



Managing Anxiety Through Difficult Situations

Managing anxiety on the regular is hard enough, but when there's a heightened fear response, it's even more important to have the strategies to manage your mind, under any circumstance. Here's a comprehensive list of the strategies I use for myself and in my practice to manage fear.

Get Grounded in the Facts

Facts don't lie, but the stories we tell ourselves lie all the time. What creates anxiety is the THOUGHT we have about what could potentially happen in the future. It's not the situation itself, the situation is neutral. The thought we have about the situation is always the problem, and the solution. To get grounded in the facts, I take a blank piece of paper and put a line straight down the center. On the left-hand side, I right down the entire story in my head. For example: I have the Coronavirus and while I am healthy, I know that this can turn from manageable to unmanageable very quickly, so I should be on high alert and track my symptoms, etc. etc. Then on the right-hand side of the paper, I write down only facts. All the facts I know about the situation. Every single one. Then I move to the next step below.

Pattern Interrupt

Okay, so now that I have written down ALL the facts, it's clear that the story and the facts don't line up. They never do. Every time my brain wants to create a story or revisit the story in my head that isn't serving me, I stop that thought and redirect to only facts. Our brains are not runaway trains, although many of us walk around acting as if they are. We can absolutely stop the drama in our head, and redirect our thoughts. In the beginning, this takes a lot of effort as you rewire your brain but then after about a week or so this gets easier. For example: My default story is that I have the Corona Virus and I should be vigilant about watching my symptoms. I STOP THERE. And I pull out my fact list and read through it.

Consumption of Information

This is a big one for me. I am very careful about who and what I let speak into my life. I don't typically scroll on social media, I don't watch the news, I don't listen to anything negative and I definitely don't have any people in my life that are negative. I am so careful about the things that I let enter my brain and you should be too. In this case, I know I need facts, so I do need to have a pulse on what's going on, so I have my husband telling me only the things that I MUST know about the virus. He filters the information for me. In this case, I really suggest having someone you trust filter information for you too and keep the information on a need-to-know basis. At this point, because this virus is brand new, I think we know everything there is to know about the symptoms, prevention and what to do if you get it. If you get the virus, there may be new information you need, and at that time, ask your doctor and get the facts. Otherwise, stay away from stories. Stories aren't helpful. In business it's true that facts tell, stories sell. Any story you are reading/seeing in the media is purely to sell you and you don't need to be sold to right now.

Boundaries

I am really honest with the people in my life about what I can and cannot handle in our conversations. If I am having a conversation about the trigger, in this case the virus, and the other person is telling me more information that I need to know, I stop them and tell them that my anxiety can't handle this type



of information and I am on a “need-to-know” basis right now, and that my husband is the only person I will be getting my information from. If they have something they want me to know, it can run through him first. Then I say that I want to talk about other things to distract me from all of this. On the flip side, if someone else is experiencing anxiety about the same thing that has triggered me, I cannot and will not be their crutch. They need to find someone else to help them through. Two people feeding anxiety to each other is not EVER helpful, it’s only hurtful.

Listing Future Activities

I knew I wanted to come out of this healthier than ever before. I know I have things left to do on this earth so I made a list of them! I made an extensive list of ALL the things I want to do before I die, the way I want to impact the world and the things I want to experience. I created future visions for my life not giving the universe any other options than to get me through this. Once we create a vision, the only thing left to do is reach that destination. Mind over matter.

Make a Busy List

I also made a list of things to do if I got bored. I realize that I was given 2 very quiet weeks to myself that I may never get again, and to be honest, I don’t ever want to experience again. I made a pretty long list of all the things that I have not been able to do because I have had my hands so busy with the family and growing a business. Here’s a few things from my personal list: Yearly credit report review, update my website, cancel our vacation plans, look into puppy training and getting an electric fence, update doctor appointments for me and the kids, etc. Here’s the trick – it’s not a “to-do” list. My primary goal during isolation is to completely rest and give my body everything it needs to fight this. It’s a list of things to do if I needed a distraction. If I do none of them in 2 weeks, I’m totally fine with that.

Zone Out

This is a big one for me. I listen to podcasts and watch shows that help me pass the time. Right now, it’s all about passing this time, and it’s a unique opportunity for me to catch up on things like TV that I never get a chance to do. Just be careful with what you are consuming.

Accept Help

Accepting help is not easy for me, but it’s the only way. Anything someone has asked to do for us, I have let them. Unless of course it’s not helpful, then no thank you, but I haven’t had that experience. I have had friends set up a meal train, send meal gift cards, send toys for the kids, help with our puppy, grocery store trips etc. I know I will pass this help forward in my own way into the world, like sharing a guide like this.

Visualization

I am big into visualizing what I want out of my life. If you can see it, you can believe it. I spent time visualizing my body fighting this virus, doing an amazing job and how grateful I am for this incredible immune system. I also visualize the time with my family when we can be together again. For you, visualize anything that’s positive and future thinking. Again, you are giving the universe no choice but to catch up with you. Everything that’s ever been created has first started as a thought in someone’s mind. Choose your thoughts and visions wisely!



Take a Peek Under the Hood

This virus has made me really take a look into how I am taking care of themselves. Here are questions I want you to ask yourself and journal about:

- What are you doing for your body to support your immune system and your overall health?
- Are you eating whole foods?
- What supplements are you taking?
- How's your water consumption?
- What are you doing that you know is unhealthy that you want to change?
- How much are you exercising?
- How are you sleeping?
- When's the last time you went to the dentist or to the doctor?
- How are you managing your stress?
- Do you have a therapist or a coach to help you through life?
- What's your work-life balance look like?
- What do you want to change as a result of answering the questions above?

Journal

This is one of the most therapeutic, inexpensive, readily accessible strategies that you can use. Just write all your thoughts down and get them out of your head/heart and onto paper. Don't bottle them!

Use Work as an Escape

This has always been a helpful strategy for me. Work can force your mind to focus on something completely unrelated to your worry-list. It's an excellent escape. If you love your work as much as I do, then it also fuels you, which is excellent for your mental health. Doing something impactful for others, whether it's paid or volunteer work, and making the world a better place is always a very great refuge during hard times.

Make a Strong List

I want you to make a list of ALL of the times in your life where you have been strong. Where you have gotten through hard things. What helped and what didn't? No need to start from scratch managing anxiety, you want to build on what already works for you. Meditation, selfcare, napping, anything that helps.

Cut the Crap

It's time to cut the things that trigger anxiety, the two biggest triggers being caffeine and alcohol. Consuming those two things are like throwing gasoline on a burning fire. When you know you are in a time of heightened sensitivity, cut back on those two things first.

Not all of these will work for all people, which is why I included such a comprehensive list of options. Try each and see what works for you. For more support, you can join my free Level-Up COMMUNITY on Facebook. Remember, you are so strong, stronger than you know. You got this!