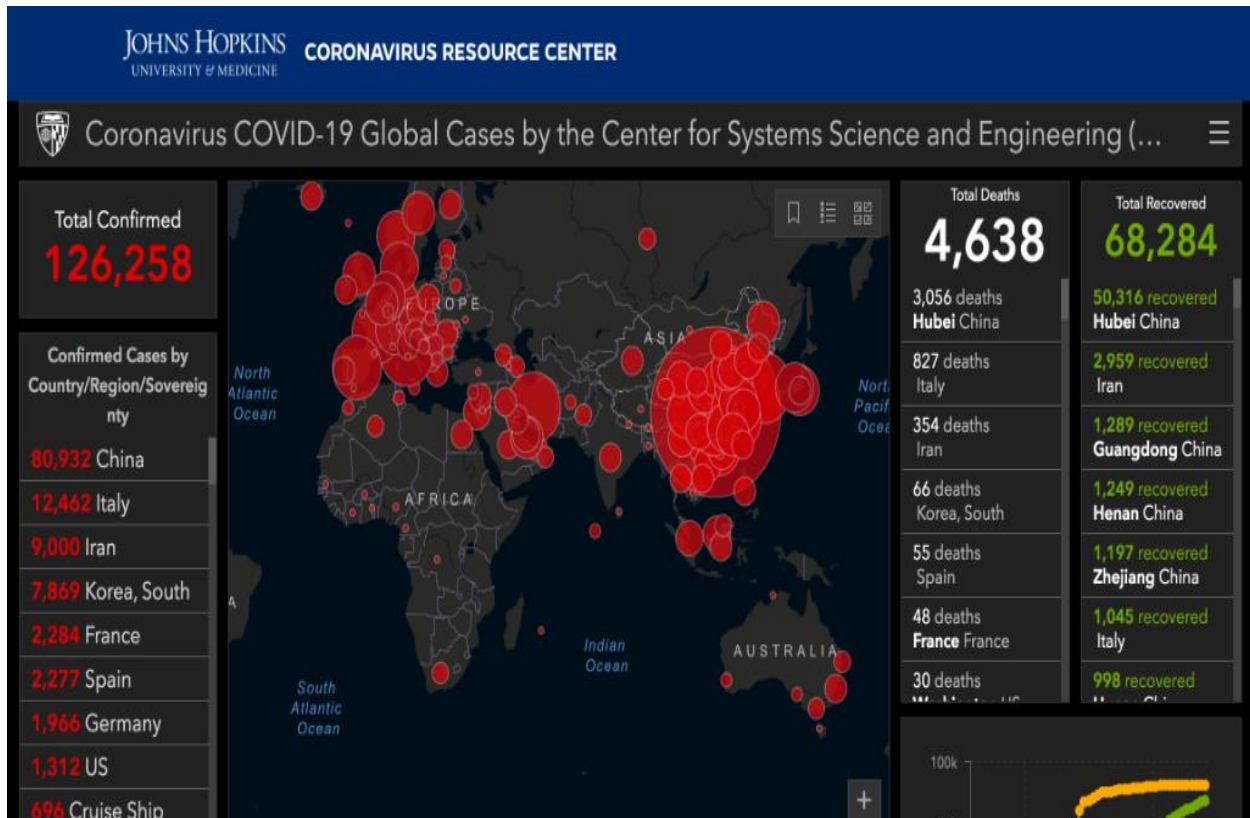


Pandemic Panic may be more dangerous than the Virus



You can't stop global fear of a pandemic - but you can boost your immunity with proven psychological strategy

By Dwight Bain 03.13.2020

Coronavirus is a real disease. It can kill you. You don't have to speed the process with what is called '*pandemic panic*'.

Fact - COVID-19 is being tracked globally and in over half of states, with the highest concentration in New York, Washington, Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, Rhode Island, Oregon and Wisconsin. Over 1300 people have been diagnosed with the disease in the United States, and over forty have died. (*as of this writing*)

Fiction – we are all going to die.

People are terrified if corona virus, "***Disease X***" as some call it, might become like the Spanish Flu pandemic which killed 50 million 100 years ago. COVID-19 is on the news continually and in daily conversations at work, school, church, social media and with neighbors. Travel bans are in place, major conferences, concerts and events shut down, school are closing, the NBA cancelled their season, so did NHL and NCAA/March Madness. Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson are in quarantine, Walt Disney World, Disneyland, Universal Studios, Sea World, Cruise Lines and major conferences like SXSW are closed or cancelled.

Blocking large groups of people from the risk of infection is socially responsible but cancelling a can still cause tremendous feelings of fear.

What next?

A viral disease has gone viral, and not in a good way.

Fiction is the problem fueling '*pandemic panic*.' Reading gossip on the Internet or conversations with coworkers about rumors can ramp up

panic. In the absence of information people tend to make things up from their own fears and biases.

Thankfully there are proven safety steps to protect you and your family physically, (*outlined from www.CDC.gov below*), but to aggressively stop the virus start with the psychological. Start by managing the feelings.

Stress will shatter your immunity system.



Stop talking only about the illness and stop living in constant fear. It is a real disease, it is a dangerous disease, but it is made **worse with worry**. The more you stress the weaker your body becomes and the greater risk you are.

America's best-known psychiatrist, Dr. Daniel Amen says, "Freaking out about a potential pandemic raises stress levels, which actually hurts your immune system and makes you more vulnerable to infections."

Want to supercharge your immunity system? Focus on positivity over fear. The more you laugh, the more you meditate on scripture, the more you practice diaphragmatic breathing, the more you pray – the stronger your immunity grows. Breathe. Trust. Believe. That's how to increase faith over fear.

Dr. Mehmet Oz was asked how to address chronic fears about this global disease on NBC's Today show. His advice was practical. "Practice good sleep hygiene, exercise and try to mediate. Meditation can help to reduce stress on your immune system. Consider adding vitamin D, C, zinc and elderberry supplements, as well as loading up on healthy fruits and vegetables. Easy to do in my matcha green tea smoothie," (*his recipes are available at www.today.com*)

He also noted people are asking if they should avoid going out in public due to the corona virus, and he urged people toward common sense.

"Live your life," he said. "Do not live your life with fear. Live it with joy and kindness."



Should you panic?

"No", says US Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams, listen to his words of caution, - "I want folks to understand that we knew this was coming, we told folks that this was going to happen and it is why we've been preaching preparedness from the very start. Caution is appropriate. Preparedness is appropriate. Panic is not."

To run to CVS or Walgreens to stock up on face masks won't help either according to CDC.gov, the nation's website for all things health related.

Dr. Jerome Adams even posted on @Twitter “Stop buying masks. They could actually increase your coronavirus risk”.

So what will help you or your loved ones?

Talk. Talk about wellness instead of illness.

Talk about how to face cold and flu season with a fact-based approach, instead of operating out of fear. Talk about how every single day matters, and how to make every single day count by practicing good physical and mental health. Talk about your love for one another and how you will care for one another no matter what happens. Talk about family and faith and love and laughter – not fear. Fear weakens. Faith builds.

Talk in healing community, since immunity is boosted through community. Let me say that again. ***Immunity is boosted through community*** – small groups of safe people who can talk about anything have stronger immunity systems and experience greater meaning in life. *(see fascinating research on how being involved in a healthy community can strengthen your immunity system and prolong your life in Harvard researcher Robert Putnam’s book, “Bowling Alone”).*

There are five categories of health and wellness. These are the elements that keep our human body protected by a magnificent immunity system and flowing with health.

Combined, these categories can keep you and your loved ones safe from disease as you practice the basics of physical health for strength including sleep, nutrition, hydration, exercise, hygiene and deep breathing.

Breathing in while counting blessings is a good way to eliminate the fear of a virus. Physical wellness then adding positive coping skills in the other areas that boost immunity - emotional, relational, behavioral and spiritual.



Once you feel empowered and strong you can go ‘viral’ by sharing with everyone you know on how to achieve mental wellness and psychological strength. Shift from living in fear to living in faith by living a life of inner strength. Meditate on the ancient scripture which carried millions of people through the Spanish Flu a hundred years ago, *“Whenever I am afraid I will trust in you.” (Psalm 56:3)*

Breathe in faith – exhale fear.

Breathe in blessings – exhale panic.

Breathe in wellness for you and those you love with these proven measures to boost immunity, then as an act of kindness to others trapped in fear.

The way to shatter pandemic panic is by building inner peace.
Pass it on.

Supercharge your Immunity with these practical steps

Physical:

- Sleep, (7-9 hours)
- Sleep rituals- Same time to wake up and go to bed
- Predictable daily schedule
- Healthy Diet with Regular mealtimes
- Hydration throughout day
- Nutritional supplements
- Low impact exercise
- Yoga/Pilates/Stretching
- Deep breathing
- Relaxation routines/massage or energizing naps
- Regular physical checkups, including blood work
- Medication, (*as prescribed by your physician*)

Emotional:

- Esteem building exercises, especially with photos or images
- Laughter/Fun/Playtime
- Face anger, anxiety and apathy directly
- Journal out negative emotions
- Let go of painful memories

- Say “NO” to bad habits
- Talk through issues to get through issues
- Identify and process hurtful emotions
- Write letters to vent out disappointment or regret, *(then tear them up- this is to free you – not start a fight on FB!)*



Relational:

- Face relationship issues
- Voice your needs to others
- Confront conflict directly
- Connect with friends/family
- Share your burdens with others
- Join a support group
- Utilize counseling supports
- Join a hobby group which involves others

- Say “NO” to manipulative behavior
- Hugs/affection, (*from pets or people*)
- Learn the love language of those close to you and let them know your needs as well

Behavioral:

- Daily planning time
- Utilize organizational planners
- Short term goals
- Daily hobbies for enjoyment
- Creative activities for relaxation
- Develop victory list of accomplishments
- Create a bucket list of lifetime goals
- Reading for personal development
- “Pay it forward” to do good for others
- Learn something new everyday
- Take on new challenges
- Leave work stress at work
- Take a training course to gain new knowledge and skills

Spiritual:

- Reading for inspiration
- Meditation
- Listen to inspirational music
- Volunteer to help others
- Forgive those who have wronged you and forgive yourself
- Attend spiritual development classes to deepen your soul
- Attend inspirational services
- Make prayer a regular part of your day
- Memorize scriptures to inspire and develop your mind

- Remember, “*Things come to pass – not stay*”
- Re-create spiritual peace in quiet places
- Build spiritual strength through meaningful experiences
- Attend prayer vigils to experience greater community connection
- Observe a day of rest
- Get in touch with nature
- Visit a bike trail, park, lake, beach or hike a mountain trail

CDC.gov Medical Prevention and Treatment of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.

- CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
-

For more to keep your family physically and medically safe visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

or to find trusted information on the spread of the virus access the active link of COVID-19 cases at the John Hopkins University medical website.

DO NOT DOWNLOAD look-a-likes of the JHU website... those are spam. Here is the actual link, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> or if unsure simply visit www.CDC.gov since managing COVID/19 is challenging enough without cyber attacks.



Dwight Bain is an author on managing crisis to create positive change who lives in Orlando with his wife, two kids and four cats.

*Follow him across all social media
@DwightBain*

