

THRIVING (NOT JUST SURVIVING) THROUGH UNCERTAINTY

No one will get through life unscathed. We will all face turmoil, stress, hardships, and challenges. This whole corona madness is one of those times, but rather than being alone, we face the challenge together. Here are some tips to navigate the uncertainty that lies ahead and how to use this time to productively better ourselves and the people around us. Each tip also includes a challenge, which I encourage you all to do.

Slow Down

“Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.” -Ferris Bueller

Here's the thing, life moves fast during the season. There's a lot of travel, training, back-to-backs, and then trying to squeeze things in when you're home. You have routines, you find a rhythm, but there's always something going on. Use this time to pause. Start every morning with some meditation (the [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#) apps are great), some breathing exercise ([Heartmath](#) can help train you), or some yoga. Learn to chill.

Challenge 1: Sit for 1 minute in total silence. Quiet your mind. If you have a thought, let it pass, but start your 1 minute timer over.

Challenge 2: Go for a walk but only focus on the present and things outside of you. Notice the sounds of the birds. The feel of your significant other or your child's hand as you walk with them. The feeling of your socks and the sound of your feet hitting the sidewalk. Don't think, just notice and be aware.

Challenge 3: Breathe, slowly and deeply for 3 minutes. See if you can decrease the amount of breaths you need to take in those 3 minutes by inhaling and exhaling slower each time.

Be Productive

I know this seems the opposite of slowing down, but being productive doesn't mean speeding up, it just means getting things done. Each day, do something to make yourself, your future, or others better.

Challenge: Pick 1 thing to do each day that fulfills these categories:

- 1) **sport** (ex: work out, skills training, watch video)
- 2) **home** (ex: get rid of old clothes, clean the bathroom)
- 3) **friends/family/community** (ex: call someone you haven't spoken to for a while, ask your significant other how you can help them, donate to a charity)
- 4) **self** (ex: sign up for an on-line class, read an interesting article, get a haircut)

Show Gratitude

In challenging times, it's easier to think about ourselves, but it's actually proven that showing gratitude helps relieve stress.

Challenge 1: Once a week for the next 4 weeks, write a letter (or email if you must) to someone who you haven't thanked for awhile.

Challenge 2: Buy a gratitude journal or search online for gratitude prompts and at the end of each day write down something you are grateful for.

Stay Connected

“Social distancing” doesn't mean solitary confinement. Reach out to teammates and see what they are up to. Facetime your grandmother. Dare I say it, have an Xbox tournament. Don't be a hermit, talk (not text) to others.

Challenge 1: Print out the current roster, coaches included. Choose at least one teammate or coach a day to call. By the end of April, you should have crossed a lot of people off the list. Bonus points for calling staff too-they miss you!

Challenge 2: Buy a book and read it. Write a note inside about what you learned. Send it to a teammate, who will then do the same. See if the book makes it through everyone.

Laugh and Have Fun

Laughter will always be the best medicine. Enjoy yourself. Be silly. Call someone who makes you laugh. Have a dance party. Tik tok your heart out!

Challenge 1: Binge watch a funny show (“Schitt’s Creek” anyone?) or some classic movies (“Spaceballs”, “Three Amigos”)

Challenge 2: Before lunch each day, start laughing, for absolutely no reason. Just laugh for one minute straight. Each day, try to make your laugh sound different. Bonus points if you get someone else to laugh at you.

Three Minutes of Venting

You might have any number of negative emotions right now and that's ok. You don't have to pretend they don't exist. Allow yourself a set amount of time to feel bad, confused, nervous, to vent, whatever, but after that time recognize a lot of what is happening is out of your control and ruminating on it doesn't do a lot of good.

Challenge: If something is stressing you out but you don't control it, write it down and put it in a box and mentally and physically put it to the side.

Summary: Control What You Can

Remain as positively focused as you can right now and focus on the things you control. What you do control is yourself, your actions, and your attitude. When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. When life gives you corona, grab some limes.

Make it Great!

Dr. Aimee C. Kimball is the Owner and Lead Peak Performance Specialist at KPEX Consulting. She is the Director of Player and Team Development for the New Jersey Devils organization, helping the players cultivate a successful mentality and the team develop a championship culture. Dr. Kimball works to assist others in enhancing their performance, balancing sport and life demands, and developing the competitive edge to succeed. (412-404-8878; info@KPEXconsulting.com; www.KPEXconsulting.com)