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Wellbeing as important part of lockdown

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The extensive time of the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on people's professional and private lives. Many of us feel anxiety due to uncertainty what the future will bring. Typical for crisis situations is the fact that our existing habits and automatic responses are ineffective. Therefore, it is good to refrain from taking immediate actions and look at the situation from a broad perspective. At this stage, it is important to be able to stop. Explore the new situation, see all new aspects of the current situation, and accept the fact that you do not know all the answers and solutions. About the "here and now" approach during the pandemic talk Lina Lindell from the Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden and Anna Dziadkiewicz from the Pomerania Development Agency in Gdansk, Poland, both representing the SB WELL (<https://southbaltic.eu/-/sb-well>) project co-financed by the Interreg South Baltic Programme.

A.D.

- I would like to ask you, as the SB WELL project coordinator, the author of the wellbeing tourism concept and the yogini, how can each of us keep wellbeing in the current pandemic situation when we hear about infections and death every day?

L.L.

- Since you mention hearing about infections and deaths every day I think you spend too much time in front of the news. It is important to stay updated on the development of the Covid-19 situation and you can do so by following press conferences of your local or national authorities. However, we should be aware that many words used in media trigger a response of fear and anxiety in us. This, over time, causes our bodies to respond with stress symptoms. When we are stressed, our bodies lower the activity of bodily systems that are not essential for acute situations, such as escaping from a very threatening situation (think running from a wild animal). One of these systems is the immune system. So, to keep your immune system strong it is essential to ensure you know how to manage your emotions well. One very direct way of doing this is limiting the intake of information (words, images) that causes you to feel stress and negative feelings and to think negative thoughts.

A.D.

- How to use the concept of wellbeing to survive the lockdown?

L.L.

- Since you mention survival, we should first focus on following the directions from authorities on social distancing, and basic hygiene such as washing our hands frequently and well. Then, we can also take action so that our immune systems are strong. That involves avoiding tobacco and alcohol, moving our bodies, eating a lot of fresh and clean vegetables, fruits and berries, being in the sun, and being in nature. If you cannot go out, spend time in your garden, on your balcony or if you do not have that spend time close to your windows, open them to breath fresh air. There are many other things that can help support our immune system so make some research about it and choose what works for you. Importantly we also need to take care of our attitudes and emotions as I already mentioned.

A.D.

- In many countries, we are not allowed to leave our homes, parks and forests are closed. We are not allowed to walk, ride a bike or run. Can you give us some advice on what we can do at home to relax and keep life in balance?

L.L.

- Yes, use this time that helps develop yourself towards becoming a more balanced, compassionate, and fulfilled human being. The best way I know to learn to manage your feelings and shift your inner state into one of inner peace and joy is the science of yoga. You can use this time to begin learning and applying yoga, contemplate and explore your inner self. If that sounds far away from where you are now, you can simply listen to uplifting music and pay attention to the sound, become one with the sound, or if you pray, go deep into the prayer, become one with the words. You can also do things that you did not have time for before. Read those books on your shelves, paint, think about how you want to live your life in a more conscious way when this crisis is over - in greater harmony with nature, play with your children or pets, explore cooking, write, dance, sing, be creative.

A.D.

- Nurseries, kindergartens and schools are closed in most countries. In this situation, parents have to take care of their young children as well, apart from remote working. Can you give them some tips how to survive this difficult time?

L.L.

- I already gave some thoughts on survival... I think you should make sure you do what you can to minimise the risk of spreading the virus to the most vulnerable part of our population. In parallel work on building and maintaining a strong immune system. When you have taken care of that, instead of focusing on survival, focus on how you can thrive in this time. How can you shift your thoughts and circumstances from surviving to thriving? A key to this is how you perceive what is going on around you and the attitude you choose to keep towards it. Choose to see this as a time you are given as a gift to be with your children, to really get to know them, to play with them, to involve them, for example in cooking, and explore things together you did not have time for before. It can also be seen as a gift for us to get the opportunity to rethink the way of our lives and society, to act differently after this period so that our children can grow up in a more healthy, happy, and harmonious place.

The Programme uses resources from the European Regional Development Fund.



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