

## Managing Anxiety in a Time of Uncertainty



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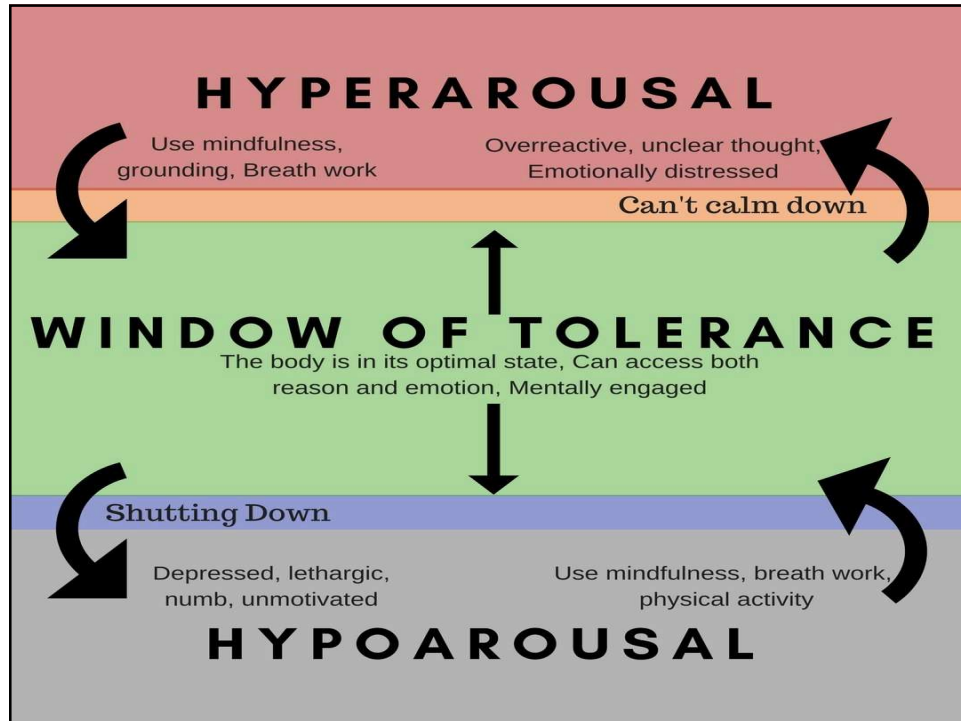
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## Objectives



- Physiological response to stress
- Strategies to shift your thinking to better manage anxiety
- Values exploration
- The importance of sleep
- Grounding techniques

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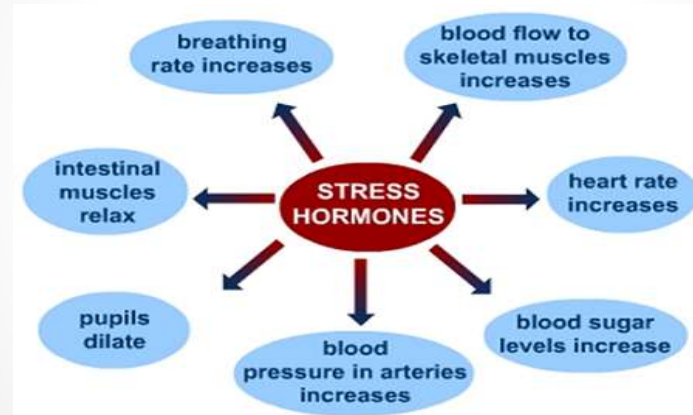


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## How Your Body Responds to Stress



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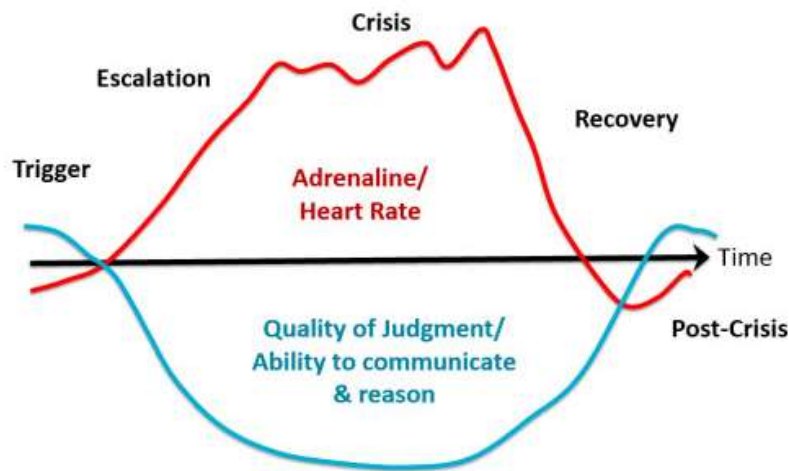
## What Happens When We Remain in a Prolonged State of Anxiety?



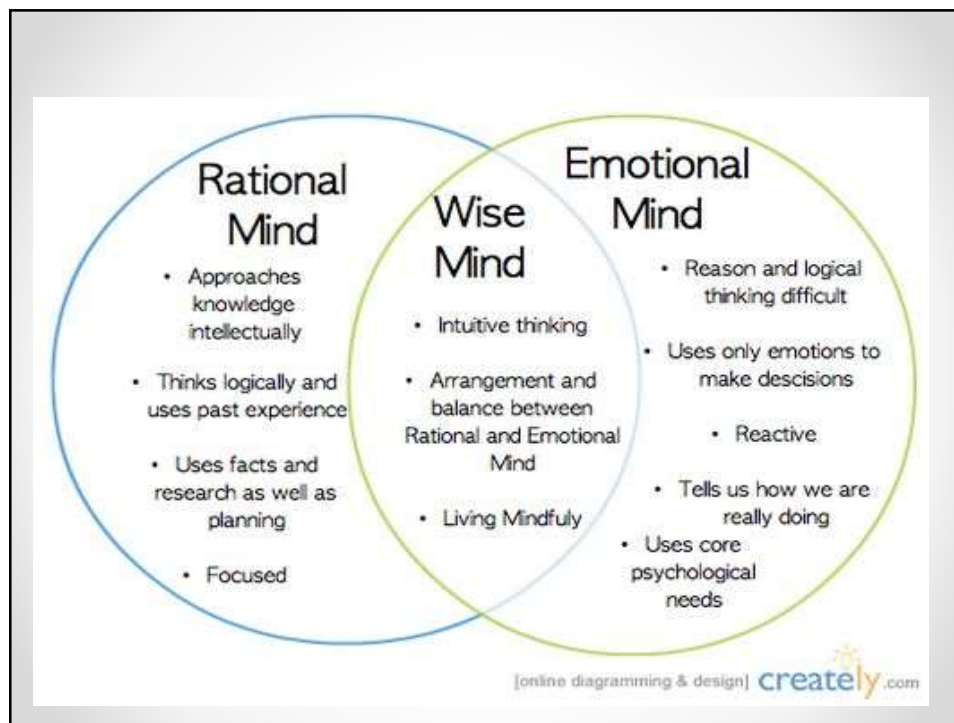
- Chronic elevated state of alertness interferes with:
  - Ability to return to balance
  - Regulating our emotions
  - Making rational decisions
  - Engaging with others

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## Emotional Arousal is Inversely Related to Judgment



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## Why is it so Hard to Get Work Done?



- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulty starting tasks
- Task shifting

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## What It's Really Like to Work at Home



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## Strategies



- Focus on outcomes
- Be realistic in response to pressure to produce
- Manage expectations
- Set boundaries

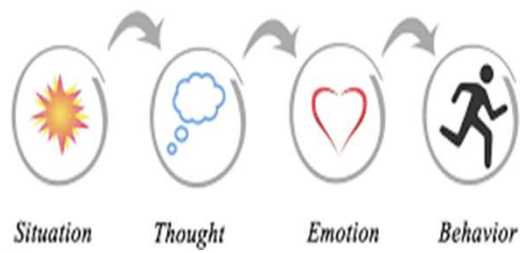
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## Intentional Connections



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## Cognitive Model



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## Neuroplasticity

The brain continually reorganizes itself by forming **new neural connections** throughout life.

This phenomenon is known as **neuroplasticity**.



- Replace an old habit with a new habit
- Fire together, wire together

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## Cow Paths

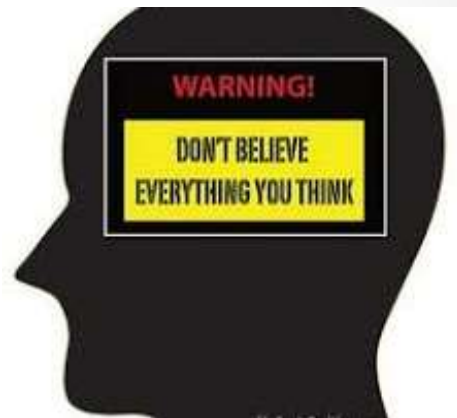


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## You are the Boss of Your Thoughts

- You are not your thoughts
- Not all thoughts are true



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### **STOPP**

#### **TAKE A BREATH**

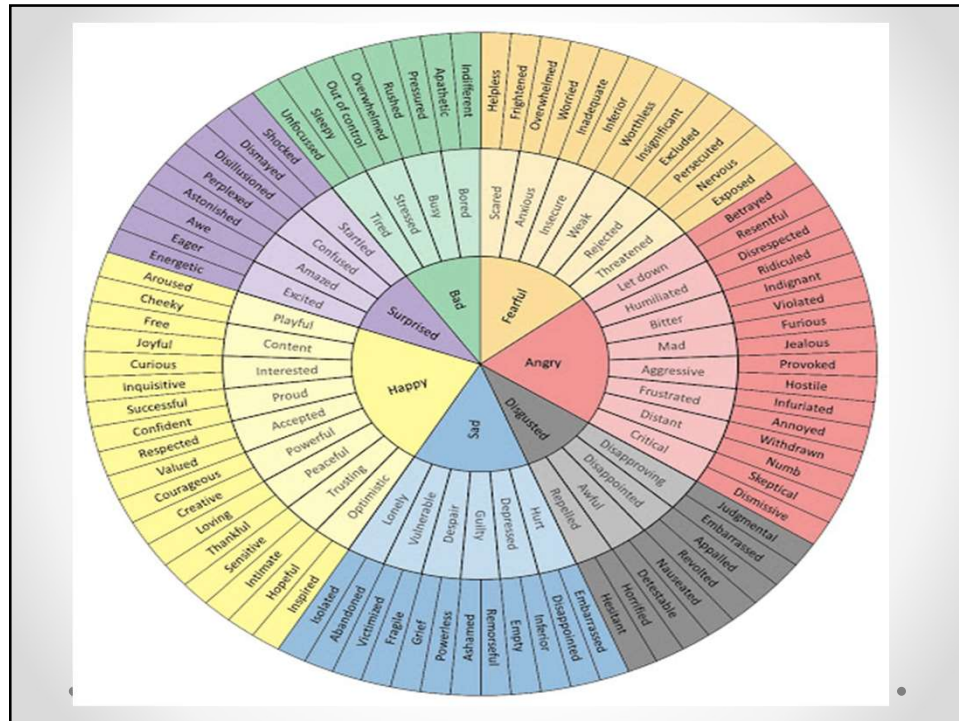
**OBSERVE:** What am I thinking?  
What am I reacting to?  
What am I feeling in my body?

**PULL BACK:** Put in some perspective. See the bigger picture. Is this fact or opinion? How would someone else see this?

**PRACTISE WHAT WORKS:** What's the best thing to do for me, for others, for this situation?



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## Notice Your Triggers



- Pay attention to warning signs, physical or mental.
- Have you felt this way in the past? When? Why?
- Do a reality check.
- Create a new narrative.

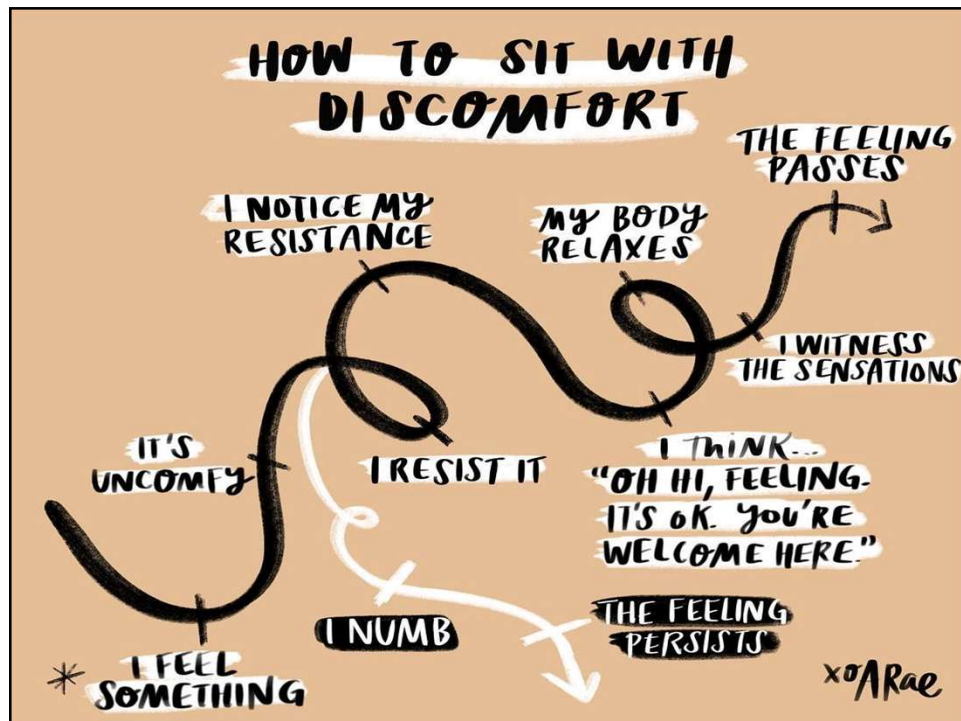
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## The Power of Mindset



- Acknowledge
- Accept
- Pivot

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## Do what works for you

- I feel better when \_\_\_\_\_.
- I feel worse when \_\_\_\_\_.

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- Human connection builds stress resilience.
  - Tend and befriend
  - Enhances empathy and intuition
  - Builds courage
  - Good for cardiovascular health
  - Recover more quickly from stress

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## Connecting with Others



- Zoom, FaceTime or WhatsApp
- Exercise together
- Watch movies or play games
- Take a virtual class - dance, music, gym, spin
- Sing or play music together

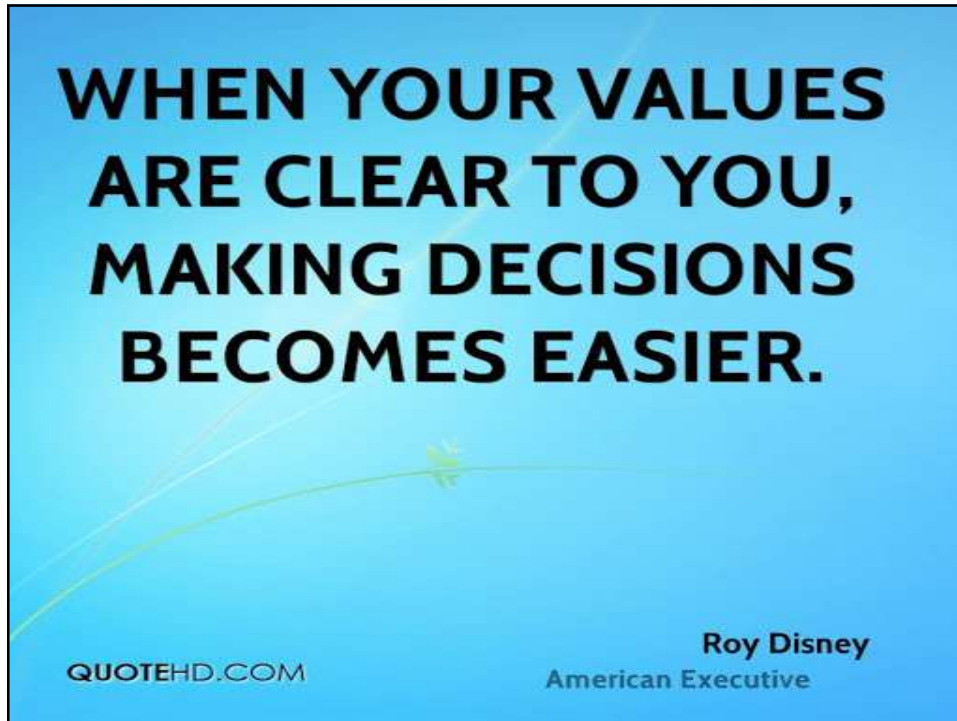
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## Grief and Loss



- It is ok to grieve what could have been.
- There is no hierarchy of loss.
- Feelings of grief come in waves.

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What are your values?

The list of values below is not exhaustive, but it's designed to get you thinking about your own. Which values on the list are most important to you? Pick your top three and if something comes to mind that is not on the list, write it down.

Acceptance	Faith/Religion	Mindfulness
Accountability	Family	Nature
Adventure	Freedom	Openness
Art or Music	Friendship	Patience
Athletics	Fun	Peace/Non-violence
Celebration	Generosity	Personal Growth
Challenge	Gratitude	Pets/Animals
Collaboration	Happiness	Politics
Commitment	Hard Work	Positive Influence
Community	Harmony	Practicality
Compassion	Health	Problem-Solving
Competence	Helping Others	Reliability
Cooperation	Honesty	Resourcefulness
Courage	Honour	Self-Compassion
Creativity	Humour	Self-Reliance
Curiosity	Independence	Simplicity/Thrift
Discipline	Innovation	Strength
Discovery	Integrity	Tradition
Efficiency	Interdependence	Trust
Enthusiasm	Joy	Willingness
Equality	Leadership	Wisdom
Ethical Action	Lifelong Learning	
Excellence	Love	
Fairness	Loyalty	

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## 6 Tips to Reduce Anxiety

1. Turn “what if” into “then what?”
2. Set reasonable limits on your TV and internet news consumption
3. Be present in the here and now
4. Spend time in nature
5. Exercise
6. Maintain a routine

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## Turn “What if?” into “Then what?”



- Turn “what if?” into “then what?”
- Avoid ruminating
- Make a plan
- Share your plan
- Put your plan aside

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## Set Limits on News Consumption

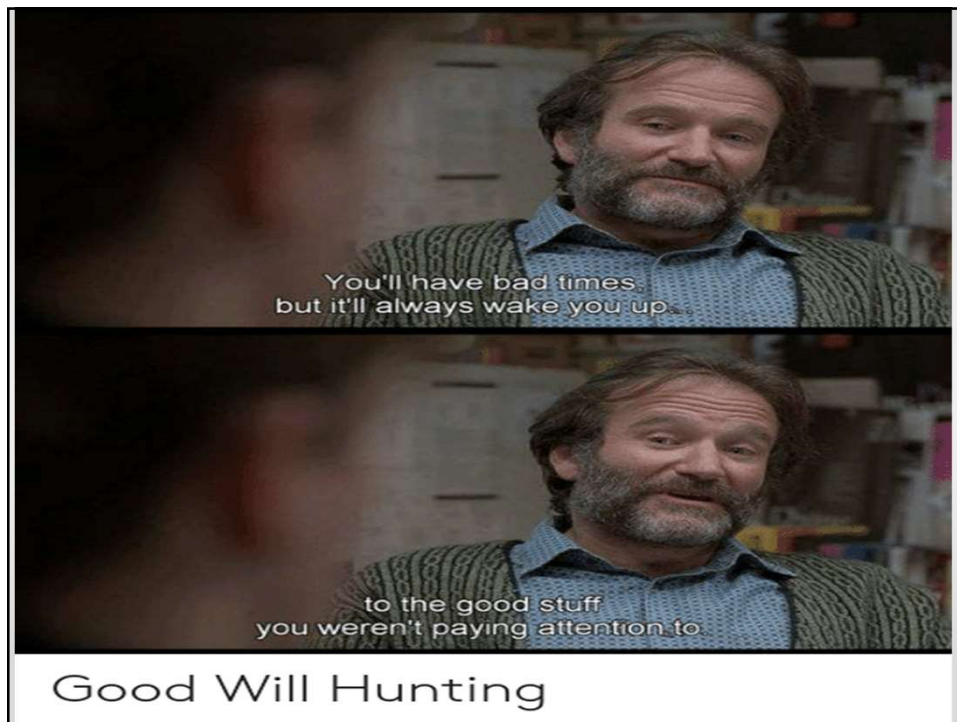


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## Be Present



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## Spend Time in Nature



- Benefits of nature:

- Stress reduction
- Improved cognitive functioning
- Enhanced self-confidence
- Improved immune function
- Improved mood
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower cortisol (stress hormone)
- Improved sleep

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## Exercise



- Benefits of exercise:
  - Improves mood
  - Decreases anxiety
  - Decreases depression
  - Improves self-esteem
  - Good for physical health
  - Teaches us that our behavior matters

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## Maintain a Routine

- **7:00 a.m.** - Wake up, stretch, take care of kids/animals
- **7:30 a.m.** - Breakfast and family time (technology free!)
- **8:30 a.m.** - Work and check on updates with small breaks every 30 minutes or so
- **12:00 p.m.** - Lunch break, get fresh air, stretch & exercise
- **1:00 p.m.** - Work with breaks every 30 minutes, check in with co-workers
- **5:00 p.m.** - Dinner and screen break! Call a friend, family, or loved one
- **7:00 p.m.** - Self care time
- Structure is helpful in times of uncertainty
- Makes our internal lives predictable
- Creates normalcy, certainty and comfort in day-to-day activities
- Gives a sense of agency

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**ACTION CALENDAR: MEANINGFUL MAY 2020**

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

"Start Where You Are. Use What You Have."  
Do What You Can" ~ Arthur Ashe

4 Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do	5 Send friends a photo of a time you all enjoyed together	6 Take a step towards one of your life goals, however small	7 Let someone you love know how much they mean to you	1 Take a minute to remember what really matters to you and why	2 Do something meaningful for someone you really care about	3 Reconnect with nature today, even if you're stuck indoors
11 What are your most important values? Use them today	12 Be grateful for the little things, even in difficult times	13 Today do something to care for the natural world	14 Show your gratitude to people who are helping to make things better	8 Set yourself a kindness mission. Give your time to help others	9 Look out for positive news and reasons to be cheerful today	10 Tell someone about why your favourite music means a lot to you
18 Hand-write a note to someone you love and send them a photo of it	19 Find a way to craft what you are doing to give it more meaning	20 Reflect on what makes you feel really valued and appreciated	21 Share photos of 3 things you find meaningful or memorable	15 Find out about the values and traditions of another culture	16 Look around you and notice five things you find meaningful	17 Take a positive action to help in your local community
25 Give your time to help a project or charity you care about	26 Recall three things you've done that you are really proud of	27 Today link your decisions and choices to your purpose in life	28 Tell someone about an event in your life that was really meaningful	22 Ask a loved one or colleague what matters most to them and why	23 Share an inspiring quote with others to give them a boost	24 Do something special today and revisit it in your memory tonight
				29 Think about how your actions make a difference for others	30 Find three good reasons to be hopeful about the future	31 Look up at the sky. Remember we are all part of something bigger

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

www.actionforhappiness.org

31 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind

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## The Importance of Kindness



### Kindness to yourself

- Listening to music
- Reading a book
- Setting boundaries for yourself
- Try to avoid comparing yourself with others

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## Kindness Toward Others



- We are at our best when we are helping others.  
*Margaret Mead*
- Kindness to others
  - Deliver groceries
  - Mail a letter
  - Volunteer to shop
  - Brighten someone's day

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## The Power of Sleep



### Three Tips to Improve sleep

1. Sleep Hygiene
2. Don't check the news before bed
3. Practice progressive muscle relaxation

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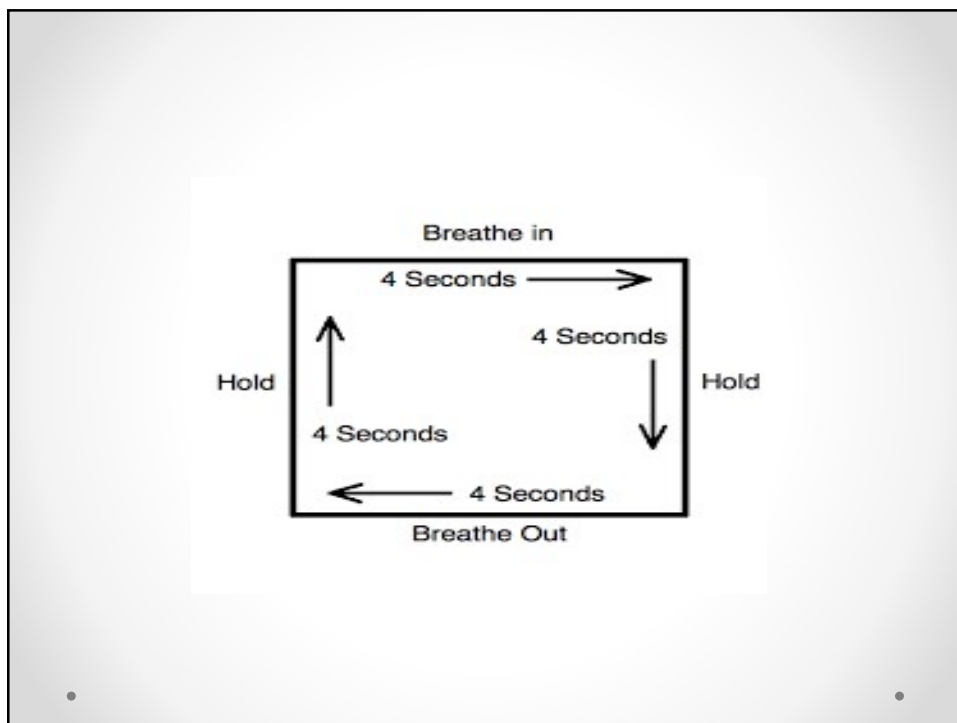
## SIMPLE GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

If you're feeling anxious or worried, bring your attention back to the current moment with this simple grounding exercise. Notice the following around you:

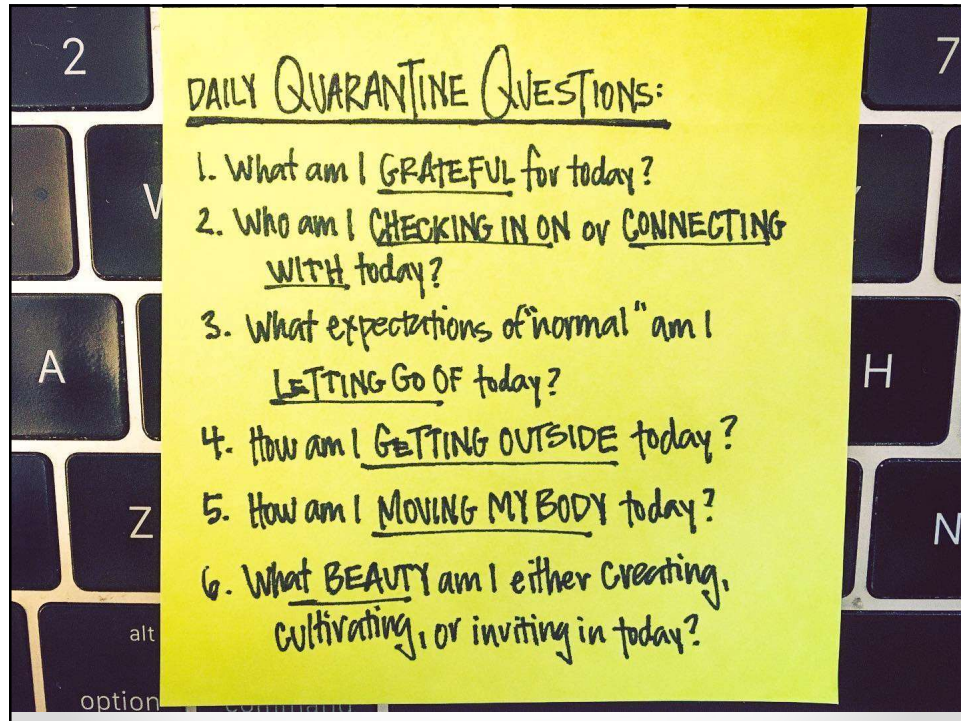
- 5** things you can see
- 4** things you can feel
- 3** things you can hear
- 2** things you can smell
- 1** thing you can taste

THEBLISSFULMIND.COM

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## Conclusion



- Stay home and stay safe
- Practise self-care
- Do what works best for you
- Connect with others
- Hunt for the good stuff
- Ask for help if needed

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## References and Resources

- [actionforhappiness.org/coping calendar](https://actionforhappiness.org/coping-calendar).
- Anxiety Canada. <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>
- BCACC register of registered clinical counsellors – bc-counsellors.org.
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Bounce Back.
- Counselling BC, <https://counsellingbc.com>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – sleep hygiene. [cdc.gov/sleep/about\\_sleep/sleep\\_hygiene.html](https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/sleep_hygiene.html).
- Cho, J., & Gifford, K. (2016). *The Anxious Lawyer: An 8-Week Guide to a Joyful and Satisfying Law Practice Through Mindfulness and Meditation*. Book Publishing, Chicago, Illinois.

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## References and Resources

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- Sentis – neuroplasticity. [Youtube.com/watch?v=ELpfYCa87g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpfYCa87g).
- Stock, B. (2017). *Nature is Good For You*. Advocate. Vol. 75 Part 4, July 2017, 561-564.
- Stock, B. (2017). *The Power of Sleep*. Advocate. Vol. 75 Part 5, September 2017, 733-738.
- Vancouver Crisis Centre 1-800-784-2433, 604-872-3311.
- YouthinBC.com.
- Virtual counselling services for individuals or groups at low or no costs. A list of agencies can be found at [www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19)