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## **Coping with the Covid-19 Crisis**

This is such a surreal and unfamiliar time for all of us. We are now faced with accepting and adjusting to such massive and sudden changes occurring in efforts to control the coronavirus. All of us are stressed, including those persons not able to work because of the shutdown of businesses, the persons who are still being called upon to deliver much needed services, and the medical and mental health providers who are trying to keep themselves healthy as they deal with so many people who are suffering. All of us have had our daily routines and familiar ways of conducting our lives turned upside down. This is most unsettling and can certainly cause people to experience increased fear, anxiety, perhaps panic, and feelings of depression and disengagement. However, we can actually do many things to prevent these distressing emotions from controlling and disrupting our lives. The following ideas are my suggestions for constructive ways of coping during these uncertain and stressful times:

1. Make conscientious efforts to maintain your physical health and to abide by the recommendations of the scientific and medical experts about hand hygiene and temporarily isolating and social distancing. Be as patient as possible.
2. Try to discipline yourselves to not catastrophize or think of worst case scenarios. We must be realistic and accept the truth about the new circumstances as they exist, but to worry excessively about the negative things that might happen will only cause more distress. Cease asking all “What if...?” questions. Keep fully informed about the circumstances you are in, but consider limiting the time you spend listening to news programs or reading materials which overemphasize the negativity of what you are going through.
3. Focus on maintaining as many of your healthy routines and behaviors as possible, and dwell upon the aspects of your present lives that you can control. Develop a constructive plan of action and follow through with implementing this plan. Use your fine mind and creativity to develop new routines and new ways to have fun. Be flexible.
4. Practice finding the good in the present circumstances. Cease dwelling upon the unfairnesses. Use this time to think of opportunities that you may not have had time to explore when working so hard. Or, if you are still employed, express your gratitude for being able to work and still provide for your loved ones.
5. Reach out to your loved ones daily and tell them how much you love them and how grateful you are to have them in your life.
6. Do physical exercise each day to strengthen your body and mind.
7. Listen to music or read materials calm you and inspire your hope. Read inspirational writings of others who have survived challenging and daunting circumstances. Share your increased hope with others.
8. Pursue humor and remember that laughing heartily washes away the worries and anxieties.
9. Focus especially on reassuring yourself that you have the courage and strength to do what is necessary for you and your loved ones to survive these stressful circumstances. Reassure yourself that you are not alone, that we are all in this together, and that we must work together effectively, like never before, to overcome this pandemic.

10. Seek support from family members, friends, and others in your efforts to cope. Stay connected with loved ones.
11. Give what you can to others, altruistically, with no expectation of anything in return. Now is not the time to give up. Rather, it is the time to give more.
12. Above all, dwell upon your abundant blessings and frequently express gratitude throughout each day.