

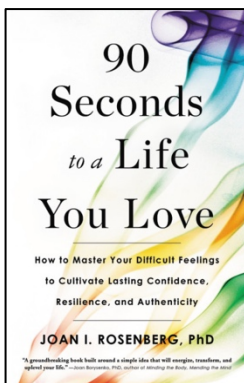
7 Mental Health Tips for Uncertain Times

By Joan Rosenberg, PhD,
Psychologist and author of *90 Seconds to a Life You Love*

1. If you feel anxious, start with deep slow belly breathing with an inhale of 6 counts, holding your breath for 6 counts and exhaling for 6 counts. Practice for 10 minutes and notice how it calms you down. Interestingly, deep slow breathing is the fastest way to calm. Practice a minimum of 3 times daily for 10 minutes each - and shift to deep breathing when you feel the anxiety coming on.
2. If you are feeling anxious, remind yourself that you are more likely feeling vulnerable. Two ways to know that you can deal with these feelings of vulnerability are to: a) tell yourself that you are capable and resourceful and will be able to figure out how to solve these challenges once more information is known, and b) ask others for help, whether it is for practical matters or whether it is for help solving the challenges you are facing. We are all in this together.
3. Given that everyone is at home, create schedules and routines that you can follow (e.g. mealtimes, study times if kids are at school, work times for you) because a schedule or sense of routine lends itself to a greater sense of order, and a greater sense of order helps calm the brain.
4. Consider building activities into your schedule that may have not been there before, such as exercise, meditation, journaling or prayer. And, clean up and shower as if you were going somewhere - you're typically more upbeat out of pajamas all day rather than staying in them.
5. If you have the space, allow each person to have their separate workspace or clear times for sharing workspace. Build in time for everyone to have shared time together and time where they can be alone as well - which might mean going outside and sitting on the balcony or porch or somewhere in your yard.

6. Because of the uncertainty and strain and all the unexpected togetherness, it's possible you will watch tempers flare, anger occur more frequently, or conflicts get more heated. Rather than looking for who is right or wrong, or good or bad, put your focus on understanding and connection. And, this is a time to be gentle sorting it out. Everyone is experiencing some level of strain. Be gentle . . . really gentle.

7. Finally, hold attitudes that bolster resilience. You can say to yourself things like:
 - a) Every experience in my life is or can become a learning experience.
 - b) I know I have faced other difficult life circumstances and I can draw on my experience of having successfully made it through them to face my current challenges.
 - c) I hold an optimistic point of view.
 - d) I use resources such as meditation, journal writing, music, humor or prayer to help me during difficult times.
 - e) I will persist and persevere.
 - f) I'm going to use what I'm going through to bring out the best in me.



*Material drawn from the book *90 Seconds to a Life You Love: How to Master Your Difficult Feelings to Cultivate Lasting Confidence, Resilience and Authenticity* by Joan I. Rosenberg, PhD.

www.drjoanrosenberg.com