

# Focus on Coaching

## Keeping in touch

Hi. We are now in our sixth week of lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic. There has been a period of adjustment in all our lives and everyone is affected in various ways at different times. I have been keeping all my coachees in mind. I hope some of the items here resonate, wherever you are just now.

You may be working full/part time, in school/setting, other work place or from home. You may have been furloughed. You might have lost your job. With all of these there are challenges: communicating with a staff team at a distance; supporting families in need; brushing up on IT skills; a clash of priorities as home and work collide; children at home to support; feelings of loss; money worries and so on. On a brighter tone, you might be enjoying the change of routine and spending more time with your own thoughts, projects and close family.

On a personal note I went for a jog last week and, as I rounded a corner, a girl of about 5 years was a few feet away, walking with her mum. She saw me and screamed, edging backwards. It is hard to think that social distancing might have put fear into young children (unless it was my running that scared her!). On p2 there is a link to an article to support young children at this time.



## How to cope with uncertain times

A crisis is the single most difficult challenge for everyone, especially in the form of a virus that took the world by storm. No one is immune and more importantly we are not in control. Here are a few thoughts to help focus what you CAN control (thanks to Jennifer Day, neuroscientist).

*Think about small tasks you can control* - what might these be? Make a list of what you can achieve e.g. time you get up/go to bed/how much news you watch/what you eat/who you reach out to. Acknowledge your successes.

*Control your self care* - what do you know makes you feel better? A particular person, a food, an activity? What ever it is make sure you build this into your day/week.

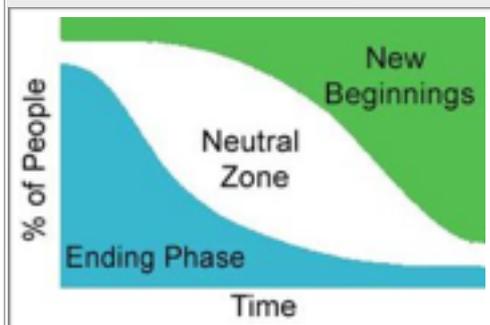
*Take charge of your thoughts and imagination* - only you can control your thoughts - focus on things that make you happy - photos of loved ones, pets. Think of something good that is happening just here and right now or go to a favourite place in your mind.

*Adopt a meditative practice* - Countless studies show the benefits of meditation and positive visualisation (there are lots available - e.g. apps *Insight Timer* or *Headspace*)



## Managing change

In the last newsletter I introduced Bridge's model of transition.



Perhaps you have started to move into where the ending phase meets the neutral zone, where lockdown is the 'new normal' but with no certainty about a new beginning in sight. We have to hold onto the fact that we will come through this, schools and settings will reopen, the economy will reignite and that life, if not quite as we knew it, will return.

## Reasons to be cheerful

A trusted friend often gives me pearls of wisdom - here is one I would like to share. Each day think of one or more things that has made you feel better. Here are three of hers:

1. the smell of hawthorn blossom after the rain;
2. a neighbour gave her a bag of flour;
3. someone smiled at her as they negotiated social distancing on the pathway.

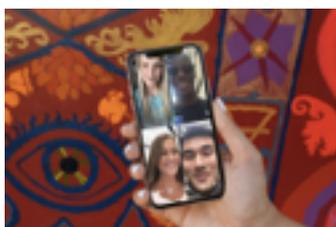


What are your reasons to be cheerful today?

*Write your thoughts and feelings in a journal* - it can be a release to park your negative thoughts on paper. It has been found that handwriting stimulates the brain synapses and synchronises the left and right sides of the brain (which doesn't happen when texting or typing).

*Talk it through* - connecting with others and talking

through concerns helps us feel better - connection releases the chemical oxytocin, known as the bonding hormone. It is the most effective interruptor of the stress hormone cortisol and these two cannot function simultaneously.



*State affirmations* - make statements that are the positives of your inner critic. If your inner critic says 'I'm not good enough, then replace it with 'I am good enough' to yourself and say it over and over. With practice it will feel more natural and you can change your self belief. The brain's mirror-neuron system can be trained to make new connections and eliminate the negative feedback loop.

*Enjoy your endorphins* - Dance, play music, run, eat spicy food - enjoy yourself, you will release endorphins. These are produced in the brain and body and are important in times of stress as they reduce pain signals and the negative effects of stress. They also boost the immune system and act similarly to drugs, like morphine or codeine, except they are not addictive!



## Support for young children

Click on the link below to access helpful ideas about how to explain to young children about the coronavirus.

[LL Coronavirus support for young children](#)

## Contact

I am retaining all booked coaching sessions until you are ready - do contact me if there is anything you think I can help with. In the meantime we wait to see what steps are taken towards getting all children back into settings and the opening of the economy and community. Stay safe and stay well. Best wishes *Ruth*