



16th July Blog

The Feel-Good Guide by CPR.

In these stressful times of lockdown when we are constantly bombarded with negative information and news updates regarding the current COVID-19 pandemic, it can take a toll on our moods and the way we feel and act. Adding to this there may be financial losses, burdens on our hip pockets, children who cannot attend face-to-face school plus restrictions on our ability to visit friends and loved ones and to move around freely outdoors.

In the light of all this stress, financial constraints, and uncertainty about when it is all going to be over, we sometimes need to take a step back and acknowledge all the good things that we still have.

We need to find and make our own positivity when everything around us seems so gloomy.

I'm not saying that is easy, sometimes it is not.

But when we try, we can still find many reasons to feel good about being alive and all the amazing opportunities that lie ahead for all of us.

These difficult times will pass, and I believe sooner rather than later. We only have to look at other countries around the world such as England, the USA and Europe that were suffering far worse than we have here in Australia who have now found a new way forward. In many ways, people in these countries have brought broad sense of normality back into their way of life and I think we will follow suit soon in Australia.

When I looked out my window this morning on a mid-July winter day and saw the sun booming down through the big branches and leaves on the tall eucalyptus trees that line the park adjacent to my home, it gave me great sense of joy and wonder about how fantastic this life really is. I was also lucky enough to hear the family of kookaburras that live in my area, singing at the top of their voices and it was a beautiful welcome to the new day ahead.

I guess with having more time on my hands I am starting to see and even do things that I ordinarily would not.

I have even found time to exercise more and that is such a fantastic thing for all of us to do. For me that includes a reasonably rigorous 30-minute workout each morning of stretching and some aerobic exercises. But it can be exercise of any shape or form. One of the best exercises is simply walking. This is not only great for your body but super good for our minds as it allows us to disconnect from all the usual things that cramp and stymie our thoughts.

With the usual busy work and family lives that we have, time is ordinarily precious for most of us. In these days when we find ourselves with 'more time' on our hands, we can think of many great things that we might like to do alone, with your partner or children.

The following are some great ideas that can make you feel more positive again and have a lot of fun during these lockdown times. Our suggestions are not exhaustive by any means as I'm sure each of us can think of many more ways we can actively do things that can bring a great sense of positivity in our lives at this point.



- 1) **Vision Board** – A vision board is a creative visualisation board where you create a collage of photos, words, phrases that represent your goals and dreams. It is a type of bucket list of sorts. It supposedly keeps your eye on the prize, so you achieve it. It's a fun thing to do - simply write a list of ten goals and find some visual representation on Google, save the images, print them out, cut them out, stick them on the Vision board (which could be cardboard you buy from the newsagent) and there you have it, your own vision board. A positive way to dream of a happier time post lockdown.
- 2) **Learn Self-Hypnosis and Mindfulness Meditation** - Deep relaxation has many health benefits including relief from stress, anxiety or being overwhelmed. Self-hypnosis is simply a deep form of relaxation as is meditation. There are many tutorials for FREE on YouTube. Simply type in "Guided Self Hypnosis" or "Guided Meditation" and either sit in a comfortable chair or even stretch out on your bed and follow the instructions to help melt that stress away through some deep relaxation.
- 3) **Play Monopoly or a Board Game of your choice** – It may be tucked away in a cupboard somewhere, dusty, and old but still as good as new. Board games are always so much fun once we get started and remember the rules. If you are living by yourself and you have no board game, there is a great card game called Patience or Solitaire. Of course, you need a deck of cards, but you do not need to know how to play it in these modern times. There are plenty of tutorials on YouTube that take you through all the steps you need to play the game. If you live with your partner, you can try 21 or Blackjack.
- 4) **Write a journal, write a blog, write a memoir, or write an old-fashioned letter to a friend** – It is said that writing down your inner thoughts of how you are feeling can be cathartic. It is a type of emotional release. Please only do this if it makes you feel good because there are so many other ways to write that can make you feel good. What do you know about? What would you like to research and write about? It could be anything from the various pedigree dogs in Australia to the different types of Opals in the world or how to get your roses to bloom naturally without pesticides. If researching and writing does not get you excited maybe writing your memories of your life would be a fun way to spend the day. If your memories include an old friend, send your story to them in the form of a letter. Not only will you have fun writing it but I am certain they will get a kick out of receiving a good old fashioned letter.
- 5) **Take up photography – Video or even learn video editing.** – If you have a smartphone, you have a camera that can take photos or even make home movies. You would be surprised what type of photos your smartphone can take especially when you Google – 'How to get the best from my smartphone camera.' Another hobby you can learn is how to edit videos. A good way to start is to simply place 20 or 30 photos from your smartphone onto the timeline of your video editing package, place a dissolve in between them and add music. There you have a nice video of your favourite photos with music to watch, send to your friends or just keep as a memory. Note – there are many free video editing software packages you can download from the internet. One is called Da Vinci Resolve – whilst it may be a bit complicated at first and there are easier to use software packages out there, this is free, no strings attached.
- 6) **Crosswords, or Sudoku** – I have always admired those who can sit down with the Sunday paper and do the cryptic crossword as intelligent people with a vast vocabulary. Now I know that doing crosswords is not just fun for those who do it, but it is proven that reading, writing, doing crossword puzzles and solving challenging puzzles may be linked to a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease. Quick - hand me that pen!

- 7) **Watch Yoga on YouTube and follow the steps** – Living in lockdown can certainly mean we are not getting enough exercise like we normally do by simply going to the shops or walking to work. One of the best ways you can exercise easily in your living room is Yoga. Whilst there are many different movements in Yoga from beginners to advanced, a great way to start Yoga is to start with simple stretching exercises. You can find plenty of easy-to-follow Tutorials on YouTube for FREE.
- 8) **Get a Netflix subscription and watch USA TV Series** – If you have installed Netflix and you search through the movies and you get frustrated with the poor selection of old movies you have already watched on TV or on DVD in the old days of DVD rental stores, do not worry. Here is some great advice passed onto me by a friend - forget about the 20-year-old movies and start looking at some of the USA TV series which are shot in high definition, with the world's best script writers who will leaving you hanging to watch the next episode – Try Decimated Survivor which is about life inside the Whitehouse or if you like Action Drama you can't go past Black List. For light entertainment there is always Superstore or Schitts Creek.
- 9) **Jigsaw Puzzle** – If you are a beginner, start with children's jigsaw puzzles first and learn how to do them. Apparently, many people love Jigsaw puzzles, and it creates a deep form of concentration that relaxes them. Well just goes to show how different we all are.
- 10) **Feng Shui – or spring clean, re-arrange your home or even renovate** – I thought I would group all these together because in some ways they are almost the same. Feng Shui is an interesting one to research, as many of the laws of Feng Shui could be called common sense. I wonder if people who subscribe to a minimalist lifestyle have been influenced by Feng Shui? The minimalist lifestyle is about living with only the things you need. Whilst Feng Shui is a vast subject with many things to learn, one fundamental I have used in the past is to move everything from one room into another, or out into the yard if you can. Once the room is completely empty you “audition” each piece of furniture or item before it is allowed back into the room. You ask do I need you; do I want you; can I live without you; do you add massive value into my life and questions like this. If you have not used it for one year, throw it out.

We certainly hope you can at least get one idea of something to help you feel good during this lockdown. To create this list the team at CPR sat down - cups of tea in hand - and discussed the many ideas we could add to the list. Some of the most notable exclusions from the list that should get a special mention are: Write a gratitude list; Organise photos from your smartphone; Create a photo album; Bake a cake you have never baked before; Learn to sew or knit; Call an old friend from school; Update your resume; Organise that messy drawer you always said you would; Read a book that you have had sitting around your house or on the book shelf you never finished; Think up ways to be an anonymous donor of a gift, money or something of value.

There are many ways to spend your time, we hope you are making the most of them. In times like these we should always remember the wise words written by Earl Nightingale – *“Our rewards in life will always be in direct proportion to our service to others.”*

Stay positive and happy. If you like this story pass it on.

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