

# Take Note of the Small Stuff

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“Don’t Sweat The Small Stuff”. We have all probably heard this and would most likely agree. However, let's take a moment to look at this from a different perspective.

We have all been quarantined, separated and isolated from loved ones and friends for months and let's face it, our mental health has clearly been affected. We get up on the wrong side of the bed and everyone else pays the price. We take it out on the fast food worker because our order is slow or the greeter at the grocery store because they look at us wrong. According to an article in *Frontiers in Psychology* social isolation has been linked to anxiety and depression (Pietrabissa & Simpson, 2020). This should not be taken lightly; we need to take steps to help prevent the downward spiral of our emotional health.

## Time for a Challenge

Time to expand our outlook! Take that driver that is tailgating you, let's be honest your first instinct is to get angry and say a few choice words. It is then we must take a deep breath and try for a minute to look from their perspective. Maybe they are having a bad day or maybe there is an emergency they are trying to get to. The reason I am suggesting this approach is more for your emotional health than for their benefit. If all we get out of that experience is anger then we pay it forward to the next poor soul that steps into our path and the trend continues. I have actually tried this myself and it did make a difference in my thought process. I let go of the anger that really only hurt me and pretty sure my blood pressure dropped about 20 points. It is a terrible heavy burden to carry that anger around all day. It takes energy to hang on to, when we could use that energy somewhere else to make a positive impact. Now do I do this every time I run into this situation? No! But I know when I do it changes me, little by little.

## Pre Op Testing

You know all the testing you have to do before a procedure such as labs, x rays and EKG's. This information tells the physician whether it is safe for the patient to undergo the procedure, in this sense it prepares the physician to proceed or not. How can we prepare ourselves to endure those negative impacts we encounter through the day?

Let's explore a few outlets to let go of the negative energy and bring in the positive. Downward dog, Warrior II, jumping grasshopper, yes you guessed it, yoga has been a long time activity known to reduce stress and help center your thoughts. According to a Mayo Clinic Article "Yoga brings together physical and mental disciplines that may help you achieve peacefulness of body and mind. This can help you relax and manage stress and anxiety." (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2020). Let's not forget the great physical benefits as well! If this is a good fit for you then I would encourage you to consider this outlet. Another avenue for consideration is meditation. This can be done just by picking a quiet place in your home sitting for a few minutes in silence and clearing your mind. Some people play soft soothing music, while others play a mediation app that walks them through soothing relaxation techniques. WebMd has an article that states daily relaxation in the form of meditation helps reduce stress, enhance our mood and even lower our blood pressure (WebMd Staff, 2020). This is simple enough anyone can do it. It does not require any physical effort, but does give physical benefits. My personal way of centering myself and seeking a positive outlook is through prayer and devotional reading. It helps me take the focus off of myself and gives me a sense of peace that I carry throughout my day. It gives you a sense that I am not carrying these burdens by myself. They say that people of faith are generally happier and less prone to depression (Vann, MPH, 2015). These are just three ways that we can prepare ourselves for the day's events and have a more positive impact on all around us, including ourselves.

# Attitude of Gratitude

Now that we have adjusted our attitude, done the jumping grasshopper and taken time for prayer and devotion let's take actual note of the small stuff. What do I mean by that? Have you ever noticed the little things that people do for you. A few days ago I had decided to look for all the ways that people did something kind for me. I was driving to work when I passed a semi and when I was far enough ahead he flashed his lights to let me know it was ok to get back over. I got to work and a coworker held the door open for me. Multiple times throughout my work day coworkers offered to help me with my task. When I got home my husband had made a delicious dinner. My husband made me ad delicious. LOL These gestures make me feel good and I want to return the kindness. Always look for opportunities to fill your heart, open a door, pick something up that someone drops or write a note to a coworker and tell them how much you appreciate them. Take advantage of small chances to make someone's day a little brighter and perhaps let them know we are all not quite as isolated as we feel.

The last several months have been a challenge to say the least. Our mental health has taken a beating and it shows. Yoga, meditation and prayer can help center your soul relieve some of the stress. So cling to the small acts of kindness in your day, pay it forward, for this may help us learn a little more about ourselves and those around us.

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