

HEALTH Plus WEALTH

POSTED ONLINE | JUNE 2019

Serenity or Stress?

I recently stumbled on a definition of Serenity as “the state of being calm, peaceful and untroubled”.

Just taking a breath and re-reading that can take me to a serene place!

However, in the context of my busy day, I also notice that life can seem anything but calm, peaceful and untroubled. Instead, I can end up feeling worried, anxious and stressed.

Increased stress can be related to various aspects of life - for example, family, friends or work, but I also think of societal, political and national challenges too. Many of these will have an impact on either my serenity or my stress levels if I allow them.

However, taking a moment to pause and intentionally reflect, I’m reminded that many of these aspects are outside the realms of my direct control, responsibility or influence.

That’s why I thought this would be a good time to share one of the tools we use as part of our 10 session Intentional Health Programme to help us manage times of stress.

*“God grant me the **serenity** to accept the things I cannot change; **courage** to change the things I can; and **wisdom** to know the difference.” Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)*

Whether you believe in God or the current political party agendas, **accepting the things you cannot change**, or have no direct influence over, **is important in maintaining an inner calm**. This calm allows clarity and affords us the wisdom to focus on the bits we can influence or change.

Now, you might argue: “If only it was that easy?” And I hear you!

If you genuinely don’t have control over “it” - whatever “it” is, but you let it take control of your thoughts, energy and emotions, “it” has the potential to control and consume you, along with any available time, energy and resources.

As this prayer suggests, thankfully, there is another way! There is usually something we can do, even if only small or seemingly insignificant.

We can instead choose to seek alternative help, including help from experts who can help us with elements over which we can exert control. **County Financial** is an example of this, as they can help us make wise decisions about how we manage our money.

We also have capacity to control our thoughts, attitudes or behaviours - especially towards those who might have different opinions, expectations or experiences to ours, which can make us fearful.

And that’s why we need courage. It takes a huge amount of courage to rise above the things we can’t control but want to, and focus instead on the things we can do something about, which so often starts with a long, hard look in the mirror.

It might not be easy, but it is simple - it comes down to making a choice.

Instead of being fearful or trying to control something we can’t, we might be better choosing to recognise what is within our control and do something about that instead.

If you fancy a more **serene** and less stressful life, next time you might be stressing over something out of your control, try asking yourself these questions;

- What is really within my control here? And what is not?
- What do I gain from worrying, ruminating or holding on to the things I can’t control?
- What do I lose from worrying, ruminating or holding on to the things I can’t control?
- What would a courageous and wise person do in this situation?

Until next time.....

*God grant us the **serenity** to accept the things we cannot change; **courage** to change the things we can; and **wisdom** to know the difference.*

Niky Dix

Intentional Health

niky@intentionalhealth.uk