

Finding Inner Peace and Calm in a Time of Chaos

Have you started to spend less time on social media in an effort to avoid the seemingly never-ending negative messages?

Do you feel like you just want to put the news on mute for a while so you aren't constantly exposed to the negativity?

With all the chaos we're exposed to on a daily basis, it can seem overwhelming and stressful to be trapped in the house, full of uncertainty. However, it is important to realize that peace and tranquility come from within and can be found even in the most challenging times. Making an effort to find this inner peace is one of the most important things you can do in this chaotic time.

Here are some ideas for you to find inner peace.

Meditation

Meditation is a great way to calm the mind. There are so many ways to meditate, but you can make it really simple. Just focus on the air moving in and out of your body as you breathe for 10-20 breaths. This will help you stay present in the moment. A meditation practice allows you to feel balanced from within and allows you to reflect on outside surroundings rather than consuming them. You can also listen to a guided meditation to keep your attention more focused on "nothing." Download one from my store, or find a free one on YouTube. You will learn different breathing techniques that can help you calm down when you find yourself stressing out. If you keep up a short, steady practice of meditation, you will begin to notice that you are not as anxious and overwhelmed.

Routine

Developing a routine, even when stuck at home, is a crucial way to find structure in your life when there are challenges put in front of you. Waking up at the same time, making time to meditate or journal each morning, and reading before bed are a few examples of tasks you can incorporate into your daily routine to keep you feeling calm. I've noticed that most everyone chooses to take two minutes daily to brush his or her teeth. Imagine creating a daily routine of just 10 minutes that incorporates a couple other self-help practices. Start small to see a big impact on your life. When you keep up positive habits, it gives you confidence to continue and motivation to put even more time into your personal development.

Nature

"Nature is the best medicine." Not everyone has a back yard filled with trees and a meditation garden. If you DO have access to that, try to get out for a few minutes every day. Enjoy fresh air and the peace that nature holds. If you *don't* have nature in your backyard, make it a priority to take a walk in nature at least once a week. Find a river or stream to wander next to, a path in a park, or a trail in the woods. Being in nature takes away the feeling of being trapped in the house. It is also a great stress reliever that will help you feel gratitude and inner peace during tough times. If you are committed to bringing inner peace to your life, schedule a 30 minute walk every day. It is a great way to stay active and get a breath of fresh air to reduce your stress and anxiety levels. When you are constantly surrounded by technology, filled with news that may seem concerning, your stress is likely to rise. When you intentionally step away and let go of this attachment, you will instantly feel calmer.

Watch Your News Intake

When chaos is going on around the world and there is stress in the air, the news is the main source that people base their opinions off of and process information from. However, it is no surprise that news sensationalizes negative situations. The more disturbing the information, the more viewers, right? The ever-increasing bad news can make the brain feel overwhelmed, anxious, and stressed. While it is important to stay up to date with current events, it is also important to not let it consume you. Many of these things are out of your control and after you take the precautionary measures that you can, it is important to step away from the news in order to relax the mind.

Read

Reading a book is a great way to clear your mind and distract yourself from your surroundings when they seem overwhelming or negative. It is a great way to restore your emotions and reduce stress without staring at a screen or scrolling through social media. When you read a book, you are improving your brain function, and this has proven to improve mental wellbeing. Whether it is an educational book, self-help book, or fiction, you will find that you are able to learn a lot and grow both professionally and personally in an enjoyable way.

While each of these activities is “easy” on its own, it takes YOU to make the first step. Making yourself a priority, especially in chaotic times, is the only certain way to come to your own inner peace and find calm.

Start by doing just a few minutes a day of healthy habits. See how it affects your life in a positive way. Then add a few more minutes. Once you are up to 30 minutes a day of putting your well being first through practicing calming habits, you

will easily recognize the peace developing within you.

What new positive habit will you take on first?

How to Practice Gratitude

You've likely heard that practicing gratitude is good for your body, your mind, and your soul. It is also often mentioned that a practice of gratitude will help you manifest the life of your dreams.

But how do you actually put a practice of gratitude into practice? Keep reading!

Gratitude has strong links to life satisfaction and good mental health. People who are grateful experience more enthusiasm, love, and joy. They also have better protection from emotions that have a destructive impact like bitterness, greed, and envy. Simply because they are more focused on what is good in their life.

It is believed that gratitude can reduce your lifetime risk of developing a substance abuse disorder, anxiety, or even depression. It can also help those who suffer from these issues and other conditions to find healing and closure. Being thankful helps you to understand that there is goodness out there, even if you are suffering or feeling lost.

Gratitude isn't just an uplifting and warm feeling; it can also benefit your body. People who introduce gratitude practice into their lives cope more effectively with stress, enjoy better physical health, and recover more rapidly from illnesses.

Even better, gratitude extends beyond you. When you experience

gratitude, it reaches past you into your wider social circle. Gratitude has the power of inspiring others to act more kindly, and it can strengthen your bond with others around you. People who are grateful are more likely to be viewed as trustworthy, optimistic, outgoing, and helpful. These are valuable characteristics that draw others to you and help you forge positive and strong relationships. And better yet? Gratitude is contagious! Wouldn't you love to spread more good feelings to your community, to the world?!

When you introduce gratitude practice into your everyday routine, you'll experience positive effects such as:

- A sense of abundance in your life
- A greater appreciation of how others contribute to your well-being
- Recognition of the small pleasures in life
- Developing a more positive outlook that allows for a happier life experience

If you start practicing gratitude regularly, you can begin to reap all those benefits for yourself.

Banishing Negativity, Focusing On Positivity

A key element of introducing gratitude practice into your life is banishing negativity and focusing on positivity in return.

Thinking positively comes with a host of benefits including:

- Happiness – banishing negativity in favor of a positive attitude can awaken happiness in your life. You may not be rich and you may not have reached the career goals you set yourself, but happiness is all about attitude. If you have a positive mindset, you automatically become happy. Recognize your happiness doesn't depend on an external cause. Rather, it comes from within. All too

often, we find reasons not to be happy. We delay adopting a positive mindset. I'll be happy when I lose weight. I'll be happy when I win the lottery... Banish negative thoughts like "I'm too fat to be happy," or "I'm too poor to be happy." You can make yourself happy right now without any of those things by simply thinking positively. It sounds hard at first, but with some practice it can become second nature!

- Motivation – when you banish negative thinking, you can actually become more motivated to accomplish the goals and dreams you set for yourself. Being motivated in itself is a positive characteristic, pushing you forward, encouraging you, and helping you to overcome obstacles. Being positive makes you more motivated to succeed and it also helps you believe that you can be successful. As a result, you will be able to achieve more than you ever imagined.
- Self-esteem – when you have a positive mental attitude you'll have higher self-esteem. You will look at yourself more kindly and begin to see your good traits rather than only the bad ones. Ignore negative people and forget about what they say and think. As soon as you adopt a positive mindset, others around you automatically raise their opinions of you and become more respectful.
- Better health – positive thinkers are usually healthier and more energetic than negative thinkers. The mind's effect on the body is a powerful one, and positive thinkers enjoy a healthier immune system with faster recovery times.
- Better relationships – when you think positively, you'll find that other people gravitate towards you. People prefer those around them to be positive since they bring happiness, energy and joy into their lives.

Gratitude – A Skill That Takes Work

Although we're all capable of being grateful for so many things in life, it's not something that we all do naturally. This makes it a somewhat alien skill. When you first decide to start practicing gratitude it can be very difficult at first.

You may find yourself struggling to think of things to feel thankful for, or you may try telling yourself to be grateful but not truly feeling it. All of this is normal, and it's something that needs to be worked through to come out the other side and to reap all the benefits that gratitude can bring.

Remember that gratitude is a skill like any other. How does an aspiring musician end up playing at Carnegie Hall? The answer is "practice." It's the same for gratitude. Practice makes perfect, so keep working on being grateful for the little things. It may be hard at first. In fact, it almost certainly will be. But, with a little effort and time, it will eventually become easier and, soon, being thankful will be second nature.

One great way to get started with a gratitude practice is to take a simple paper calendar (you can always make your own) and write three things you are grateful for each day. Ideally you will write your list in the morning, but any time of day you can spend two minutes reflecting on the good in your life is a great time!

As your calendar fills up with all these wonderful, beautiful, even simple things, you will start to see the bounty in which you already live!

If you forget a day, don't fret. Just fill in more things the next day. Can't think of three "new" ideas each day. That's ok! Repeating what you really love, what you are really grateful for is also a great way to start.

The point is to keep up the PRACTICE so that over time gratitude will become a natural process for you every day!