



Less Stress Press

The Midwest Center

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Dedicated to hope and help since 1984

Minute

BY CAROLYN DICKMAN, MIDWEST CENTER, EDUCATION DIRECTOR

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"The Midwest Center is committed to providing the individual with cost and time efficient cognitive behavioral based solutions - solutions that foster strength, character and self-empowerment."

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Dear Friends,

Due to the recent national crisis we have seen an increase in the level of anxiety and depression. We would like to assure you that we are doing everything we can at and through the Center to be available to those in need.

I know you will find the program helpful in dealing with obsessive worry and "what if" thinking related to this situation. There are many sessions that will be especially helpful in helping you to cope during this crisis.

I have been asked to do many interviews regarding the current world situation with requests for how people might cope with their feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, anger and depression. I would like to offer some of the suggestions I have been sharing in the hope that you will find them helpful.

First, give yourself permission to feel all these feelings. Of course you are anxious, sad, fearful and overwhelmed. This is a major catastrophe with many complicated implications. Our country has had a fairly peaceful existence for quite some time. None of us were prepared for this type of horrific act. It is normal to feel depressed and anxious. Everyone feels this way right now.

Many of us are worrying about what might happen next. Get the facts and stay in reality. Try not to get caught up in "what if" thinking. Don't let others take you there. Truthfully, all the different things that we fear now have been around for many years. We are no more vulnerable now that we were five years ago, we are just more intensely aware. Due to this experience we are taking action and building a

stronger defense and national security. In many ways we are probably safer than we were before. America is a strong country. Intelligent, skilled people whose total focus is our safety surround our President.

Get your life back on track as much as possible. Get back into your routine. Be sure to exercise and watch your intake of caffeine and alcohol during this time. Caffeine will make you more anxious and more obsessive. Alcohol will make you more depressed.

Do whatever you can to try to make a difference or help someone else feel better. Take dinner to someone who lives alone, he or she is anxious too. Give blood, volunteer, get involved.

We tend to over breathe when we are anxious. At different times during the day slow your breathing down to 15 breathes per minute for three to five minutes. This will slow your heart rate and possibly lower your blood pressure and help prevent feelings of panic.

Most importantly, keep the faith. Pray, meditate, and turn to a higher power.

We are all in this together and together we will persevere.

Sincerely,

Lucinda Bassett, CEO Midwest Center for Stress & Anxiety

DON'T PANIC!

- Accept the feeling, it can't hurt you.
- Give yourself permission to feel anxious.
- Don't over-breathe. Breathe slowly through your nose.
- Calm yourself with positive self-talk.
- Let go. Just float and flow.
- Distract yourself, it is only anxiety.
- Use the adrenalin in a positive pursuit.
- Don't let a bad day scare you.
- Let time pass. IT WILL GO AWAY.

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NOW—More than ever

Because of the horrible events in New York, Washington DC and PA, I've been putting off this edition of the on-line newsletter. What can I say? What would be too much...what would be not enough? How do I keep what I say focused on stress, anxiety and depression without editorializing?

Every summer our family took a car trip. Even though we didn't have an indoor bathroom, my Dad thought it was important to spend the money it took to see the United States. We would climb in the Buick, drive an average 500 miles a day, eat in parks and stay in little efficiency motels and hang our sink-laundered unders on that rope that was attached to the back of the front seat (standard equipment back then).

I think I've seen just about every national park in the U.S. I will never forget my Dad kneeling beside me on the edge of the entrance to the Badlands in South Dakota. I can still smell the sage and heat, see the pinks, heathers and gray in the hills, I can still feel the soft, powdery sand. It was desolate. My Dad pointed toward 'as-far-as-the-eye-can-see' and said, "Sis, your forefathers walked across that." He was an active teacher of patriotism.

I started every day with the Pledge of Allegiance; I put my hand on my heart. I lived through the frightful Bay of Pigs, the Assassination and two brothers in Viet Nam. When I see a flag pass by, hear the national anthem or a 21-gun salute; I get a lump in my throat. I can't tell you how broken hearted I feel that we are- again -at this place in history.

We have had lots of calls; anxiety levels are up. We need to use our skills more than ever. The promise of recovery is not that there will never be another anxious moment, that there will be no more anxiety, but that whatever comes our way will be manageable because we have healthy life management skills.

I am focusing on one of the most powerful tools we can cultivate...the power that comes with living in the precious, present moment. Living in the NOW. NOW, I am alive and healthy. NOW, I am sad but not depressed. NOW, I am doing what I can to help others. NOW, I am exercising. NOW, I am eating and drinking with good health in mind. NOW, I am using my relaxation tape and techniques. NOW, I am speaking to myself, and others with kindness and respect. NOW, I am.

Acknowledging the NOW- more than ever,

Carolyn Dickman, Education Director

I ASKED...

I asked for Strength...and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for Wisdom...and God gave me Problems to solve.

I asked for Courage...and God gave me danger to overcome.

I asked for Love...and God gave me troubled people to help.

I asked for Favors...and God gave me Opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted...I received everything I needed!

Author Unknown

TAKE A BREATH

We are all in the state of waiting to exhale; now would be a good time to review our breathing. Two – Four breathing, counting, using our abdominals (instead of chest breathing), is so simple yet so helpful.

Some tips from the book, *THE BREATHING BOOK*, by Donna Farhi: Cultivate relaxing into the surface – kind of spreading out over the surface – breathe slowly into your abdomen, **EXHALE** slowly and completely.

GO AHEAD

Go ahead and move forward

Go ahead and move back

Go ahead and get anxious

Go ahead and go slack

Go ahead and laugh freely

Go ahead ...Really!

Uncover the chill of having to strive

Discover the thrill of being alive.

Go ahead and love fully

Go ahead and act "coolly"

Let emotions instinctually open the door

Let abundance surround you like never before

Go ahead and see you

Go ahead and see me

Go ahead and see GOD

In all that will be

By Tammy Barlekamp, Coach/ Life Guide

COME IN FROM THE COLD

We need to talk through our feelings. Not live and dwell, but deal by bouncing it off of someone who cares about us and that we respect. We need to feel held and reassured, ask for this. We are all on a journey. Sometimes it gets icy cold. We need to come in from the cold and get warm before we set off on the next leg of our adventure.

Anais Nin wrote: "People do not live in the present always, at one with it. They live at all kinds of and manner of distance from it, as difficult to measure as the course of planets. Fears and traumas make their journeys slanted, peripheral, uneven, evasive."

Let's look for some even ground this week! Keep the faith. We are strong people. I recommend we do some reading/research about how our English friends endured the nightly bombing of London, which went on for days and days. Churchill focused them on their strength and asked them to show the demon that he could not destroy their spirit. Among other things he encouraged them to go to the theatre. To show Hitler that no matter what he did to them, they would stand together in the morning.

They filled the theatre halls. When the bombing would begin they went to the subways. In the subway there were libraries, singing and visiting. When the all clear sounded they came up from the subways and went on their way. In the morning they came out of their homes, sometimes seeing treasured landmarks destroyed, and went to work.

Last week a group of U.S. tourists walked into an English Pub. When the locals saw them they all stood and sang the Star Spangled Banner.

Stand tall people. Carolyn

