

COVID-19 panic will destroy your immunity and health. Here's how to make it worse



Coronavirus fear is real.

Everyone is facing the pandemic differently. Some are well-equipped, (*read as have plenty of toilet paper*), while others are in near melt-down mode. Pandemic panic is to be so overwhelmed you can't think or function normally. Can't think clearly, can't make decisions, can't find the remote control that is in your hand. We all know stress hurts immunity and worry doesn't solve anything, in

fact it is a self-destructive process which steals motivation toward positive change and can end up making you more vulnerable to disease.

Why do people chronically worry about global COVID-19 which makes their life at home feel worse? Why would they do things that steal energy, motivation or emotional control during



one of the most stressful times in our generation. Here's how to find out if you are building up dangerous levels of stress so you can take healthy action and make the choice enjoy today, instead of just enduring it.

The Pandemic Panic Formula

Understand there is a cumulative stress cycle that fuel worry and anxiety where a person can only see life going from bad to worse. This follows a series of predictable steps. Highly anxious people have conditioned themselves to follow a pattern of behavior that makes every day chaotic and every situation a catastrophe. This chronic negative mindset can be fueled by rumors on the Internet of how everyone is going to die from coronavirus and how you need more toilet paper. Reason is lost on a tsunami of fear.

These people never allow themselves to relax and count blessings because their total focus is on their perceived problems. They never have good days, just less miserable ones where nothing goes right because they are always looking for the worst

possible scenario. It's like the old saying, "*Cheer up- things could get worse. So, I cheered up and sure enough, things got worse.*"

If the only things you are searching for are more problems through the coronavirus crisis then you can be sure you will find more than enough to stay worried and afraid, terrified perhaps. Here are the basics steps that lead into more worry, fear and confusion. The more elements of the formula you have in place, the worse you will feel, so please spot any unhealthy thinking to make a change now.

Physical Steps to Feel Miserable

- 1) Ignore your own health. You can do this faster by neglecting to get enough sleep. Push your body to the limits and never sit still to take quiet times to just sit and rest. Follow the rule that *'burning out is better than rusting out.'* See the coronavirus as a battle to fight 100% every day until you collapse.
- 2) Stay idle. Sit still and watch TV, Internet or Netflix; but never exercise or move around. In fact, stay inside most of the time and never allow yourself to see sunshine or feel the wind on your face. Nature is to be considered dangerous since this crisis is about a virus. Use entertainment to replace all forms of physical fitness or being outside.
- 3) Eat anything you want, especially large portions of comfort foods followed by soda with lots of sugar and caffeine. Remember the rule - the worse the food is for you, the worse you will feel.



Avoid anything healthy or nutritious if you want to feel worse through this crisis.

Emotional and financial methods ruin your day

- 1) Keep all your fears inside and never take time to release pressure in healthy ways. No journaling, no mapping out your worries on paper to prevent feeling panic. And make sure to never set goals that would give you a positive point of view in facing the future. Stuff your stress to make the day worse. Decide here and now that all is lost and you should give up on the economy or ever going on vacation to Disney World again.



- 2) Don't budget or create a realistic financial plan as our country is facing a recession – in fact, let your financial obligations pile up until you feel like you are drowning in debt and financial fears. Not

having any idea where you stand financially is sure to make you feel worse and may even lead to screaming at your partner about their spending patterns while ignoring your own.

- 3) Never tell anyone what keeps you up at night, in fact, avoid any counselor, coach, pastor, family member co-worker or friend who might be a safe person who could help you process your fears to find greater strength. Go it alone, stuff

your fears inside to improve your chances of feeling miserable.

Media messages to deepen your bad mood

- 1) Focus on the fearful news of coronavirus instead of the heroic actions of medical teams, first responders and homeschool moms. When you focus on negative news full of depressing images and tragic stories you will stay in a state of discouragement that all is lost.
- 2) Follow how COVID-19 is affecting your favorite Hollywood celebrities. Keep up with how they are dealing with social distancing; in fact, spend more time studying what is happening in their lives than you do in managing what is happening in your own life. Distraction by famous strangers is sure to keep you from the real-life issues you need to face.

Spiritual path to expand emptiness-

- 1) Ignore God and anything that would inspire you to see beyond yourself. No scripture reading, no prayer, no journaling or meditation about the blessings of life, which would stimulate gratitude. Avoid any type of function that takes you out of your own world or that might make you



aware of the greater needs in the rest of the world. Just focus on yourself and ignore everyone else.

- 2) Skip watching any function where you might find inspiration, and make sure to skip any activity that places you around positive or prayerful people. This includes helping the homeless, a small business or reaching out to other families who may be facing tough times. If you stay focused on yourself and your problems long enough you can continue to feel empty, afraid and alone.

How do resilient people ‘snap out of coronavirus crisis thinking’ to find energy?

People with high levels of emotional resilience have felt beat up by life, they just don't dwell on the difficulty because they focus on the life-lesson. If you can relate to feeling overwhelmed, undervalued, empty, lonely, unloved, worried, depressed or afraid, then you understand the normal human emotions. You also don't have to stay down when you have the choice to think emotionally stronger thoughts. "We will get through this." "Other generations went to war and survived, we can too". There are many positive messages on the Internet or social media – look for those who are talking about recovery more than recession. Everyone feels overwhelmed at times and everyone has been too stressed to face the day.

Resilient people have learned to identify "*pandemic panic*" so they can make rapid adjustments to feel better fast. The real problem is when you feel so exhausted and beat up by life that your fears of tomorrow are blocking your creative energy. What about you -

do you wake up refreshed to face another day with positive energy or do you live just below the level of panic day after day?

The Secret to resiliency is E-MOTION

The bottom-line to feeling stronger to break out of fear over a global pandemic is to remember emotion could be defined as E-MOTION. When you drift through life with no positive movement, you always feel worse. When you learn to get up and get moving toward an intentional goal you always feel better and stronger.



Try this simple exercise as you are sheltering in place the next few days. March in place and repeat three times, *'I will survive.'* I know it may sound silly, but if you look in a mirror while marching and swinging your arms in rhythm you can't help but

smile. Just creating movement and motion will improve your mood and fire up your motivation. In other words, you have a lot more control of your mood and motivation than you ever thought possible. You control your use of e-motion in large part by making the next right decision to go in a positive or healing direction.

Moving from being Panic to Peace

Emotionally resilient people have learned to take positive action to break out of chronic fears about a global pandemic that they can't control. Everyone is facing this challenge, and everyone may

have some tough days but you can learn to face them with strength by doing the opposite of the formula listed above. You can try it either way. One path will lead to being motivated and empowered, while the other may ruin the day because of lethargy or moodiness. Hopefully you have some mentally healthy people in your circle who say, *'snap out of it', 'get on track', 'you can get through this.'* *What are your options, you always have options'.*



During this time of sheltering in place, who could you come alongside to challenge or encourage with positive steps to break out of panic or fearful thinking. Who in your contact list could you call with some words of hope? Fear gets worse in isolation which is why healthy

people allow safe people to help. Asking for what you need and if you don't have those people know there are safe people in safe places when you begin to look for them.

You are on this planet for greater things than fear over a pandemic. Let today be the day you break the process of continually dwelling on fearful panic to embrace feeling better. To count blessings instead of problems. To focus on self-care and personal strength instead of staying afraid. No matter what you are facing today, you will face it better by doing the opposite of

the formula listed above so you can develop deep spiritual, emotional, financial and physical strength.

You have the power to change and make today better. Choose to break the formula and when you do it will ripple across your community with hope, faith and love. Those emotions have guided people to press on in the worst of circumstances through the centuries. They still work when you step up to live free of needless worry to spend your energy on moving forward. No one knows what the future will bring – but you can know how you will face it. Breathe in faith – breathe out fear. It will work for you, for your family and for those you care about. We are stronger together. Pass it on.

CDC.gov Medical Prevention and Treatment of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:



- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
- CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For more to keep your family physically and medically safe visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>



Dwight Bain is a Nationally Certified Counselor who writes on managing crisis to create positive change. He lives in Orlando with his wife, two kids and four cats.

Follow him across all social media @DwightBain