

How to Eat and Live Well During High Anxiety Times



FLOW



- Breathing exercise by Katie Gray
- Why we feel out of control around food now
- An unnecessary layer of anxiety we can eliminate with this mindset shift (and the hidden "optimal conflict" growth opportunity)
- Simple and easy ideas to get back in control with food, anxiety and our well-being

Out of control is out of choice

- Food scarcity
- Have to battle COVID
- Have to stay healthy
- Have to stay informed
- Have to social distance
- Have to stay home
- Have to work from home
- Have less work because of market uncertainty and closing of non-essential businesses
- Have more work
- Have to home school
- Have lost our routines



Less choices we have, the more we turn to food to “choose”

How To Be In Choice



- Have to's are the “what happened”, how we choose to respond is where we have agency (independent choice)
 - Can be a challenge if we still have trauma stored in our nervous system
 - Will fall into black and white, all or nothing, catastrophizing patterns (i.e. life or death, financial ruin, safe or unsafe)
- Knowing our choices can reduce anxiety and enable us post-traumatic growth from COVID-19.
 - Become aware of the battle narrative limiting our choices
 - See new choices by shifting our metrics to what's important now (our new needs)
 - Don't need to jump into “the growth” today, tomorrow or next week

Optimal Conflict for Post-Traumatic Growth

- Transform from a socialized, battle narrative to a self-authoring mindset around our bodies abilities
- Socialized mind is created from the norms based on the culture, media, family and groups (churches, medical system) we've been socialized into. Think "mainstream" or "conventional".
- Self-authoring is where we can change the narrative by co-creating a new one
 - Must be willing to challenge existing stories and truly be open to information that challenges our worldview
 - Unlearn binary thinking (black and white, all or nothing) and learn discernment
 - Unlearn what you are conditioned to pay attention to and consciously choose what works for you

Move from "I have to or must" to "I choose to"

Socialized and Self-Authoring Ideas

	Socialized (War/Battle Narrative)	Self-Authoring: What's true for you?
COVID-19 is a virus	COVID-19 is the enemy. (Germ theory fits into this narrative)	Is this virus "my enemy"? (Terrain and Germ-Terrain Duality Theory)
We need to eat	Need to gear up (i.e. eat perfectly) for battle (of our weight)	Food is part of this equation and more about what I've done over time, not in a few week span
The body requires movement	Exercise only counts if it's hard or I burn a certain amount of calories (to be a good soldier)	Expand exercise to be movement and serves my well-being goals
We have feelings	Pathologize feelings (need an enemy). Dehumanize our feelings with pharmaceuticals, food, alcohol, shopping and "be positive" pressure	All feelings are allowed Feelings aren't facts Feelings clarify and provide insight
Media exists	Media is independent Reinforces cultural narratives, need to constantly be tracking "the enemy"	What do I need to know for my and my loved ones well-being? For my community?
We have social needs	Hero's Battle Journey (individual)	Interconnectedness

See new choices



Self-Authoring questions to get safety needs met

COVID-19 is a virus

What if I don't need to "gear up"?
What is my true risk?, What is my responsibility?
Why might I be at risk? How can I prepare or change?

We need to eat

How can I eat to feel calm (i.e. decrease anxiety)?
How can I eat to sleep better?

The body requires movement

What will replenish me today?
Do I need my movement to include community, nature or time to myself?

We have feelings

Where can I express my feelings safely?
What can bring my anxiety down by 1 or 10%?

Media exists

What will change my behavior?
What news will keep me prepared, not panicked?

We have social needs

What social needs have I lost?
What sort of social contact am I learning I need?
How will I need to rework what social connection looks like?

Home

What do I need so home feels like a home?
What new routine do I need to separate life and work?
What sort of education do I want my children to receive now?

Financials

Where can I cut back?
Where can I watch and wait before catastrophizing?
How can I plan for an impending recession?

New Normal

What am I grieving?
What have I enjoyed?
What do I want to bring forward?

These answers can change minute to minute, day by day.

Signals of Safety Choices



- **Food Rx:** extra protein and fat, trouble sleeping: 1 T of nut butter (or seed butter) before bed or when you wake up in middle of night
- **Exercise:** Parasympathetic based like walking, yoga, barre, weight bearing exercises (Pilates, functional movements), ritual work-outs
- **Emotional needs:** fall apart, grieve, delight, experiment (no “right” or “wrong” way)
- **News:** Proportion of response doesn’t equal degree of threat, is this part of only feeling safe on high alert, work on “tapering”
- **Connection Needs:** nature, transparency and check-ins with who you are quarantined with, virtual social dates, be in more contact than you think you need with work

Q&A

