

Making Our Faith Bigger Than Our Fear

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In uncertain times, such as the current protracted global COVID-19 crisis, fears and anxieties can run rampant. And no wonder! Not knowing what the future holds, our anxieties around what lies ahead may leave us doubting our ability to cope. Let's explore how we can strive to make our faith in our ability to handle whatever comes our way bigger than our fear of what the future may hold.

In challenging times, our world can change in ways we could never imagine. When this happens, we can get thrown off course, and lose faith in our ability to cope with what the future may bring. At times of great difficulty, fear and anxiety can show up. We then begin to doubt everything in our life, our skills, our work, social situations, and our relationships with other people. Our fears and anxieties can escalate as we forecast worst-case scenarios and imagine how we may not be able to handle future events and situations.

When we lose faith in ourselves, our fears and anxieties creep in and cloud our judgment.

Fear, anxiety, self-doubt

It's important to pause and reflect on the self-doubt that underlies anxiety when fear begins to build. Are there negative belief systems at play, thoughts, and feelings of doubt in our ability to manage things when challenges arise? What is at the root of this self-doubt?

Life after trauma

As a clinical psychologist specializing in treating trauma, for over 25 years I have worked with countless individuals who have survived major traumatic events and situations. These patients often tell me that if they had seen a movie or read a book that told the story of their trauma, they would not believe that anyone could survive such an experience. And yet, there they

are, survivors of unimaginably traumatic events and situations, working with me face to face, having handled even the harshest events imaginable.

My trauma patients share one thing in common: they did the best that they could under extreme circumstances. Life handed them unforeseeable and unimaginable difficult situations, and they did their best. They survived and sought in supports to help them heal and move beyond their trauma.

The certainty of uncertainty

Life is a series of experiences. And the only certainty in life is uncertainty, and change. Some changes are good, like a new job opportunity, and others bad or even tragic, like a devastating accident, violence, major illness, or the death of a loved one.

You are here to live your life fully, rather than in a state of dread and fear. You need to have faith in your ability to handle whatever comes your way. Remember, to date you have handled everything that life has sent your way. You did the best you could in the moment, using the skills, abilities, and resources available to you at the time. You lived, as the saying goes, to tell the tale, even if you feel you have not managed every situation with the utmost class, dignity, and poise. You lived and you learned. And you'll continue to grow the skills, abilities, and attributes to handle whatever comes your way.

Navigating fear and anxiety

In the lyric of his song, *Instant Karma*, John Lennon wrote: “*Why on earth are we here? Surely not to live in pain and fear.*” When the going gets tough and self-doubt creeps in, it is important to focus on bringing in compassion for yourself, by adding in self-care to stay connected with yourself and calm your fears and anxieties. Make your faith bigger than your fear by taking charge of what you can control; your environment, your choices, and your peace of mind.

Eat quality food that nourishes your body rather than binging on high-calorie ‘junk’ foods. Avoid numbing substances and behaviors, like alcohol, recreational drugs, over-eating. Avoid digging a financial hole through binge shopping, or online gambling. Curb the hyper vigilance that fuels negative ruminations by limiting exposure to the 24-hour news cycle and incessant engagement on social media. Make sure to get a good night’s sleep. Take the time in nature to calm your mind and move your body. Share your burden with the people in your life, and lend a helping hand to others who may be struggling.

Develop a meditation practice of some kind — whether for you it means sitting in silence or losing yourself in the moment doing something you love. Remind yourself that the future is just your imagination, so why not imagine the good rather than forecasting feared worst-case scenarios?

Stay connected to yourself

Most importantly, stay connected to yourself. Surround yourself with positive people and reinforce positive self-messaging. Remind yourself that so far you have been capable of handling whatever came your way. Make time to connect with your inner strength. Reflect on your life so far. Acknowledge that you really *have* handled everything that came your way, even when what came your way was challenging or difficult. Honor yourself for how much you are evolving into a higher and a better version of yourself. These strategies cement your ability to stay present and focused on the goal of making your faith bigger than your fear.

Make your faith bigger than your fear

Take charge of the messages you tell yourself

Acknowledge that you have handled your life so far

Bring in quality self-care. Take care of yourself, mind, body, and spirit

Limit your exposure to negative news cycles, social media, and toxic people

Develop a meditation practice, whether that means sitting in silence or immersing yourself in an activity or pastime that you enjoy

Choose faith in yourself over your fear of the unknown.

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About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker, columnist and advocate in the field of mental health and wellness. Her upcoming book, A Deeper Wellness, will be available for pre-sales in February, 2022, and her in-depth online self-help program, A Deeper Wellness, offers powerful mental health guidance, life skills, knowledge and healing, anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/> <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>

