

Good afternoon, I hope that this email finds you, your family, friends, and co-workers healthy and safe. Throughout these past weeks of attempting to live our lives as close to “normal” as we can, it is evident that we must actively attempt to keep our **PEACE** in the midst of the chaos around us.

**PEACE** (Merriam-Webster definition):

- a state of tranquility or quiet
- freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
- harmony in personal relations

I have received feedback that individuals are feeling frustrated and at times they are struggling with the current situation. You may have found yourself thinking or saying, one or multiple of the following statements:

- I can't seem to get my home/living environment organized
- I want to GO to work! or, WHY am I at work?
- I do not like cooking and now don't have a choice
- Why can't I sleep?
- My mind cannot stop thinking of the “unknowns”
- When will this be OVER?????
- I NEED a solid schedule!
- I am frustrated and/or angry
- I overeat when I am stressed!
- I am tired of being “stuck” in my home/living environment
- I'm having issues staying focused
- I am worried about the health of my loved-ones
- I am tired of working from home with these darn connectivity issues!!!
- I can't spend time with those that I care about
- I NEED some time ALONE, away from those that I live with
- I am tired of watching re-run sporting events!
- Why is there no toilet paper, meat, cleaning supplies, etc.!?!?!?!?

In actuality each of these statements is evidence that our PEACE is being invaded. There are multiple simple, yet strategic methods to gain PEACE in our lives.

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Paraphrased from: *Managing Life at Home During the COVID-19 Outbreak (Yale Medicine)*

It is common to struggle with unhealthy habits, especially when you are experiencing high levels of stress. Below are a few coping mechanisms:

- Stay engaged with work or other sources of stimulation (Hobbies, social networks, etc.) – This keeps our minds active
- Planning and purposefully eating - healthy snacks & meals - Boredom & stress = Unhealthy, impulse or over-eating triggers

- Have a positive attitude – Pause and reflect on what is important in your life – Practice daily gratitude ☺
- Interrupt negative “thought loops” – PEACE invaders
  - 1) Awareness - Be mindful that negative thoughts are occurring
  - 2) Stop negative thoughts in their tracks!
  - 3) Deliberately bring thoughts back to the present, use something that grounds you. Something that calms your emotions, grounding = Sense of PEACE
- SLEEP 7-9 hours/night– Also consider the quality of your sleep
  - 1) Start the day with exercise/movement, which release hormones that signal your body to stay awake
  - 2) Get an hour of bright light/day to help regulate circadian rhythm
  - 3) Keep the same bedtime and wake up time – Routine
  - 4) Avoid eating in the 3-4 hours before bedtime - it can throw off your internal clock and lead to acid reflux, which disrupts to sleep
  - 5) Limit alcohol and caffeine consumption, which may also disrupt sleep

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Paraphrased from: *One Minute Mindfulness*, Donald Altman:

“Mindfulness realigns your life by letting you break free from automatic mode, giving you the freedom to choose how to respond to life’s difficult, intolerable, and impossible situations.”

It is difficult to find PEACE when we live in the middle of doom and gloom. Below are tips on how to “Create Your Island Of PEACE” –

- Exercise control over the stimuli that causes the brain’s stress center to react
- Create a boundary around negative thinking
- Limit exposure to social media and news
- Dedicate a silent/PEACEFUL place in your environment to enable you to ground yourself when needed
- Find visible objects or scents (aromatherapy) in your environment that sooth you (Art, items that make you smile, comfort you, take you to your “Happy Place”)
- Take an inventory of any environment that you want to introduce greater PEACEFULNESS
- Organize and de-clutter your physical environment or dedicate a place, if environment elements are out of your control (Small children, etc.) – Significant mood enhancer
- Organize and de-clutter your mental environment/thoughts – Clear unhealthy thoughts/habits

Using the points above, write down one thing that you can do to create your own *Island of PEACE* space in your environment. Even one small change can buffer the stress and promote PEACE and clarity!

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May I challenge you to take the COVID-19 crisis one day at a time and be mindful of the things that attempt to steal your PEACE. It is easy to lose our PEACE when situations and circumstances are out of our control, however when we are at PEACE, we are truly in a position of power!

Wishing you the best...

Respectfully,

Lisa Taylor  
Exceptional Family Member Program - Family Support Coordinator  
Airman & Family Readiness Center  
Bldg 6248, West Pine Loop Dr.  
USAF Academy, CO 80840

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