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MENTAL WELLNESS TIPS: USEFUL ANXIETY

According to Jon Reeves, a Clinical Psychologist in Seattle, there is a difference between profitable worry and unprofitable worry. In times of stress, we often fall into unprofitable worry, which is worrying about things that you cannot identify concrete actions that you can take to alleviate the concern. For example:

- **Unprofitable Worry:** Examples “how did the Coronavirus start?” “how was it handled at the start?”
 - These cannot be turned into actionable steps to protect yourself or your loved one
- **Profitable Worry:** Examples “how can I protect myself and my loved ones?”
 - This can be turned into concrete steps such as practicing good hand washing, not touching your face, keeping 6 feet distance from others...

Similarly, useful anxiety can lead you toward positive, life-improving actions, while bad anxiety can lead to unproductive worry and thought spirals.

- **Thought Spirals:** Being unable to think about anything other than your worries and anxiety about the coronavirus

You can break out of thought spirals through “noticing” and “naming”.

- **Noticing:** When thoughts coming into your head, consciously noticing them by saying “I am having the thought that...”
 - For example, when you are thinking about Coronavirus spread at the grocery store, thinking “I am having the thought that coronavirus germs could be spread by touching the key pad to enter my pin code.”
- **Naming:** Increasing your awareness of what you are feeling by naming it as it happening “I am having a feeling of...”
 - For example, when you at the grocery store and paying for your groceries, thinking “I am having the feeling of fear/anxiety that I might catch the coronavirus by touching the key pad to enter my pin code.”

Naming and noticing help to break the negative thought spiral by identifying what is going on internally. Once you are aware of these thoughts and feelings, you can do something about it. For example, by knowing that you are feeling anxious about touching a key pad at the grocery store, you determine concrete steps to address this: bring rubber gloves to the grocery store, sanitize your hands after touching the key pad, or ask how often the sanitize the key pad and ask them to sanitize it before you touch it. This consciousness lets you move into profitable worry. You can shift from being locked into a feeling of “I’m scared” to an awareness of “I’m having a feeling of fear” and choosing what actions you can take to reduce that feeling.

To see the full article:

https://lifehacker.com/how-to-deal-with-coronavirus-anxiety-1842119738?utm_source=lifehacker_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2020-03-15