life right now. Uncomfortable doesn't have to be negative. Rather, think unfamiliar. These are my suggestions:

1. Lessen the Expectations You Have of Yourself and For Yourself

You are contending with a silent pressure 24/7. You are expected to conform. If you do not many feel they or a loved one may be in peril. That is a very stressful reality. Rather than try to "push" through, as you begin each day take your emotional temperature. Perhaps yesterday you were 98.6. You were able to do everything you normally do. Today, you may be less than 98.6. Honor your new number. If you must move slower, do. Few people are moving at the same pace they were three weeks ago. One day you may be happy as can be. Then next day you may be punching holes in the walls. That is the effect these types of restrictions impose.

2. Look for Good News

Believe it or not there is a lot of good news out there contrary to what mainstream media is putting out for daily consumption. For instance, did you see the article about the Ozone layer repairing itself? Wow! How good is that? As of the date of drafting this article, according to the WorldOMeter, in the U.S. alone, 48,513 people have recovered from the virus. My point? Focus on the good. Stay away from scary, negative, anxiety creating news.

3. Create a New Routine that Gives Structure and Familiarity

Even if we don't have the same routine we had a month ago, we can create a new temporary routine which will provide a sense of comfort, stability and normalcy. Set new goals, and a new to do list.

4. Make your bed before you leave your bedroom in the morning. It provides order and sets the stage for a positive day.

5. Create order in your living space before you do anything else. It's helpful when we are trying to adjust to abnormal circumstances to see an orderly space. Too much "stuff" will cause us to tune out and feel overwhelmed. The goal is to find a way to feel connected to our life despite the restrictions we face. Connectedness causes calm to set in. A clear space helps that goal.

6. Exercise first thing in the day if you can. Do exercise at some point in your day. If you do self-care first, you will have a better mindset for the rest of the day. You will likely make better choices and metabolize the stress of your situation more successfully.

7. Eat well. Now more than ever it is important to feed your body well. The temptation may be to "junk-food" yourself out. That will only make you feel worse when you are confined, and outdoor time is limited. It lessens your mental acuity.

8. Stay connected. Be in touch with friends, and family, and learn how to use video communications. Seeing is an improvement to hearing. It's helpful to "see" you are not alone. Either way connect to your social network.

9. Get creative with your hair. I'm wearing barrettes right now. I haven't worn barrettes since I was 25. Without a hair cut in three months I have to make it work. Have fun with it. Why not?

10. Pull out the guitar, open up the piano, pull out the karaoke machine, set up the easel, pull out the Wii and do a dance party, etc. Express yourself without words. Nothing heals and helps you release like the energy of sound, or expression that requires no language. You don't have to be a virtuoso. Let it out like you are one.

11. Give yourself a break. What we are all going through is tough. You don't have to be perfect. You don't even have to try to be perfect. Getting through is the only goal.

Remember: We will get through this. You will get through this. There's an old saying "all good things must come to an end." It's also true for hard things. Hard things will also come to an end.