

Week 6 -Lockdown

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us"

Helen Keller

As we approach the end of lockdown week 6, we can now clearly see the extraordinary challenges and monumental disruptions to our daily lives, thrust upon us by the Covid-19 pandemic. I imagine without exception, that at some point we have all felt overwhelmed, both by our emotions and a loss of agency of lives and our futures. I know I have.

We are likely to feel at different stages on that cycle and certainly for some of the young people (and adults) that I have had contact with this week, there has been an overriding theme of entering a new normal which sits alongside one of 'stuckness' - of being in limbo. Having reached this temporary normal, which 'kind of' works we must also accept not knowing for how long we may have to do this.

In my readings this week, I stumbled across the reflections of an unknown submariner who said that you have to differentiate time. Focus on what you have got, rather than what you are being denied and try to stay away from 'What happens next?'. He emphasised that, 'you can only control what you can control' and if you create your own rhythm, you will find the days more enjoyable and bearable. Which brings us back to that old chestnut of maintaining routine and discipline during our days and a good sleep pattern, whilst somehow trying to make the weekends different.

I was also given this diagram (again sadly source unknown – but thank you) about, 'Who do I want to be during COVID-19?'



I want to be during Covid-19?'. Not only does it break down the different emotional stages but offers us practical steps towards moving on and into the 'growth zone'.

It is a very individual process. Our reactions to this crisis are both variable and non-linear. The diagram shows this organic, non-linear process of movement, with no timeframe and, maybe, can offer some sense of structure as we continue to grapple with everyday life. Those of us who may be stuck in the 'fear zone' could perhaps pay attention to not get rooted in anger or blame - with ourselves or those around us - as this only prevents us from moving forward.

Alongside the fear and uncertainty mentioned last week, the pandemic has created opportunity for reflection and consequently reassessment about how we live our lives and what we value most. 'Real life' often doesn't afford us this enforced looking glass into our lives. If anything, when we lurk in the 'fear zone', we avoid making changes to how we are operating both as individuals and as part of society, rather than actually making time to learn about ourselves and embrace change.

Focussing on the things we can control – e.g. eating nutritious food, exercising every day, structuring our days, being kind to ourselves and others, planting and watching seeds grow - can return a sense of agency to our lives. Being open and available to growth and not fear may enrich our lives with possibilities we didn't know were missing six weeks ago. Beginning each day not by revisiting grievances, but inviting gratitude and positivity to accompany us, helps us move out of the fear zone.

Interestingly when my sister had a quick scan of this blog to make sure you wouldn't nod off reading it, she said 'I love the diagram – it makes me realise I can exist in all three zones in the space of an hour!'. Which is absolutely true of the grief cycle – it can flip flop back and forth as we confront and move through the myriad of emotions in our path, especially at this time. Trying not to stay stuck and being more open and accepting of others, of nurturing rather than criticising, may help us to focus not on the door that has closed, but on the new ones opening up ahead of us.

Please continue to stay home and safe and a huge thank you again to Mrs Zoe Hall for Mabel's most recent video - https://youtu.be/r_eWZqapn3Y

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