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Message from Honorable President

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”
~ William James

Being a professional and portraying professionalism is an aspect which calls for a conduct which of excellence, one which is not just restricted to the work arena but extends to the personal front as well. The ongoing situation, the spread of the global pandemic, and the imposed lockdown, has presented before us unprecedented situations. And these situations have in turn created hurdles and issues and impacted the normalcy of our personal and professional lives.

A genius once said and I quote, that stress occurs in a scenario when the situations at hand are not according to our expectations and we can do only so much to change them. While the existing scenario is pointing towards exactly similar situations, the need of the hour is to portray an extreme sense of professionalism and deal with not just the situation but the stress arising out of in a manner which not only curtails the negativities of the likes of stress and anxiety.

While understanding the need of the hour and our responsibility towards the nation, the ICSI and its members have rendered their support towards their fellow citizens by way of contributions to the PM Care Fund, we also understand the issues facing our stakeholders especially our members and students.

In an attempt to showcase the silver linings amongst these moments of cloudiness, the ICSI-CCGRT has developed a unique publication under the aegis of ‘Stress Management in Turbulent Times’ to provide the much-needed encouragement and motivation to our members.

I appreciate the efforts undertaken by the team ICSI-CCGRT under the guidance of CS Devendra V. Deshpande in bringing out this publication. I would also like place my acknowledgements towards the members who have contributed their articles highlighting various aspects of this contemporary topic. I am sure that their works, shall provide you with the much-needed vibes of positivity and energy to deal with this difficult situation.

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयः। सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा कश्चिं दुःखभाग्य भवेत्॥
(May all sentient beings be at peace, may no one suffer from illness.
May all see what is auspicious, may no one suffer.)

CS Ashish Garg
President
The Institute of Company Secretaries of India
Forward

The real taste of life is in its trying times. But the stress, the anxiety and the fear is something which has become an integral part of our professional and personal life. The stress and anxiety are there with every one of us may it be professional, student, employer, employee, state and the entire environment around us.

At present times, the entire universe is praying for the health and well-being of the people, yet we understand, it is not easy to stay away from the impact of this virus indirectly also. The changes in our routine, the concern for the health and anxiety of what’s next are leading to extreme level of stress for many of us.

Looking at the current scenario, we at ICSI-CCGRT made an attempt to provide an opportunity to the members to express themselves as well as those who are looking for some answer to these issues related to stress and anxiety.

We appealed the members from our fraternity to introspect and share their perspective on stress management. We are happy to receive an overwhelming response for the same in terms of articles and write-ups highlighting various aspects of stress management. In this present publication, we have collated the selected papers highlighting these perspectives. This compilation of the papers will guide and motivate others to think in positive direction and to find the solutions.

Based on the inputs and feedback from you all readers, ICSI-CCGRT will be coming out with a series of write-ups that deals with Yoga, Self-management and various other aspects of stress management.

I take this opportunity to present this first volume of e-publication and appreciate all of the members, who sent the Articles to ICSI CCGRT as well as screening committee of researchers who selected the Articles for e publication. My sincere appreciation to Dr. Trupti Karkhanis and Rakesh Goyal and team CCGRT for bringing up this series must adaptable to the present times. I also must thank the CS. Ashish Garg, President ICSI and CS. Nagaendra Rao, Vice President ICSI as well as Managing Committee Members of ICSI – CCGRT for their support and guidance.

As rightly said by Lynn Austin, ‘Smooth seas don't produce skilful sailors’, these turbulent times will shape each one of us as better human beings!

Stay Safe and Stay Home!

Sincerely

CS Devendra V. Deshpande
Chairman, CCGRT ICSI
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Today, the whole world is undergoing a pandemic situation due to spread of corona virus. This pandemic has affected human life at large across the globe and Government is taking strict measures to fight against the current situation. Of course, this has put lot of stress on the living culture of human being leading to lot of personal & economical pressure.

The generation born after 1960 is facing such situations like curfew, lockdowns and social distancing for the first time in their life. So everyone was anxious to go through such a phase with the fear of COVID-19 and its consequences. This is indirectly leading to increasing stress amongst society on account of restrictions on social and normal civilian culture and its impact on economy. Though this is a current scenario but in our everyday life also we all have stress — at work, at home, and on the road, everywhere. Sometimes, we can feel stressed because of a bad interaction with someone, too much work, or everyday hassles like getting stuck in traffic, completing business targets, health issues and what not. What is STRESS?

**STRESS- Situations That Release Emergency Signals or Stimuli**

Stress can keep you away from feeling and performing your best mentally, physically and emotionally. But no one’s life is completely stress-free. It’s important to know how to manage the stress in your life. The following simple techniques will help you to overcome your stress.

**Meditation- ‘If you cannot go Outside Go Inside’**

One has said it very well that ‘If you cannot go Outside Go Inside. Yes, Meditation has become one of the most popular ways to relieve stress among people. This traditional practice, which can be worked out in many forms, also in combination with the spiritual practices, can be used in several ways.
By learning to calm your body and mind, you reduce your physical and emotional stress. It makes you feel better, refreshed, and ready to face the challenges of your day with a balanced attitude. With regular practice over weeks or months, you can experience even greater benefits. Yoga and other physical exercises can also quick-fix your stress and works as reliever to help you reverse your body’s stress response and keep you relax.

Friendship with your mind makes you connect to yourself.

**The Power of Music**

Music can have a profound effect on both the mind and the body. Faster music can make you feel more alert and concentrate better. Upbeat music can make you feel more optimistic and positive about life. A slower tempo can quiet your mind and relax your muscles, making you feel soothed while releasing the stress of the day. Music is effective for relaxation and stress management.

One of the great benefits of music as a stress reliever is that it can be used while you conduct your regular activities so it really doesn’t take time away from your busy schedule. Music provides a wonderful backdrop to your life.

**Hobbies for Stress Relief**

Hobbies are often thought of as activities for people who lead quiet, relaxed lives, but people with full busy, even stressful lives may need hobbies more than the average person. Hobbies bring many benefits that usually make them more than worth the time they require. Hobbies provide a slice of work-free and free me-time in your busy schedules leading to relaxed life. Hobbies like cooking, reading, gardening, art, painting, dancing, playing your favorite musical instrument provide a nice source of eustress, rather the healthy kind of stress that we all need to remain feeling excited about life.

**Spirituality**

Many people find that having a spiritual or religious practice helps with stress management. Having a spiritual side can give a person a boost by allowing reliance on God or a higher power and surrendering worries and troubles, rather than holding on so tightly to stress. With a spiritual practice you'll find that no matter how tough it gets you’re not alone. Practicing spirituality can give us a quiet respite from stress. We live in such a country that we have bundle of festivals which are meant to rejoice special moments and emotions in our lives with our loved ones. They play an important role to add structure to our social lives, and connect us with our families and roots which keeps us stress free.

There are many more ways to manage your stress and lead to a happier lifestyle. Stress-management techniques include relaxation techniques, time-management skills, counselling or group therapy hence maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle.
An important goal for those under stress is the management of life stresses. Elimination of stress is unrealistic, since stress is a part of normal life. It's impossible to completely eliminate stress, and it would not be advisable to do so. Instead, we can learn relaxation techniques and other methods to manage stress so that we have control over our stress and its effects on our physical and mental health.

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another”

- William James
COVID-19: Stress Management in Turbulent Times
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These can be difficult times for all of us as we hear about spread of COVID-19 from all over the world, through television, social media, newspapers, family and friends and other sources. The most common emotion faced by all is Fear. It makes us anxious, panicky and can even possibly make us think, say or do things that we might not consider appropriate under normal circumstances.

Understanding the importance of Lockdown

Lockdown is meant to prevent the spread of infection from one person to another, to protect ourselves and others. This means, not stepping out of the house except for buying necessities, reducing the number of trips outside, and ideally only a single, healthy family member making the trips when absolutely necessary. If there is anyone in the house who is very sick and may need to get medical help, you must be aware of the health facility nearest to you.

Handling Social isolation

Staying at home can be quite nice for some time, but can also be boring and restricting.
Here are some ways to keep positive and cheerful.

1. Be busy. Have a regular schedule. Help in doing some of the work at home.
2. Distract yourself from negative emotions by listening to music, reading, watching an entertaining programme on television. If you had old hobbies like painting, gardening or stitching, go back to them. Rediscover your hobbies.
3. Eat well and drink plenty of fluids.
4. Be physically active. Do simple indoor exercises that will keep you fit and feeling fit.
5. Sharing is caring. Understand if someone around you needs advice, food or other essentials. Be willing to share.
6. Elderly people may feel confused, lost and need help. Offer them help by getting them what they need, their medicines, daily needs etc.
7. If you have children at home, keep them busy by allowing them to help in the household chores - make them feel responsible and
acquire new skills.

Focus on facts, reject rumours and theories

1. Knowledge is power; the more you know about a certain issue, the less fearful you may feel. Make sure to access and believe only the most reliable sources of information for self-protection.
2. Do not follow sensational news or social media posts which may impact your mental state. Do not spread or share any unverified news or information further.
3. Do not keep discussing all the time about who got sick and how. Instead learn about who got well and recovered.
4. Stick to the known advice—hand hygiene and keeping a physical distance from others. It is being careful about yourself, and also about care of others.
5. A common cold is not Corona infection. The symptoms of Corona have been well described. Follow etiquette of sneezing, coughing, avoiding spitting in public places etc.
6. In most people, the Corona infection causes mild symptoms and the person only needs to follow social distancing till he/she stops being infective, usually 2 weeks. Mild infection does not require a person to be admitted in hospital. Only people who have breathing difficulties need to be in hospital. Most people recover.

Handling emotional problems

1. At times of anxiety, practice breathing slowly for a few minutes. Try and distance the thoughts that are making you anxious. Think of something calm and serene, and slow down your mind.
2. When feeling angry and irritated, calming your mind, counting back from 10 to 1, distracting yourself helps.
3. Even when feeling afraid, deal with it by asking yourself:
   a. What is under my control?
   b. Am I unnecessarily worrying about the worst thing that can happen?
   c. When I have been stressed in the past, how have I managed?
   d. What are the things I can do to help myself and be positive?
4. Feeling lonely or sad is also quite common. Stay connected with others. Communication can help you to connect with family and friends. Call up people whom you haven’t spoken to and surprise them. Discuss happy events, common interests, exchange cooking tips, share music.
5. If any of these emotions persist continuously for several days, despite your trying to get out of it, talk about it with someone. If the feelings worsen, a person may feel helpless, hopeless and feel that life is not worth living. If that happens, for advice from a mental health professional or contact your doctor / mental health professional.

What is NOT advisable

1. Avoid tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Use of tobacco or alcohol or other drugs to cope with emotions or boredom can worsen physical, mental health and reduce immunity. People who already have a substance use problem may require professional help, especially when they feel low in mood or stressed.
2. Do not shun or judge people with a Covid infection. While you need to maintain a physical distance and keep yourself safe to prevent such infection, remember they need care and concern. If you know someone who might have the infection, tell them about precautions, and how to get medical assistance, if required.
3. If you happen to get infected with Corona, remember most people get better. Do not panic. Practice self-isolation and take medications that are advised.

Emotional issues after recovery

1. While it is wonderful to recover from Covid infection, you may actually face stress after you have recovered and wish to get back into the community. You may have fear about your loved ones falling ill.
2. People who do not understand the illness well may actually keep you at a distance, which is also very stressful and isolating.
3. You may experience feelings of guilt that you were not able to work or care for others. This may lead to feelings of depression, helplessness or frustration.
4. Use the ways mentioned earlier to deal with these feelings. Share your positive story that it is possible to recover from COVID infection.

Recognise mental health problems in your near and dear ones

Just as you can recognise your own mental health problems, be sensitive to such problems in your near and dear ones, which may include:
1. Changes in sleep patterns
2. Difficulty in sleeping and concentrating
3. Worsening of health problems
4. Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs

Be supportive to them. If the problems persist, please contact to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Persons with mental illness

Persons who had previous mental illness may face newer challenges during self- isolation or Covid infection:

1. They would also have the same fears and stress as others which may worsen their previous mental health condition
2. Social isolation may make them more withdrawn, moody and irritable
3. They may not seek/ get easy access to medicines and counseling.

Help and support is vital for persons with mental illness from their families and other care givers, in addition to regular taking of prescribed medication, a regular daily routine, keeping engaged and positive.

*Remember, good mental status in the difficult times may win you the battle more easily!*
"You have power over your mind—not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."—Marcus Aurelius

Introduction:
The earth today is victim of economical, global and psychological stress caused by the ongoing Covid 2019 (Corona Virus Disease). It affected and put a halt to the human life of almost 210 nations and more than 2.49 million people till now. The pandemic had aroused a question whether we are capable of facing and fighting the disaster stress. The answer is yes as it is the power of human mind which can build strength to face any huge storm any critical situation. The technology, communication, medical, defence and different areas of human development had somewhere stopped the spread of pandemic by quarantine, testing, movement of crowd, etc. However, the sole efforts of emergency streams are not enough every citizen of every nation is bound and capable to take efforts to reduce the pandemic.

"The mind is its own place and in itself, can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven." —John Milton

What’s Stress?
Simply stress is a strain, force or pressure. As per Cambridge dictionary stress is a great worry caused by a difficult situation. According to Hans Selye, a pioneer researcher in stress reaction, “stress is the human response to changes that occur as a part of daily living.” Stress has a physical and emotional effect on us, and it can create positive or negative feelings. “Stress comes from any situation or circumstance that requires behavioral adjustment. Any change, either good or bad, is stressful, and whether it’s a positive or negative change, the physiological response is the same” - (Lazarus, 2000).

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.” William James

Types of Stress:
1. Acute Stress:
Stressors defined as acute are the things that hamper your plans or your day: transportation problems that make you late to work, a missed client deadline, an unexpected meeting with your family doctor. Acute stress happens to everyone and tends to be manageable as its for short time period.
2. **Episodic Acute Stress:**
Episodic acute stress is characterized by intense reaction to everything: the classic type personality, an excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience, and having a sense of time urgency. Episodic acute stress involves worry that a disaster is going to happen any minute and reach to you.

3. **Chronic Stress:**
Chronic stress is the long-standing stress that wears people down. It can be associated with such problems as poverty, illness, dysfunctional families, unemployment or work dissatisfaction.

4. **Traumatic Stress:**
Traumatic stress occurs when a person has had a traumatic experience such as being in an accident, witnessing a terrible crime, losing a job, or having extreme financial problems in keeping the farm as a result of a drought or any natural or human disaster. Individuals experience extreme emotional responses.
The shock can make you dazed and the denial is the coping mechanism – putting off feeling the intensity of the experience.

**Effects of Stress:**

“*It’s not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it.*” – **Hans Selye**

Stress is a natural physical and mental reaction to life experiences. Everyone expresses stress from time to time. Anything from everyday responsibilities like work and family to serious life events such as a new diagnosis, war, or the death of a loved one can trigger stress. Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones that increase your heart and breathing rates and ready your muscles to respond.

You’re sitting in traffic, late for an important meeting, watching the minutes tick away. You are sitting in home cannot do shopping, can’t enjoy weekends in movies, holidays; even social gatherings, parties cancelled, no plans working. A tiny control tower in your brain, decides to send out the order: Send in the stress hormones! These stress hormones are the same ones that trigger your body’s “fight or flight” response. Your heart races, your breath quickens, and your muscles ready for action. This response was designed to protect your body in an emergency by preparing you to react quickly. But when the stress response keeps firing, day after day, it could put your health at serious risk.

**Common Reactions:**
- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety about the future
• Disorientation;
• Feelings: unpredictable, intense mood swings; anxiety; nervousness; depression
• Thoughts: flashbacks; vivid memory of event; inability to concentrate
• Physical reactions: rapid heartbeat; sweating; headache, nausea, chest pain, general pain, and digestive problems
• Relationship problems: strained, frequent arguments with family members and/or coworkers; withdrawal and isolation from group activity

Yet if your stress response doesn't stop firing, and these stress levels stay elevated far longer than is necessary for survival, it can take a toll on your health and affect:
• Central nervous and endocrine systems- irritability, anxiety, depression, headaches, insomnia
• Respiratory and cardiovascular systems – heart attack, blood pressures, heart strokes
• Digestive system- nausea, vomiting, or a stomach-ache.
• Muscular system- Tight muscles cause headaches, back and shoulder pain, and body aches.
• Reproductive system

How to cope with individual stress:

What can we do to cope with stress in our lives? “Coping reflects thinking, feeling, or acting so as to preserve a satisfied psychological state when it is threatened. Coping is typically not a single response, but a series of responses, initiated and repeated as necessary to handling the remaining, continuing, or transformed nature of the stressor.
Focus on the things you can control:

The fundamental rule to reduce personal stress is to focus on below points which implies SELF RESPECT:

1. Set goals: plan any goal to complete reading a book, painting a portrait, learning music, dance or whichever hobby
2. Exercise: Stay fit as the sitting continuously at same place can affect body movement
3. Love yourself: Meditate and be calm at yourself
4. Focus on activity: Activity including family games, time for children, cooperate in recipes. Even our ICSI is giving the activities such as attending webinars, competitions, writings, etc.
5. Rest and relax: Take sleep on time
6. Eat right: Healthy diet is important to stay immune and fit
7. Smile: One smile to stranger can make you smile. Share your smile as much as you can.
8. Portray positive: Concentrate on the positives of life
9. Enjoy life: Enjoy time with parents, children, contact everyone through video, chatting, emails
10. Care for others: Care for everyone in your society, disabled, anyone who needs help
11. Tell yourself you can do this
   “Doing something that is productive is a great way to alleviate emotional stress. Get your mind doing something that is productive.” - Ziggy Marley

Ways to face stress:
Stress affects each person differently. Some people may get headaches or stomachaches, while others may lose sleep or get depressed or angry. People under constant stress may also get sick a lot. Managing stress is important to staying healthy.

It’s impossible to completely get rid of stress. The goal of stress management is to identify your stressors, which are the things that cause you the most problems or demand the most of your energy. In doing so, you can overcome the negative stress those things induce. Everyone reacts differently to stressful time. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people and the society you live-in.

People who may respond more to the crisis includes:
   1. Older people and people already suffering from illness
   2. Children’s and teenagers
   3. People helping others including doctors, healthcare workers, first responders, security
   4. People coping with mental health conditions

We’re in a time of massive upheaval. There are so many things outside of our control, including how long the pandemic lasts, how other people behave, and what’s going to happen in our communities. That’s a tough thing to accept, and so many of us respond by endlessly searching the Internet for answers and thinking over all the different scenarios that might happen. But as long as we’re focusing on questions with unknowable answers and circumstances outside of our personal control, this strategy will get us nowhere aside from feeling drained, anxious, and overwhelmed.
To cooperate as individual and reduce stress:

When you feel yourself getting caught up in fear of what might happen, try to shift your focus to things you can control. For example, you can’t control how severe the corona virus outbreak is in your city or town, but you can take steps to reduce your own personal risk (and the risk you’ll unknowingly spread it to others), such as:

- Ask someone reliable to share important updates: If you’d feel better avoiding media entirely, ask someone you trust to pass along any major updates you need to know about.
- Be careful what you share. Do your best to verify information before passing it on. We all need to do our part to avoid spreading rumors and creating unnecessary panic.
- washing your hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- avoiding touching your face (particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth).
- staying home as much as possible, unless urgency.
- avoiding crowds and gatherings of 10 or more people.
- avoiding all non-essential shopping and travel.
- keeping 6 feet of distance between yourself and others when out.
- getting plenty of sleep, which helps support your immune system.
- following all recommendations from health authorities.

At times like this, it’s easy to get caught up in your own fears and concerns. But amid all the stories of people fighting over sanitizers, food, rolls of toilet paper or lining up outside the stores to arm themselves, it’s important to take a breath and remember that we’re all in this together.

“Individual commitment to a group effort -- that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”  

Vince Lombardi

It’s no coincidence that those who focus on others in need and support their communities, especially during times of crises, tend to be happier and healthier than those who act selfishly.

To cooperate as citizens and reduce stress:

- **Helping others:** It not only makes a difference to your society, city and even to the wider world at this time can also support your own mental health and well-being. Doing kind and helpful acts for others can help you regain a sense of control over your life—as well as adding meaning and purpose. Even when you’re self-isolating or maintaining social distance, there’s still plenty you can do to help others.
• **Reach out to others in need:** If you know people in your community who are isolated—particularly the elderly or disabled—you can still offer support. Perhaps an older neighbor needs help with groceries or fulfilling a prescription? You can always leave packages on their doorstep to avoid direct contact. Or maybe they just need to hear a friendly, reassuring voice over the phone.

• **Donate to food banks:** Panic-buying and hoarding have not only left grocery store shelves stripped bare but have also drastically reduced supplies to food banks. You can help older adults, low-income families, and others in need by donating food or cash.

• **Be a calming influence:** If friends or loved ones are panicking, try to help them gain some perspective on the situation. Instead of scaremongering or giving credence to false rumours, refer them to reputable news sources. Being a positive, uplifting influence in these anxious times can help you feel better about your own situation too. Those who are quarantined or must avoid exposures to the public for any reason reach out to friends and family for support, virtually if necessary.

• **Be kind to others:** An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or specific group, so speak up if you hear negative stereotypes that only promote prejudice. Do not behave rude with your clients, family members, strangers, your juniors as kindness spreads faster than any virus.

• **Managing stress after a disaster:** After a disaster you’ll use a lot of emotional energy coping with your fears, frustrations and other feelings. You may not realise how much energy you’re using, continue to work too hard and for too long, and put aside your emotional and physical wellbeing. Be calm and manage stress even after disaster as managing now.

"The mind has exactly the same power as the hands; not merely to grasp the world, but to change it." —Colin Wilson

**Conclusion:**

"We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world." —Buddha
Due to continuity of news spread through social media it is difficult to avoid the headlines causing stress. It’s impossible to completely eliminate bad stress from your life, but you can learn to avoid and manage it. It is important to realize that social distancing does not have to mean social isolation, especially with modern technologies available to many of us. Connecting with our friends and loved ones, whether by high tech means or through simple phone calls, can help us maintain ties during stressful days ahead and will give us strength to weather this difficult passage.

Not all stress is bad. The Covid pandemic has resulted in a bunch of positives especially in environment such as reduced air pollution, less noise pollution. The data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), part of India’s Environment Ministry, was collated by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) - Nitrogen dioxide went from 52 per cubic meter to 15 in the same period -- also a 71% fall. Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Bangalore have also recorded a fall in these air pollutants.

According to the real-time water monitoring data of the CPCB, out of the 36 monitoring units placed at various points of the Ganga river, the water quality around 27 points was suitable for bathing and propagation of wildlife and fisheries. In fact, some stress heightens your senses, helping you to avoid accidents, power through unexpected deadlines, or stay clear-minded in chaotic situations. This is the "fight-or-flight" response that your body triggers in times of duress. All stress is meant to be temporary. Your body should return to a natural state after the situation has passed.

The request by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi for the respect of service fighters or the lightning of a few minutes led us to believe positively that the whole nation is fighting and we are not alone in this pandemic fight. It is important to remember that when you can’t control what’s happening, challenge yourself to control how you respond to what’s happening. That’s where your power is. Thus, it’s our responsibility at this time to stay focused on yourself, stay home and stay safe.

“Any disaster you can survive is an improvement in your character, your stature, and your life.” - Joseph Campbell

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A CATASTROPHIC LEADERSHIP!
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Introduction:
The situation is Covid-19 and it is a pandemic causing severe global socioeconomic disruption, including one of the largest global recessions since the Great Depression. We have delayed or cancelled most of the activities on sporting, religious, political and cultural including wedding ceremonies. Well, this has caused a widespread supply shortage exacerbated by panic buying and helping the nature to heal its way without human intervention as we have participated in the decreased emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Simon O Sinek said ~ if you are working hard for something you don’t care about, it is called stress. Well, if you are working hard for something you love, it is called passion.

Now comes the important aspect of handling a catastrophic situation with that most required skill called executiveness with passion and not with stress.!

This is a situation that is demanding a sudden leader to appear from nowhere ~ just like a superhero or a comic character to come alive to make some magic to resolve the situation.

What is more striking here to is the time – which is of immense essence. It is the crisis for which something must be done immediately. When transporting organs for transplant, time is of the essence (that’s some science) and when used in a contract, places the other party on notice that failure to complete a required performance by a date certain set forth therein will constitute an incurable breach (that’s some law).

What is the leader to play here with stress, time, and the pandemic...?
They are here to express their deep sense of gratitude and also the value-added expertise from the earlier crisis dealt with some key strategies.

Some critical thoughts of focus to ponder upon on the outburst of stress:

1. Are you accountable –

The return on investment is always a criterion or rather a demand by an investor; whether its your stakeholder or your employee for putting in that money and time in your business. The situation is demanding the businesses to not just work on the financial statements but also think wide about the health and wellbeing of those several thousands of families that are associated with its business beyond just the profitability. Human is a critical resource for the stable running of an organisation and being human is the need of the hour.

2. Integrity –

Integrity is doing the right thing even when nobody is watching you. But this is the situation where everyone is focused on how you as a leader are going to handle it. As a leader, the degree of your diligent consciousness should be at its peak. This is the time, when your crowd is going to pursue you for your thoughtfulness, your integrity in delivering your best.

This is the situation to take into confidence your valued customers, shareholders, investors, employees and the public at large. If you are required to do something, then you must do it undoubtedly.

3. Manufacture solidity –

In the middle of the chaos and the anxiety around everywhere, it is often important to make people feel safe by doing your best that you could do for anybody. Activate your business continuity planning team, have the call tree programme on a alternate day basis, ensure to do this continuously. There is control when you bring a new perspective and a structure to the system.

4. Keep all your modes of communication sorted and on –
Communication is of significance. Ensure to stay connected by all modes of communication. Mails, telephone, video-conferences, real-time video clips that can be transformed into the media to reach in no time, have the ideal talk points, think through the critical questions and answers for the same.

Build strong communication networks and pressure test them using stimulated stress, so that the network is prepared to deliver the best in the worst scenario. Making sure that the chain of command is strong is in the hands of a leader that need to be rock strong. There should be a single tone and one voice everywhere and everyone should be talking your words – the leader’s words.

When you are deciding anything in a catastrophic situation, your decisions need to be quick, very clear and precise in comparison to any other historical decisions.

Be confident that the effective internal communication networks ensure information flows up and down the hierarchy so that C-suite decision-making makes sense to staff in the stores as well.

As large organisation, its often seen that the C-suite decisions are made not focusing the environment of the organisation, but have your attention on not just strategy, big ideas but on ground realities too.

When there is responsibility in your statement and sense of owning, will make things better than your thoughts. Take inputs from all the critical resources and important stakeholders; but be wise and considerate while you take quick decisions for the situation and have a single voice that is heard everywhere.

5. Delegate -

As leaders, it is common to take control just to ensure that everything is running fine and though its exactly the opposite that is required in the crisis like present.

As a leader being in one corner of the entire organisation (probably that is spread across countries, territories), when you are forming decisions without understanding the clear nuances of your decisions, it is ideal
to delegate certain aspects of your decisions to be locally taken by the ones that are aware of the situation with complete clarity.

Instance: as the infection is robust and spreading, what should be the decision that need to be taken in case of expatriate employees – knowing that they will lose all credibility and never be able to go back? Such decisions need to be delegated to the local teams to handle diligently.

Outcome: the families of the expats can be sent home and the employee need autonomy and cannot be isolated. Giving the option of whether he/she can be with the family or not is a personal choice of an individual but taking care of all his requirements during the demanding situation is purely a leadership call.

6. Be a leader with head, heart & guts -

It is the important skill for the demanding situation for a leader to demonstrate today; that as a leader you have the ability to set strategy, empathize with others and take calculated risks – all at the same time. Consistently doing the right things based on the personal values system does talk largely about you, because the organisations want leaders who are authentic, inspire trust, and set high standards.

Take time to introspect. The situation can help in gaining more insights for the strength and opportunities that was never thought earlier when everything appeared as a routine. It is critical for the ‘whole leaders’ to visualize, balance people, business needs and motivate colleagues with diverse backgrounds, and create real trust through unyielding honesty and transparency balancing risks and rewards.

7. Lead through crisis with purpose -

This is certainly not the time to evaluate or define the performance of the company by its share price or if it is going to hit its EPS guidance; but, is the time when leadership has to play its role by fulfilling a higher purpose by showing up how they have shown up by meeting with the requirements and expectations of its varied stakeholders.
As a leader, you have to make your varied audience understand the availability of minimal resources for the optimum outcome. Encourage creativity and boost innovation for doing more with minimum or least resources at your disposal to build the capacity of the organisation for the unforeseen circumstances and further aiming at building a future leadership.

Conclusion: As the learning never stops; when we are working hard for our passion, there should be compassion too for strengthening that passion. Everyone is stressed; some release it and some does not; but, as a leader, you have an additional responsibility to cheer and motivate teams to remain focused and continue to deliver the best outcomes.

The present situation is demanding differently and very challenging to handle. But, don’t miss out on your focus on learning. Invest the right energy within you to create a difference and positivity for the lives around you. Hopkinson said - “Leadership based on understanding and not control – trusting that people know what to do – allows companies to turn a crisis around into an opportunity to shake things up.” Here is an opportunity to be the one to shake up the effective leadership in the stressful situation.
SELF GOVERNANCE: ‘SUCCESS KEY’ TO MEANINGFUL LIFE

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Introduction

Self-Governance always comes from within. It is to be practiced by individual self, controlling its mind and senses for the greater cause. The human mind is wrapped up with so many layers of unnecessary desires, expectations and shallow thinking that it had lost its originality of being love, calmness, happiness and peace. By losing the original identity, Man, of the day, had loss his real meaning of life and conditioned his pure mind with illusionary worldly senses like greed, lust, anger, undue favor, over expectations from others, etc.

Such conditioning of mind with worldly senses become the hindrance in taking right decision at right time for the benefit of the organization as well as for one-self. Here, in this article, ‘Quoted’ texts have been taken from the book “Man’s Search for Meaning” by Viktor E. Frankl. Some other authors have also been quoted at relevant places. How we have made our pure and crystal-clear mind as conditioned one and the identification of meaning for living life will be clear when we will go through this article.

The corporates are being run by the human being and to truly implement the corporate governance into the RNA of the corporates, it first must become the part of the RNA of the leaders who run it. The mind which is the driving force of human being must be escalated from its current position of delusion and must be purified to achieve the highest level of governance norms at every level. Let us understand at subtle level to be a purified human being. This will highly benefit us to be independent person in true spirit.

Textbook tell lies!

Since beginning, the human mind is programmed in such a way that it cannot see the things or event with holistic views and apply the set principles in each event which have been fed into it either by family, friends, society, science or any external elements. I am not saying here that all the information as programmed in mind are wrong nor I am challenging the validity of science or anything else. But just the conditioning of mind with limit which is actually limitless should be revisited. The author has quoted following in support of the same:

“The medical men among us learned first of all: “Textbook tell lies!” Somewhere it is said that man cannot exist without sleep for more than a stated number of hours. Quite wrong I had been convinced that there were certain things I just could not do: I could not sleep without this or I could not live with that or the other. I would like to mention a few similar surprises on how much we could endure: we were unable to...
clean our teeth, and yet, in spite of that and a severe vitamin deficiency, we had healthier gums than ever before.”

Further, it reminds me the dostoevski’s statement that flatly defines “man as a being who can get used to anything”. Yes, this is absolutely true. We have inbuilt power to survive and rather to say develop our inner being in any conditions, favorable or unfavorable.

This is the conditioning. From the childhood, we are programmed in this way. With every situation or every event, we are conditioned with set of rules and principles and hence we, as a human being, lose our inbuilt capacity to deal with every situation in more beautiful and unique way. When the boundaries of such conditioning are creatively destructed, the life will be much easier and simpler and ability to tackle any situation will be developed naturally. We as an individual being has developed wrong belief system that if certain conditions are there then only, we can survive and in absence of those we lose even before performing any action. Such belief system needs to be challenged by us to us.

**Love**

To love, to be loved or being love is the ultimate object a man can dream for. This must be the reason to live for. Even in the position of utter desolation, where a man loses all hopes for living, a dignified way of living, then also the love is the ultimate means for which a man can achieve fulfilment. When there is firm determination to live for the love, the love with inner self, then you are actually undisturbed by the knowledge of the outer suffering whether it is mental or physical one.

The author has beautifully described the passion for love in single line as -

“*Set me like a seal upon thy heart, love is as strong as death.*”

**Beauty of Art and Nature**

The way of looking at your life in the given circumstances will create your destiny accordingly. Even during the toughest phase of life, one can change his angle of looking at life with new perspective and be able to find the beauty out of it i.e. the beauty of Nature and Art. The mountains, the trees, sunset teaches us how to withstand in any circumstance. The nature teaches us the way of living life.

Similarly, the Art plays very important role in living meaningful life even in adverse situation. This all depends how you define the Art. The meaning Art has to be taken in broader sense here. Even laughing or crying or singing for a moment in the middle of the group of friends or loved ones will heal your sufferings even though it is momentarily only.
**Sense of Humor**

One could find sense of humor at any stage of life and even in difficult situation also. It will help escalate one to come out of any suffering in a more astonishing way. This is the art of living. One just need attitude to look at particular thing or situation in a humor filled way. This is the weapon through which one can realize the meaning of life even in a situation where survival is at the question. The author has described it as –

*“It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds.”*

**Judging others**

The person should take utmost care while passing any judgement about others without analyzing the event in its whole perspective. There may be certain compelling situations which has forced the person to behave in particular way. One should always put oneself in the same like situation and ask honestly to the inner self whether in a similar situation if I was there then what I would have done. It is very easy to blame someone or to adjudge someone faulty or wrong but very hard to practice the expected behavior from the others. So, as a leader, one should always stay away from the pre-conceived notion about others and have only positive angle towards the others whether he is superior or subordinate. This will create positive environment at the work place and your colleagues will also develop the mindsets to listen and implement to what you are expressing.

**Sense towards the Profession**

One should always be loyal and dedicated towards its profession and be always ready to discharge its primary duty for the betterment of the organization or society at large under any circumstances. This will definitely give you the inner satisfaction towards fulfilment of duty and ultimately lead to contentment of living life with reason because when you are living then there must be some sense of living the life. There may be situations arises when there is a question of life or death and to perform the duty. In such cases, the passion towards the profession will lead you to live life with contentment.

**Human values and self-respect**

In any organization or society at large, when human is not being treated with dignity and make full use them as physical resources then the human values finally suffers loss and the existence is degraded to the level of animal life. The human being is completely and unavoidably influenced by his surroundings. It is the human values and dignity which realizes him as
sombody. He has right of freedom i.e. inner freedom and spiritual freedom or human liberty. The author has beautifully raised questions about human existence –

“Is that theory true which would have us believe that man is no more than a product of many conditional and environmental factors be they a biological, psychological or sociological nature? Is man but an accidental product of these? Does man have no choice of action in the face of such circumstances?”

There must be a difference between the things and human being as things can be compared and determined with each other but man is identified by its self-determination. He has best potentialities which he can explore from within by his own decision without comparing with the others. Therefore, in any corporates, irrespective of its size, product line or structure, human being must be dealt with specific attention considering the human values and dignity of human being irrespective of the designation he holds.

This reminds me the book written by Arie de Geus titled “The Living Company”. The relevant extract of the book is reproduced below:

“Why do so many companies die young? Mounting evidence suggests that corporations fail because their policies and practices are based too heavily on the thinking and the language of economics. Put another way, companies die because their managers focus exclusively on producing goods and services and forget that the organization is a community of human beings that is in business any business—to stay alive. Managers concern themselves with land, labor, and capital, and overlook the fact that labor means real people.”

So, human values and self-respect plays very pivotal role while surviving in difficult situations. The absence of the same proves very fatal to the existence and preservation of oneself.

Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the weapons including nuclear weapons; however, he is also that being who died out of the use of those.

**Choice of Action**

The life offers you the choice of action at every day, every hour, and every moment. It is YOU who have to decide whether to surrender to particular force or energy or to live the life with complete inner freedom and with dignity. No one can take away from you the freedom to choose your attitude, to choose
your way of life and the experiences you earned in the past and from the sufferings.

Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress. This will create your destiny and provide your life with purpose and reason for living.

Dostoevski said once, “There is only one thing that I dread; not to be worthy of my suffering”. Under any circumstance, man can decide what shall he become of him eternally, physically, mentally and spiritually. Sometimes, suffering only make the man achieve the miracles and gain the inner achievement.

**Suffering vs. Enjoyment**

Whenever any event occurs, there is some purpose behind the same and the purpose is always for something good. The life is full of enjoyment, sufferings, beauty, art and nature. The human being with its pure identity needs to identify the hidden purpose of the event and learn and escalate oneself from the same.

The successful man is the one who accepts its fate and all sufferings in total and learn and convert that into opportunity and move ahead for better life experiences which life has stored it for him in the Pandora Box. The author has greatly put this as –

> “If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as face and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete.”

Man can change his destiny with his great determination and inner strength to achieve the final goal of the life, the reason to live life. Everywhere man is confronted with fate, with the change of achieving something through his own suffering. Life’s meaning is an unconditional one, for it even includes the potential meaning of unavoidable suffering

**I am Life, eternal life**

You can identify the reason to live life from the art and nature or from the experiences of full and complete past. The life is beautiful as it is. The past, sufferings, happiness, love, sorrow, peace, nature, arts, etc. are inseparable ingredients of the life. The author has quoted beautifully the case of one of his patients –
“In my former life I was spoiled and did not take spiritual accomplishments seriously. Pointing through the window of the hut, she said, “This tree here is the only friend I have in my loneliness.” Through that window she could see just one branch of a chestnut tree, and on the branch were two blossoms. “I often talk to this tree,” she said to me. I was startled and didn’t quite know how to take her words. Was she delirious? Did she have occasional hallucinations? Anxiously I asked her if the tree replied. “Yes.” What did it say to her? She answered, “It said to me, ‘I am here I am here I am Life, eternal life.’”

**Provisional Existence**

A man who could not see the end of his “provisional existence” was not able to aim at an ultimate goal in life. The man should always be ready to bear with the uncertainties which are destined in life. When he could not absorb the uncertainties turning into reality and future becoming present at one cannot survive due to trauma the future has brought for him. In the book, the one of the prisoners of the Nazi Camp dreamt in the month of February that he along with other prisoners will be released from the camp in the month of coming March. But when exactly reverse happened to his dream, he could not absorb the realities and died.

Those who know how close the connection is between the states of mind of a man, his courage and hope, or lack of them and the state of immunity of his body will understand that the sudden loss of hope and courage can have a deadly effect.

**‘Why’ to live**

“He who has a ‘why’ to live for can bear with almost any how”. It should be the guiding motto for all. Whenever there is an opportunity, one should give to himself a ‘why’ an aim for his life, in order to strengthen himself to bear the terrible how of one’s existence.

“It did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us.”

“Life” does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete, just as life’s tasks are also very real and concrete. They form man’s destiny, which is different and unique for each individual.

“But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.”
Human life under any circumstances, never ceases to have a meaning, and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death.

**Impossible vs. Responsibility**

“When the impossibility of replacing a person is realized, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its continuance to appear in all its magnitude.”

What you have experienced, no power on earth can take from you. Not only our experiences, but all we have done, whatever great thoughts we may have had, and all we have suffered, all this is not lost, though it is past; we have brought it into being. Having been is also a kind of being, and perhaps the surest kind. Sometimes, all hopes for being in existence are faded, still there is one element ‘the responsibilities’ which drives as the motivating factor to live life that becomes the driving force to achieve the highest level of satisfaction.

**No right to do wrong**

It is the commonplace truth that no one has the right to do wrong not even if wrong has been done to them. It is the greatest principle of living life with peace, happiness and calmness. You do your work at the best. Don’t have an attitude of taking revenge or reaction. Even if you are being hurt by the words or actions of the others, don’t react. Simply stay in silence and pray for the betterment of the person who had hurt you. This will bring the miraculous results in the action and behavior of yourself as well as in others.

Mahatma Gandhi has quoted a beautiful line in support of this – “*My greatest weapon is mute prayer*”.

At first instance, it looks somewhat unrealistic to practice but with firm determination, it can be implemented and with that you can exercise your independence in any sphere of life whether it is emotional, spiritual, social, physical, corporate or any other.

**Self-transcendence vs. Self-actualization**

Sometimes, it is very difficult to dive deep into the inner soul experience of oneself and cannot realize his life object within oneself. Then it is advisable for such human being to look for the same in the outer world. However, it may
be noted here that there with very thin-line difference between inner self and outer world but yes man can find life objective remaining in connect with outer world either for something or for someone to love for. The author has beautifully put this as –

“By declaring that man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man of his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. I have termed this constitutive characteristic “the self-transcendence of human existence.” It denotes the fact that being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself. What is called self-actualization is not an attainable aim at all, for the simple reason that the more one would strive for it, the more he would miss it. In other words, self-actualization in possible only as a side effect of self-transcendence.”

Happiness Within

Happiness cannot be pursued; it must be ensued. Happiness can only be found within you by loving yourself. When you try to find happiness from other human being or other things, you are unknowingly being webbed into the circle of expectations. Expectations are nothing but imposing your way of doing or acting on others and when others are not acting or doing as per your way, you are being hurt and ultimately it leads to unhappiness. Meaning orientation had subsided, and consequently the seeking of immediate pleasure had taken over.

The author has beautifully quote as – “Live as if you were living for the second time and had acted as wrongly the first time as you are about to act now.”.

By this attitude, you can find happiness. People have enough to live by but nothing to live for; they have the means but no meaning. For happiness, one requires reason. The reason to remain happy internally and not for the show off to something or someone.

This reminds me one beautiful word put up by Louise L. Hey in her book titled “The Power is Within You” as –

“Who are you? What did you come here to learn? What did you come here to teach? We all have a unique purpose. We are more than our
personalities, our problems, our fears, and our illnesses. We are far more than our bodies. We are all connected with everyone on the planet and with all of life. We are all spirit, light, energy, vibration, and love, and we all have the power to live our lives with purpose and meaning.”

Holistic look or past
It is the human tendency to look at only negative events or sufferings of their past and create a negative impression of past as who which lead them to abstract life road ahead without any reason to live for. Whatever happened, happen for the good cause. To find out the real meaning behind the particular event of the past, the one has to take the holistic view of the past and try to understand the big picture and then move ahead with the learnings. Past experience whether it is bitter one or good one always teaches lessons to live life with more zeal and vigor. When you view the past holistically, the cause and effects you shall find will be unconditional one only.

George A. Sargent was right when he promulgated the concept of “learned meaninglessness.” He himself remembered a therapist who said, “George, you must realize that the world is a joke. There is no justice, understand how silly it is to take yourself seriously. There is no grand purpose in the universe.

Conclusion
When we are born, we are the purest human being without any layer of worldly senses or attachment towards worldly things. What happens during our life journey which conditions our mind and thus lose the ability take best decisions and judgements for the larger objective of the corporate or for the society at large. We are basically the human being full of love, happiness and peace. When this state of mind is achieved, a human being as a leader will never fail to achieve the organizational vision keeping in mind the best interest of all stakeholders. Therefore, to achieve highest standard of self-governance and independence, one should first look within and start searching and clearing your conditioned mind. With clear and unconditioned mind, highest level of self-governance can be attained which will in turn be intertwined as best corporate governance system in any corporates.
Calmness & Focus Amid Corona, Chaos & Confusion
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At the outset I must appreciate the wonderful effort on the part of ICSI to bring out this series for the benefit of its members and others. I also thank the Institute for an opportunity to contribute and share my thoughts and experiences. Considering the limitations of space in any article, I decided to split what I wanted to share in multiple parts, hoping that the Institute will be considerate and publish all of them. In this opening piece I will deal with the situation and possible solutions. In subsequent articles I will deal with Yoga, Pranayama, Meditation and finally how to put them all together so that you can come on top of any situation, leave aside the current one.

These are truly difficult times and would also have a lasting impact for some time into the future. The pandemic and the closure lock down following it, comes close on the heels of earlier uncomfortable news like a) huge NPA debt burden on the banking sector, b) multiple corporate collapse throwing thousands out of their jobs and income, c) weak investor sentiment and inability of the economy to stimulate growth d) large unemployment particularly amongst fresh graduates. Most people cannot comprehend or guess what is in store for the future? Particularly post lifting of the lock down what will be the scene in the job market. Many have been asking the question to themselves as to whether they will have a job after this massive loss to the economy. The problem impacts different people differently. For the younger generation it is the post qualification unemployment staring in their face. For those above 50, the fear of not being gainfully engaged should they lose their job and also deal with pending EMI payments can be deeply troubling. For midcareer executives retaining a job, achieving desired financial and material goals, career hoping prospects dimming are troubling. For those in retirement the falling interest rates coupled with inflation eroding savings with additional health care bills are the worrying factors. For professionals the increasing regulatory compliance burden, exhausting demand from clients, the inability of the market to reward appropriately, the pressures to resist slipping into unethical territory are all factors that can eat one from inside. Many small businesses are staring at closure, some unable to compete with the might of the E-trading companies, some because of the losses sustained that can no longer be funded, some because bigger companies delaying payment much beyond due dates stifling them of much needed working capital and others for different reasons. There seem to a fear psychosis that has gripped every one and to add to it all is the uncertainty of survival against a virus that seems to multiply and spread at rapid speed.

The situation is different, consequences seem different, but the resultant suffering seems to be repetitive. One reading of the great work Manias, Panics and Crashes by Charles Kindleberger would take you through history of...
financial crises and how they were triggered. There is an interesting video at www.youtube.com on pandemic hitting the world every 100 years. You can look it up at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTnMFoAYmWg. The current situation is not totally unanticipated. As early as 2005 George W Bush the then President of United State of America had called for preparation to deal with the next pandemic when it emerges. Check his video at Youtube.com at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSDC5L7qYUc. He is not talking about Corona or Covid 19 but the need to anticipate and prepare for pandemic attacks and to develop the capability to deal with it. Ironically USA and Europe seem to face the maximum deaths from the virus. [Real numbers in China may never be known]

With the onset of the current pandemic and the forced lock down and house arrest many have become wise and are talking about how it has benefitted mother earth, allowed other creatures to reclaim their space, the ozone layer seems to be repairing and so on. Those introspecting deeply seem to realize how futile is the accumulation of wealth in the face of the pandemic. It appears to be harsher towards well-heeled as compared to their poorer brethren. From a holistic wellness and life perspective (the perspective that I come from and advocate) it is necessary to understand what leads us to this situation and how we can possibly stay above water and sail through. I would draw your attention to the following:

a. Falling immunity failing to defend against increasing propensity to ailments
b. Unhealthy reliance on medical drugs and reduced attention to selfcare
c. Consummate greed and insatiable appetite for material possessions coupled with desire to get rich quick.
d. Changing eating styles and food habit

While these issues are highlighted as separate bullet points, they are not isolated but need to be viewed in totality. Most working executives tend to spend long hours in their work place leaving home early and reaching very late. Most work in front of computers sitting in one position for long hours, consuming excessive coffee and tea and indulging in fast food snacks to keep going. They eat dinner rather late, and go to bed soon thereafter. Many eat their food sitting in front of their Television screens without any focus or attention on what they are eating. Increased use of frozen food with their chemical preservatives lacking nutrition fail to provide much needed nutrition for the body. Most feel that nutrition can be supplemented by popping some pills Life revolves around multiple gadgets with their electromagnetic waves that tend to disturb the natural earth magnetic resonance in the body. At work they encounter constant stress which is perceived by the body as a threat with the typical response of fight or flee. While the system is meant to deal with infrequent threat perception, restoring the body to normal level when the threat abates, a constant stress of conflicts at work place, internal competition with co-
workers, target related pressures, anticipated incentive materializing etc., rarely provides the body time to restore what is called homeostasis. This impacts the blood supply to various organs in the body leading to weaker functioning and reduced immunity to fight diseases. Compare this with the age old wisdom handed down to us: eat early, light, eat each meal slowly focusing on what you eat, chew it well and have pleasant and good thoughts, offer a prayer before you eat thanking the almighty for providing that food, feel that the food will enter the body and nourish it and allow two to three hours post dinner before going to bed. We tend to brush aside these ideas as old fashioned and non-modern mindset. You will drastically change that perspective once you read Dr. Bruce Lipton’s book Biology of Belief as well as The Honey Moon Effect and watch his multiple videos at www.youtube.com. He gives you a scientific and modern perspective on how human body cells behave and the way perceptions change the cell functions and how you are what you eat.

In his book “Never Be Sick Again” the author Raymond Francis brings out an interesting theory that all sickness can be attributed to one thing that is your cells in the body are not functioning optimally. He then goes on to say that there are only two causes for this − (i) Cells don’t get the nourishment that they need and (ii) toxicity, that is cells poisoned by something that they don’t need. Either of these result from six pathways that seem to deliver them − i) Nutrition or lack of it from what you eat ii) toxins from food, environment and other sources iii) psychological—the mind body connect, which yoga spoke about eons ago, implying that thoughts impact the cells and negative thoughts impacting negatively iv) Absence of physical maintenance in the form of exercise, rest, sunlight and fresh air v) inability to optimize genetic potential and avoid genetic damage and lastly vi) Modern medicine which seems to kill millions of people injures million others. Like what I keep advocating, he also insists on dealing with all the six holistically and not depend only on any one or two. His whole book then deals with each of these pathways and how to use it for one’s health and avoid sickness.

How does all this relate to the Pandemic and the present situation one is caught in? First if you maintain good level of immunity, the virus causing any damage to you is minimal. You own antibodies will attack and neutralize the virus. For this you need to be free from life style diseases like diabetes, heart ailments, hypertension etc. If you are already impacted by any of them you need to work to reverse them and there are multiple ways of doing including how to send the right signals to your brain to make it happen. There are multiple holistic healing techniques and not all will work for all uniformly. You need to experiment and find that which can work for you. Very interesting insight in this can be taken from two books written by Dr. Norman Doidge a) The Brain that changes itself and b) The Brain’s way of healing. You also need to maintain a healthy flexibility of
your body which comes with regular practice. No age is too old to start. At our center we have people starting with yoga after the age of sixty and picking up flexibility anywhere between six to 8 months but with regular practice. We also have instances of people coming to us with ailments and find substantial improvement or have come out of the ailment. People who could not relax even for a minute start relaxing their body and mind with practice over 3 to 4 months.

You may ask why a healthy body is required when you can take pills to deal with your health issues? For one, medical pills have their own problem and ways in which they damage many organs which even doctors don’t seem to be aware. This impact on weakening multiple organs then, impacts you negatively should any virus attack you. The more important reason is a healthy body is required for a healthy mind and without a healthy mind you cannot handle stress and its negative consequences. Once you develop a healthy mind you can meditate, to lead you to better inner awareness and help you avoid the mad chase of material wealth. No one says don’t enjoy material prosperity but don’t grieve if you don’t have what others have. Repeatedly our age-old culture only says don’t develop attachment to the material possession. Let me explain this from my own life experience. For one I took to yoga around the age of 36 after a bout of spondylitis. Over the years I have substantially stayed clear of ailments and cannot recall having taking off from office for medical reasons. One week of rest mandated for a slip disk around the age of 39 is all I can recall. Yoga and meditation help me avoid competing to be in mad race for financial prosperity. Many of my own age group were scaling corporate heights or professional heights but almost all of them did it at the cost of their health. Now in their sixties they are battling ailments and are mortally scared if they forget to take their tablets. I was happy with what I could achieve for it gave me a decent life without the avoidable ailments. I could say no to assignment that I did not want to take. Yoga and meditation gave me confidence to be assured that I need to put in my efforts and cosmos will provide what is due to me. All my international assignments came to me providentially. The pandemic and other circumstances like demonetization have impacted my liquidity but I am able to take it in my stride rather than lose my sleep over it. You will start realizing the wonders of the power of mantra and their vibrations. Why it was a culture in most families that one must say prayers before dinner, a practice dying for want of scientific demonstrations of the benefit. The west is already catching upto its benefits. You can read about in Dr. Richard Gerber’s book on Vibrational Healing.

What can you do to improve your situation? It cannot come overnight for in self-discipline there is no short cut. You can start with practices prescribed by Feldenkrais for improving body flexibility. I beta tested a variation which I call Relaxercise yoga and will be launching it post lifting
of lock down. Then take to yoga and progress to meditation. As you go along you will automatically start changing your views and start feeling much better. Calmness will set in. You will be able to take the positives and negatives in your stride. There a ways in which you can start simple and improve stage by stage. The best source is the classic landmark book A Systematic Course in the Ancient Tantric Techniques of Yoga and Kriya by Swami Satyananda Sarawati of the Bihar School of Yoga. This book is divided into capsules lessons going up to 36 lessons in all. I am starting a new series in which over next two years I will cover all the lessons with each running for a fortnight. You can do the same for yourself or consult a suitable yoga teacher to help you. Does it really work? It seems so based the feedback I get from those who come to my center for practice.

The Pandemic has not spared anyone. When you run a holistic wellness center like I do, your income drops to nil during the closure. How am I dealing with it? I am treating it as a great opportunity to start work on my long pending project of writing a four-volume book called Essentials of Finance for MBA’s and CA’s. Volume 1 is now well under way and I hope to complete it by July or August. It would never have started but for the lock down. I am working on launching 36 lessons in yoga as indicated. I am perfecting the ground work for the research project to test the effectiveness of yoga and mantra chanting on brain improvement. I have developed a module for this which I call Eduga. All this would not have happened but for the lock down. Net result I am tied up from morning to evening fully occupied. You can say I am extremely thankful to the Universe for giving me this opportunity despite the high cost attached to it. You too can if you can develop the right attitude.

In subsequent Articles I will deal with Yoga and Pranayam, Meditation and putting it all together.
Stress Management at Covid-19 and thereafter: A Professional Perspective

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Synopsis:

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How COVID-19 is affecting the countries

Impact of pandemic on the business community

Managing physical and mental health during the Pandemic

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Introduction

The dramatic spread of COVID-19 has disrupted lives, livelihoods, communities and businesses worldwide. All stakeholders, especially global businesses, have urgently come together to minimize its impact on public health and limit its potential for further disruption to lives and economies around the world and minimize its impact on public health and limit its potential to avoid further disruption to lives and economies around the world.

The spread of COVID-19 demands global co-operation among governments, international organizations and the business community and embark for Public-Private Co-operation wherever deemed necessary. In this war against Covid-19, governments need more data. The world over, authorities have been compelled to devise counter measures based only on estimates which are more often than not go haywire. It’s essential therefore to take steps which give a more realistic assessment of the spread of the virus.

Right now in India, lacking sufficient information could delay exiting from the lockdown. The only way to get a better idea of the likely spread of the virus is to customize and speed up testing facilities. This can happen quickly only if every available resource, public or private, is used. A warlike situation is when
the conventional rule-book is replaced by measures which deal exclusively with the emergency.

As businesses close to help prevent transmission of COVID-19, financial concerns and job losses are one of the first human impacts of the virus. Not knowing how this pandemic will play out also affects our economic, physical and mental well-being.

2. How COVID-19 is affecting the countries

In recent weeks, we have seen the significant economic impact of the corona virus on financial markets and vulnerable industries such as manufacturing, tourism, hospitality and travel. Estimated loss of GDP worldwide is estimated at nine trillion USD. Global tourism, travel and hospitality companies closing down affects the SMEs globally.

Some governments have announced economic measures to safeguard jobs guarantee wages and support the self-employed, but there is a lack of clarity in many countries about how these measures will be implemented and how people will manage a loss of income in the short-term.

Behind these statistics lie the human costs of the pandemic, from the deaths of friends and family to the physical effects of infection and the mental trauma and fear faced by almost everyone.

There is a huge amount of misleading information circulating online about COVID-19, from fake medical information to speculation about government responses. People are susceptible to social media posts from an apparently trustworthy source, often referred to as an “Uncle with a Masters”-post, possibly amplified and spread by “copy-paste” posts. The downside of self-isolation are confusion and anger, all of which are accelerated by fear of infection, having limited access to right information. This stress and anxiety can lead to increased alcohol consumption, as well as an increase in domestic and family violence.

The closure of schools and Physical distancing and altered plans for childcare to combat the spread of corona virus enhances additional burden on working parents, especially as traditional sources of childcare are typically grandparents, many of whom will be in the most vulnerable groups. It is easier
to respond positively when there are public appeals to protect the elderly or vulnerable in society, rather than by coercive state action.

- **Optimism**

As per a McKinsey survey of entrepreneurs released few days ago, 53% of Indian entrepreneurs are optimistic, while only 25% of Japanese entrepreneurs are optimistic. It seems to be a mild U-Curve for the Indian economy.

This Article deals with management of ourselves against the stress generated by COVID-19 which has emerged from nowhere but prevalent everywhere. This Article threadbare identifies the areas where the action is expected. Howsoever temporary the event may seem to be, it is going to leave its footprint on the lives of the people globally. Relevant information has been collected from the secondary source of information which is gathered from websites, publicly available.

3 Impact of pandemic on the business community

There is plethora of sector-wise analysis done by the experts in the field but what is of relevance here is the FMCG which is the fourth largest sector that will be affected in a major way. As most of the people are under lockdown the essential category of FMCG will have “V” shaped curve indicating sudden decline in demand but as the things get stabilized, demand will rise again with the same pace.

Whereas in respect of luxury items such as shampoos face make-up items, hair care and deodorants it will have “U” curve indicating sudden drop in demand that will remain at lower level for a long time and then gradually rising to the normal shape. But there will be spurt in Hygiene related products.
Automobile and spare parts sector is the worst hit sector. Where Germany is the hub of production capacity for automobiles and spare parts is already under recession and will be further hit very badly for a very significantly longer time.

India is Major exporter of pharma products, it will have increased demand for various generic products such as Paracetamol, Hydroxy chloroquin etc. But 70% raw material comes from china will be disrupted for a significant time. Health measures must be the first priority for governments, businesses and society. It is important for businesses to show solidarity and work together to protect staff, local communities and customers, as well as keeping supply chains, manufacturing and logistics working. Daily updates on a company website with input from scientists and experts are recommended to counter politicized messages in the media and from governments. This is particularly true for large companies that have the capacity to do this.

Raw material procurement, Supply chain management (SCM) labour management, realization problem leading to liquidity crunch etc will be buzz word during next five years in businesses attributable solely to this Pandemic.

- **Government back-up**

  Indian Govt. earns about $60-70 billion a week from taxes. Imagine what a hit a 5-week lockdown will have. Size of Indian economy is about $3 Trillion. In some scenarios, it is predicted that Govt. could take a hit of nearly $1 Trillion.

- **Result of backlash against China**

  Internationally, there could be an emotional and economic backlash against China. Businesses with supply chains passing through China will need to keep this in mind and insulate themselves and build alternatives. India and Indian businesses need to try to become the contract manufacturer of the world, just like China. India needs to make use of this opportunity smartly.
In every sector, there are good and bad companies. Management has to invest correctly in manufacturing and modern tech, be honest and fair to all stakeholders. Those companies with good management and displaying good behaviour will come out victorious.

- **Real Estate**

Indian real estate economy is sitting on a huge inventory with a huge cost-of-carry. The industry is highly leveraged with low margins. Unsold inventory is considered as an appreciating asset, but might turn out to be a flawed view. Market was already overdue for a huge reset, which will be accelerated by the pandemic.

- **Medium and Small businesses.**

They have to work with thin capital reserves. Excess capital is taken out of the business and applied into personal assets. Small businesses take out the surplus and purchase personal assets instead of re-investing in the business. There are various factors and motivations here. Because of this, they are unable to meet the cash expenses of even the next month. Medium and Small business need to have a look at how they can build some business reserves to endure such disruptions.

4. Managing mental health during the Pandemic

Experts around the world share insights in which the danger is that with headlines blaring around us, news outlets vying to be the first to break news, and our social media feeds locking us in echo chambers, there's a risk of an “infodemic” or “Anxiety Pandemic”, in which misinformation spreads.

- **You must always return to yourself**

With many healthcare workers around the world stretched by demand, how can they deal with emotions and stress? Many consultants have headaches and nausea when they deal with stress and emotion. There are also times when there is nothing they can do. For example, at times, they cannot provide
beds, masks and other needed supplies. You must always return to yourself, be aware of yourself, and distinguish which emotions are yours, which are from the others.

- **Social isolation is associated with poor mental health**

It’s also important to consider unexpected risks associated with the response to the outbreak. The fact that social isolation is associated with poor mental health is unquestionable. There will be medium and long-term consequences on people whose employment is in sectors like retail and transportation. Adding economic pressures will inevitably result in worse mental health.

Though quarantining measures and guidance varies from country to country and are still evolving, a substantial portion of those quarantined displayed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

If quarantining is necessary, there are steps that can mitigate the effects of being isolated, particularly including:

- Staying connected with your social and family networks via technology
- Keeping your daily routines as much as possible
- Exercising regularly and practicing habits that you enjoy and find relaxing
- Seeking practical, credible information at specific times of the day
- Preliminary research from Deloitte shows that there are over 3,000 mental health apps on the market, with varying degrees of efficacy.
- Shift narratives away from number of deaths toward number of recoveries

There often seems to be a dearth of positive stories about corona virus and those who recover. We’re not seeing the stories of recovery. We need to shift narratives away from number of deaths toward number of recoveries. And media having realized this have started reporting number of recovered cases which is more than 80%.

In fact, a sense of hope instead of fear could allow leaders and citizens to better cooperate with one another – a vital element in defeating this outbreak. In the immediate past weeks, fear and anxiety have increased hardships and our lives continue to be disrupted as social distancing became necessary. As
a society, we must work together with a sense of empathy. As individuals, we must inform ourselves of the facts, stay connected to the people we love and be kind to each other.

- **How can I stay mentally healthy?**
  Give yourself a set number of hours to work and to allow yourself to take short breaks, including 20 to 30-minute naps if needed. In order to switch off from work, it is important to engage in an activity that is completely different. Activities such as cooking, doing household chores or listening to music are quite helpful.
  When speaking to someone experiencing anxiety first, give them a sense of time. Global issues like this can feel incredibly overwhelming because there is so much uncertainty around it. Using words such as ‘day’, ‘week’ and ‘year’ when speaking to someone experiencing anxiety, gives them a sense of time and reassures them that this period will not last forever.
  To help that in need, we can all help share factual information about the crisis and raise awareness about the mental health ramifications and resources.
  You can stay up-to-date on the latest
  Pay particular attention to language patterns such as using like “brave,” "smart” and "proud” when speaking to someone in crisis can show empathy and lead them to feel empowered to move out of the crisis.

- **How can I talk to children about the crisis?**
  It is essential to pay special attention to children during this time. Children are very imaginative and when they hear adults speaking about the virus in a very distressed way, they are left feeling nervous or can imagine disturbing things which can lead to long-term negative effects on the child’s psyche.
  Underhill suggests three important strategies. First, be discreet about what is being said in front of children and young teenagers. There is no need to be secretive; they should have some information, but it is important for parents to not overload a sense of worry or anxiety about an invisible enemy.
  Second, spend some quality time with your children by showing them special attention and fondness during this time. Children need a reassuring
environment during this time so engage them in fun activities and congratulate them when they perform a task well. Third, routines can also help soothe anxieties, Children are immensely reassured by discipline, not by being disciplined, so enlist a disciplined routine for your child.

- As employer how can I support my employees' mental wellbeing? As COVID-19 changes how we work, employers must also consider the wellbeing of their employees. For example, the employees must have access to “safe housing, transportation or any other means they may need for working from home safe. employers to “put on your oxygen masks before reaching out to others.” Once staff know that they are “safe and can connect online,” they can, in turn, help those who need assistance. As fear and anxiety increase during these uncertain times, it is important to recognize and be grateful for what we have. Stay connected to those we love and care for, and lend a helping hand to those who need it.

Much is still unknown about COVID-19. It is clearly unnerving that any number of deaths is, of course, concerning, and it is undeniable that we are living in a moment of real anxiety. Central to our collective task at this moment is to support the work of those who are charged with protecting the public’s health. It is with that in mind that we would do well to recognize and assist the federal and local health officials in charge of outbreak control, and ensure the conditions are in place to generate the science that can inform these efforts.

To my thinking, the core lesson of COVID-19 is the need to change the context in which it emerged, a context of disinvestment in public health preparedness. As a consequence, we simply do not have the money invested in a health system that can scale up detection and treatment in time to adequately deal with large-scale outbreaks. This reality has been somewhat mitigated by the dedicated health professionals who are working to address COVID-19. But the fact is, these professionals, and the populations they serve, are not receiving adequate support. Older populations, and people with pre-existing diseases, are at greater risk of dying from COVID-19.
As the global strategy for slowing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic changes from containment to mitigation, millions of residents are being asked to shelter in place, leaving their homes only for essential needs. This limitation of movement and social interaction has been a major stress test for marriages. In many places the strain of life under mandatory self-quarantine has sparked a surge in divorce matters, which feels like a prophetic warning for couples currently on lockdown.

But could conditions created by the pandemic also bring couples closer together?

Research on stress and marriage suggests that in times of major upheaval, spouses are the main sources of support. But not all support is equal. The prolonged period of quarantine that couples are currently going through, while painful for many, could unfold as an opportunity for personal growth and development.

In Wuhan, Hubei province, the city that was the initial epicenter of the outbreak, a video shows medical workers—brought in from across China to contain the outbreak—assembled in a large auditorium to see their loved ones, many wiping away tears welling up behind mask-covered faces. One medical worker announces to her partner, “When this epidemic is over, I will accompany you to anywhere you want to go.”

- **Work From Home (WFH) Scenario**

It is possible for lot of employees to not visit the office and still be productive. In some offices, it is found that it is enough that only 30% staff stay in the office. Others can be connected from homes. This leads to lesser commute expense, stress of the commute, time wasted, etc., Parents can take care of children more effectively when WFH. There can be dark hours when no calls will be made, etc.

5. **Opportunity utilization for Creative thinking**

One very interesting thing has happened in Washim in Maharashtra during this Pandemic, as reported recently in ABP Majha, when a construction labour couple who had nothing to do under lockdown since March 2020 associated with couple of problems including scarcity of water have dug 30 feet deep well
at a rate of two feet every day in their house compound and got a source of sweet water. They are so appreciated by the residents of the surrounding locality and were felicitated by the local leaders. They also declared that they will not only use that water for their household requirements but also allow the surrounding communities for their domestic animals for drinking.
This is an eye opener for us as professionals to get obsessed with our own professional advancement to sharpen our tools and utilize this opportunity which was not harnessed before.

6. Conclusion
Eventually, the quarantine will end one day or other, though gradually and we will return to rebuilding our normalcy, our economy and our lives. One can imagine a future in which we have learnt some lessons from this pandemic. Health practices acquired over the course of the outbreak, such as washing our hands for 20 seconds, will stay with us permanently. We will always have some eatables always ready at home even if we can't go out for a week or so due to any emergency whatsoever. We will always have a discovered list of friends and relatives, ready with whom we can discuss our concerns to release our mental outburst. And above all communal spirit of kindness prevails encompassing entire globe as there is no country in the world which is not affected by this Anxiety Pandemic.

References/ Webography

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