

Coping With Anxiety About Celebrations and Coronavirus

By mindfully living in the present, you can make the conscious decision to practice focusing your resources and time on joy, appreciation, and healing.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Coping With Anxiety About Celebrations and Coronavirus

® Do you tend to feel overwhelmed by all the scary messages you are bombarded with daily about the coronavirus?

® Is it difficult to remember what is going well in your life when you are preoccupied with all the outside noise?

® Do you feel overwhelmed by the combined stress of Covid and the Holidays?



Use these challenging times to practice becoming better instead of bitter. There are many models of great teachers and leaders who have shown how to find joy amidst suffering.

Eric Kandel, recipient of the Nobel Prize for Medicine, notes that the ability to rejoice is not something that we are born with or that we lack; it is something that should be cultivated constantly. He has observed that we can train our brains to resist harmful gut reactions and strengthen our ability to focus on positive aspects and feelings that serve us and those around us



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Dr. Linda Miles

What can we learn from those who manage harmful gut reactions and show a strong ability to hearten themselves and others?.In the American drama, Up The Down Staircase, a young teacher felt humiliated because she went the wrong way along the flight of stairs; the movie’s focus was on how she learned to lead her students in the right direction regarding life and purpose. Her leadership was born of her sense of purpose and positivity despite the difficult environment.

It is helpful to remember people who have managed to find joy amidst suffering in past and present circumstances. Desmond Tutu survived more than 50 years of soul-crushing violence and oppression. During the violence of Apartheid in South Africa, he chose to convey gratitude and lead by example as a role model who “lived in the light.” According to Archbishop Tutu, he knew he would not be able to inspire people around him to be joyful if he himself could not authentically rejoice in daily living. He writes, “Despite all the ghastliness in the world, human beings are made for goodness. They have a commitment to make the world a better place.” Desmond Tutu is like other inspirational world leaders who emerged from a personal purgatory and pulled themselves up in hard times; by doing so, they managed to pull together other people around them into a sense of community and purpose.

In times of emergency, you do need to use logic and common sense. It’s imperative to listen to what experts say about preventive measures such as handwashing, sanitizers, and social distancing. But staying informed and panicking are two different things. You do not want to allow your emotions to run away with you or rob you of the gifts of the present moment.

When you feel overwhelmed by the negative emotions about coronavirus or anxiety-producing holiday events, you can begin to practice mindfulness techniques to evoke calmness and healing. Breathe deeply and fill your body with clean air. When you exhale imagine that you are blowing out a candle. When you inhale, think the word “Be” and when you exhale “calm”. Repeat this often during the day..

MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

By mindfully living in the present, you can make the conscious decision to practice focusing your resources and time on joy, appreciation, and healing. This does not mean that you’re denying the reality of inconveniences or suffering that may affect you, your family, or community. Instead, it means that you actively choose to find moments during the day to share and partake in kindness, gratitude, and joy. Sara Lazar of Harvard University has done research that demonstrates how mindfulness physically changes the brain, helping reduce anxiety after twelve weeks of practicing mindfulness.

MINDFUL REMINDERS

- The challenge of coronavirus is an opportunity to become better and to help others.
- Do not torment yourself out of fear that you will be tormented in the future; excessive worry will rob you of the present moment.
- Joy does not imply never-ending happiness. It is the ability and choice to rejoice. All emotions are temporary.
- You cannot avoid suffering, but you can intentionally look for joy amidst suffering.
- Take it one day at a time. You do not know the future. Give your best today.
- Inhale and think the word "Be"; think the word "Calm" as you exhale.
- Accept reality. It does not help to deny what is happening.
- Realize that gratitude is not just for good times; it is healing in troublesome times.
- Your feelings, like your fears, are meant to be a guide that you can use to help yourself and others.
- Now is a good time to practice choosing peace of mind instead of fear. Life can feel different if your heart is not obstructed by fear.
- Joseph Campbell said that one of the most important lessons is to "find joy amidst suffering."
- "Our best protection is a joyful heart." -Mother Teresa. Emotions are contagious, so ignite your own inner light.
- Approach this situation as an experiment in staying in the present moment.
- Notice the stories you tell yourself about what might happen, and realize that those are only stories.
- Make your life be a benefit to others.
- "Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy." -Anne Frank

Dr. Miles has a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology and has worked as a psychotherapist for 35 years. Her first book, *The New Marriage*, written with her husband, Robert Miles, M.D., won a literary prize as a finalist for Forward Non-fiction Book of the Year. She has published several books on relationships and mindfulness, as well as articles in the Wall Street Journal, Boston Globe, Reuters, and Miami Herald. She has been a guest expert on numerous national TV shows including CNN, Fox News, ABC, and NBC. Her most recent book on mindfulness is entitled *Change Your Story, Change Your Brain*.

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