**Changes in a Time of Coronavirus**

*Turn and Face the Strange*

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We’re living in strange times (understatement of the century), and we are being forced to [change](https://www.facebook.com/brightsideoflongevity/videos/222862135671123/) … everything, all at once. These are definitely not the small, [Kaizen](https://www.spreaker.com/user/masterpiece_living/kaizen-nov-5-2019)-like, bite-sized baby steps that we normally advocate. We have all been hit with huge change through the onset of Covid-19. It is in our very DNA to resist it, a perceived threat response inherited from our ancestors.

**Our Brains On Change**

You see, our brains are hard-wired to interpret those big, all-at-once changes as dangerous. What is familiar is safe to our brains. Change feels unsafe, producing fear, discomfort, grief and a whole slew of difficult emotions.

But you know what? That discomfort that you feel is simply your brain doing its job. You can thank your brain for that, and then gently remind yourself that you are the master of your mind and not the other way around.

You see, there is a tendency to hold ourselves accountable for our thoughts. The ones that tell us, “People are dying. I have no right to feel this way.” Self-judgment has no upside. In these times of great change, we need to practice self-compassion, limit inputs that create fear, and flood the brain with inputs that are good for us.

**Resistance is Futile**

Resisting change is useless, stress producing, and negatively affects quality of life, peace and happiness. When we try to resist change, we suffer stress, and possibly disease.

When we come to accept that this may very well change our lives forever, then we can begin to make small adjustments to our lifestyle that will allow us to function successfully in this new reality. Only then can we see this time as positive change … a chance in a lifetime to reevaluate and restructure our values and lives.

There other positive events that we are witnessing during this historic time: clearer skies, less asthma, creatures roaming more widely, less noise … all happening very quickly. Jonas Salk’s statement is true: “If all insects on Earth disappeared, within 50 years all life on Earth would end. If all human beings disappeared from the Earth, within 50 years all forms of life would flourish.” Instead of viewing this as a negative outlook, we can choose to view this as a remarkable opportunity to take better care of ourselves, each other, and our planet.

**Other Practical Tips for Navigating these Strange Times:**

1. **Plan Ahead:** Be proactive vs. reactive, with the understanding that this may change day to day and hour by hour.
2. **Be Mindful**: When stress takes over, sometimes you can only focus on what’s right in front of you vs. worrying about what *might* happen.
3. **Create a Schedule**: Look at what is in your control. Creating some routine in your day can help you feel more centered and grounded.
4. **Find What Helps You Unwind**: A comedy show, yoga, meditation, listening to music, engaging in a hobby. It’s not idle time. It’s necessary to recharge.
5. **Find the Glimmers:** As [Jane Parker recommends in a recent *Dr. Roger & Friends* interview](https://www.spreaker.com/user/11175410/jane-p-aug-4), look for positive moments that encourage positive emotions. And, as we’ve mentioned earlier, flood the brain with those *good* inputs.
6. **Get Moving:** Dance, go for a bike ride, walk, clean your house, anything to help burn off stress and breathe more.
7. **Practice Acceptance:** Denying or resisting inevitable change is not helpful. Control what you can. Let go of the rest.
8. **Talk or Write it Out:** Find a healthy way to vent, which may mean just sharing with a friend what you are experiencing. More than likely, they are going through similar feelings right now. Or, if it’s easier to be honest with your thoughts, keep a journal. Sometimes writing it down helps purge it from your head, puts things in perspective, and helps you then turn your attention to something less stressful and more productive.
9. **Find the Lesson:** What can you take from this stress (that you didn’t ask for) and turn into a growth opportunity?
10. **Eat Well:** There’s a tendency to eat comfort foods, canned goods (because we’re stocking up), and processed foods with a long shelf life while in isolation. Do what you can to keep eating fruits and veggies. There’s a direct link between [food and mood](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/external/2018/03/relationship-food-mood/).

**Above all, be kind to yourself. Be kind to others. We can do this.**

***Stay safe. Stay well!***