

An effective way to deal with anxiety: Mental housekeeping and other practical tips

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Everyone is born with the desire to be happy. However, so many experience the opposite and have no idea where and how to find that source of happiness.

My husband and I are retired now and live a relatively comfortable life in Santiago, Dominican Republic. We don't have to worry about our lives. However, every time I think of our beautiful grandchildren, my chest tightens, and I cannot help but wonder what kind of life they will have? Hopefully, they will grow up in a peaceful world.

Changes are happening ever more rapidly. How can anyone keep up?

It is more important than ever to be rooted or anchored in something permanent, while life pushes us around. No one can escape that. How can we make sure that our children and grandchildren will develop the strength, confidence, and resilience to navigate life successfully?

Eventually, we will get past this worldwide pandemic. I am sure that positive things are coming from this crisis too. That always happens, even though it is hard to imagine during such a challenging time. Is there a way to create a life that we can enjoy even amid all these difficulties?

YES -- it is possible! We must realize that the source of peace, love, beauty and goodness is not out there but inside us. We just need to learn how to access this inner well.

This is what I want to talk about here. Most of us spend lots of time taking care of ourselves externally -- our appearance, home, etc. -- but are not accustomed to doing mental housekeeping. If we get into the habit, for example, to intentionally feel grateful even for the smallest things, we will cleanse our minds. Some time ago, I read in one of my books the phrase "bring joy." Don't look for joy but bring and create joy!

We can make our surroundings conducive to enjoyment. We need to keep consuming the news to a minimum. I have become very selective in what I read and watch, especially on social media. I don't completely cut it off, but create boundaries and criteria of "what, why, where, and when" -- doing that is very refreshing! I select the source of any information very carefully. I am happy to say that I have finally succeeded in forming some great habits and enjoying life. This is different from the idea of retreating and cutting ourselves off from the world; instead, we establish healthy boundaries that allow us to live our lives to the fullest, even in this challenging environment.

When our mind is clear, we can see solutions and opportunities we would not see otherwise. Once we get on this positive mental trajectory, we will encounter so many good things: valuable pieces of information,

ideas, and, most of all, finding ourselves to be a source of hope and encouragement to others.

A few years ago, I went through a difficult period in my life -- I could not see the light at the end of the tunnel. It was truly horrible to have to live with that state of mind. Then I found a new way of life. My circumstances have not changed but instead have gotten worse due to the Covid pandemic. I do have difficult days, of course, but I can now get back to a safe place in my mind very quickly.

Here are the determining factors to ensure such an amazing life:

Become aware of our attitude towards whatever issue may arise and adjust our attitude as needed. I call this mental housekeeping. A right attitude does not cost anything, and it makes a world of difference in the quality of our life.

Keep our mental environment as clean as possible. How much and for what purpose do I watch a movie or show, listen to videos, or read books and articles? I am shocked by how often something I read or watch does not provide pleasure or purpose and is only a distraction that causes agitation, worry, and so on. Now I can very quickly stop and look for something better. And there is a lot of great stuff on the Internet once we have more clarity and know what to look for!

Know what makes us truly happy. For me, it is that I, at the end of the day, have accomplished what I set out to do. It may not be much -- for example, fulfilling promises to others. I have learned to pace myself and make realistic plans. If I try to accomplish too much and cannot do it, it will cause unnecessary stress and conflict.

Stay focused. Once you decide on what is most important and keep working towards this goal, you will encounter many sources that provide you with the right tools when you need them.

Currently we find ourselves in uncharted waters. I am confident that in a few years, when we look back, we will see how we have come closer together as a worldwide community. We will have discovered significant changes that benefit humanity. In the meantime, we have to do our best to remain calm and practice mental housekeeping. Never lose [hope!](#) Finally, as an uplifting read, I recommend the book "[A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity.](#)"