

# *Chaos & Fear*

# SURVIVAL GUIDE



[pcca.org](http://pcca.org)

*Leelo Bush, PhD*

Dir. of Training, Professional Christian Coaching & Counseling Academy

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# Chaos and Fear Survival Guide

by Leelo Bush PhD, CEO and Director of Training  
[Professional Christian Coaching and Counseling Academy](http://www.pccca.org)

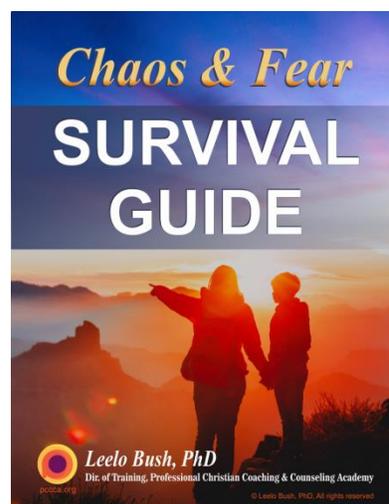
The purpose of this Survival Guide is to help you and those you care about, manage your thoughts, emotions and your mental health during any time of crisis or chaos when you have circumstances that cause you fear and anxiety.

I invite you to share this guide with anyone and everyone you think it can help. If you are a coach or counselor, feel free to use it as is with your clients or patients. This is a free resource. I hope and pray you find it helpful.

**Now is our time to lead.** We need to become equipped. We need to understand how to reframe uncomfortable thoughts and manage our own feelings to better help others.

**The study of how the brain works is called neuroscience.** This is something I have studied for over a decade and I am bringing some of my best information to you here. Through several life circumstances, I realized how much I personally needed this information and this inspired me to create both the Stress Relief Coach and Joy Restoration/ Christian Grief Coach certification courses at PCCCA.

**FACT:** God doesn't just feed one person. He feeds everyone. When God gives us gold, and this information is gold, He wants us to use it so that as His ambassadors, our life is a living testimony to His goodness, grace, mercy and power. I strive to do this and encourage you to do the same.



**We are living in an interesting time, aren't we?** There's so much going on in our world right now, that when we try to take it in and think about it, it can feel overwhelming.

Studying the mind and how to take our thoughts captive unto the Lord, so that we can live our life of purpose, has long been our focus here at this Academy.

Because of this, we have been able to help countless students and their clients overcome stressful situations and recover from their grief. The information contained in this document is an outgrowth of our work so that we can help whoever needs it in this time of uncertainty.

This is the work we do here at PCCCA. It's our area of expertise. And now I believe it is the duty of each person who has this information in your possession, to share this knowledge and help others.

To help you do so most effectively, I have prepared this ***Chaos and Fear Survival Guide***. In it, I am including some advanced yet simple tips and methods you can begin using immediately to help yourself, your immediate loved ones, community and clients. Feel free to share this to help others, be they individuals or groups. Feel free to link to this document so that others can obtain their own copy. All I ask is that you keep this copyrighted document in its current form when sharing.

So let's begin. First I want to equip you with some facts and statistics to put the current situation into perspective.

Among the most significant things that are going on in the world right now is concern about the coronavirus or COVID-19. And with the help of media fanning the flames, what were originally reported as isolated cases of the virus here in the United States, have escalated to full-blown fear and chaos.

### **Caution and Facts:**

Of course we need to be cautious. Yes, we should practice good hygiene. And by all means, begin or continue those lifestyle practices that contribute to a stronger immune system.

The Centers for Disease Control posts daily statistics of verified cases. They also post information to help you protect yourself at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html> The highest risk group are those around 80 years old and older as well as people with severely compromised immune systems.

To put this into perspective, compare this to the 2019 influenza outbreak. According to the [CDC report](#) (Center for Disease Control) there were **35.5** million cases of the flu reported, **490,600** hospitalizations and **34,200** deaths during the 2018–2019 flu season.

Anyone with a compromised immune system is at higher risk.

The good news is that according to the CDC, for most people the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

For the rest of us, it's not the virus itself that's the greatest problem we face, rather the mass panic and chaos created by a steady stream of frightening information put out by media outlets.

This is where you and I can help. By being armed with the facts and the needed skills to support those who are suffering from fear, you and I can make a real difference in the lives of others.

God's word reminds us that the battle is fought, and won or lost in our mind.

**“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” ~ Romans 12:2**

**“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7**

**“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” ~ 2 Corinthians 10:5**

What does it mean to take every thought captive and how can we really do this?

We need to understand that an external circumstance whether it is good or bad, has no control over us until we think about it and give it a meaning.



It is not the circumstance that causes our fear. It is the thought that we have about it, which triggers our emotions. It's the meaning we give it, that makes the difference.

It's also true that we will always move in the direction

of our focus. And our focus will go in the direction we choose. So if we fill our minds with media reports that create fear and despair, our mind will continually seek more of it.

Because of our built-in survival instinct, our brain will continue to seek out danger messages so that we can focus on it and avoid it. The more media we watch and listen to, the more we reinforce that subliminal instinct to seek out danger messages.

**Remember, the #1 job of our news media**, as they see it, is to get your attention to turn on your TV or other media, or read their article(s). While your brain is trying to protect you by looking for danger, the media is waving at you to get your attention with

their sensational stories. This repeated activity causes your brain to build an ever stronger neural pathway to expedite this repetitive process. If you have ever heard the word, neuroplasticity, it is referring to your brain's ability to change and rewire itself to become increasingly more effective for you. Before long, your brain automatically goes searching for frightening information. You believe you need to know everything that's going on because your brain is becoming wired to efficiently seek it out. This is how your brain is designed to work so don't be surprised or discouraged by this.

**The good news is** that you can rewire, or UN-wire your brain from automatically performing the task of seeking frightening news updates.

**The way you do it is:**

- (1) Stop obeying the prompt to seek frightening news.
- (2) Prepare yourself with an alternative task as your default action. You can set this to anything you wish. Maybe you want to automatically take your brain over to a particular scripture. Or, you may get a link to a fun / positive website having nothing to do with news or frightening information. Go there and participate there instead.

It will only take a few days of repetitions to break the original mandate to seek out scary stories.

**One of the first things we must do is reduce our media consumption.**

Then, we need to learn how to differentiate between circumstances (external things we can't change, for example the COVID-19 outbreak) and the thoughts we have about it.

We know that current circumstances will eventually pass. The blessing is that it has created a phenomenal opportunity for us to learn more about how our mind works and become stronger. Equally as much, it's an opportunity for us to take a leadership role to help many others.

**“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who<sup>[a]</sup> have been called according to his purpose.” ~ Romans 8:28**

What meaning will you give those events that occur in your life? It's your choice. Our lives are full of experiences. But you and I get to decide what meaning we will give these experiences. That meaning will determine the thoughts we have about them and consequently our emotions. So if we are full of fear, our thoughts are the cause.

**Negative emotions including fear are causing needless suffering in our society today.** Once we understand how the process works, we can take the steps needed to achieve a better, more balanced thought life. This will help us to end or dramatically reduce the suffering.

Yes there will always be unfortunate circumstances and they may cause discomfort or pain. But if we can understand how our marvelous, miraculous brain works, we can reduce the suffering.



**Exercise:** Think about your life and the thoughts you are having right now. Take a sheet of paper and draw a line vertically down the center. On the top, left side, write your thoughts right now. At the top of the right side, write what your life actually looks like. For the next 10 minutes, continue to do a “brain dump” and fill in both sides with everything you can think of, with no judgment.

When you were done with the exercise, review what you have written. You will see that if you remove any fearful or negative thoughts, your life will be pretty much fine.

## **Balance the input.**

If you spend a half hour watching or listening to media reports, then spend an equal or greater amount of time downloading your thoughts onto paper. When you do, it's a way to minimize their effect. It will help you remember what is important and release the feelings.

## **Love vs. Fear**

God's word tells us that perfect love casts out all fear.

**“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” ~ 1 John 4:18**

How can love cast out fear? You can do this by focusing on the external and prioritizing caring for others. If you focus on helping others eliminate the chaos and fear from their lives, you will be casting out fear from your own life.

**First, take actions that demonstrate love by caring for yourself.**



**SELF**  
Self-care  
IS NOT SELFISH

These include taking precautions, practicing good hygiene and boosting our immune system. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Self-care is taking care of this temple of God. We do that from a place of love. And we can't be there properly for others if we aren't in a good place spiritually, mentally and physically.

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.” ~ Mark 12:30-31**

We may not be able to control what's going on in the outside world, but we can control our thought life. Giving up control of healthy thoughts is the worst thing we can do for

ourselves. Fear and anxiety are known to weaken our immune system. Chronic anxiety causes adrenal fatigue which can be deadly.

### **Here are some exercises and activities to help you:**

**Deep breathing** – We know this works. Here is *why* it works. As simple as it sounds, deep breathing is a powerful aid in reducing anxiety. The reason for is that it activates your body’s relaxation response, according to a mental health editor, Margarita Tartakofsky. Slow, deep breaths will help your body go from the fight or flight response related to sympathetic nervous system to the relaxation response related to the parasympathetic nervous system, according to Marla. W. Diebler.



**Physical Activity** – According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), exercise helps release anxiety in 3 main ways:

- 1 – It releases feel-good hormones in the brain, aka endorphins to help ease depression
- 2 – It enhances your immune system, lessening the chance of depression
- 3 – It also increases your body temperature, which helps you become calmer

If you are exercising for the purpose of reducing your stress or anxiety levels, *don't* give yourself a choice to work out or not. Making it a daily “must do” will help you stick with it.

### **Daily Written Recap Exercise:**

At the end of each day, get a piece of paper and draw a line vertically down the center. List the things that trouble or upset you on the left side and list those items that were favorable and pleasant on the right side. Make sure that you write at least one blessing for each upsetting one. This will help someone realize that there are good things happening every single day.

Sometimes it's as simple as the old adage of looking at your cup as half full rather than half empty. I choose half full!

### **Remind yourself that you're OK now.**

Our brains are wired to look for trouble in order to protect us from ever completely letting our guard down. In our modern world, this is far less necessary than centuries ago. If you feel your brain telling you something is wrong on autopilot, it may be because you have not trained it otherwise. This takes time and practice. So if you start feeling anxious and fearful, say to yourself, "I am OK right now."

For more on this see Rick Hansen's article "[Notice You're Alright Right Now](#)".

**"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."**

Hebrews 13:5 NIV

### **Help Others**

When you help others it helps you too. Even though it may feel difficult when you begin, I encourage you to get involved in helping others. Look for opportunities and you will see they are all around you. Now in fact, is a perfect time since so many people seem stressed or fearful.

You may have heard that helping others lowers your own stress levels. In a research study following 77 adults over the period of a week, they were asked to write down any stress they personally experienced, how often and when they helped others and how they felt afterwards.

The results of this study demonstrated that each person who helped others had less negative emotions about their own life stressors than those who didn't.

The point here is to feel like your actions are making a real difference for another person. As mentioned previously taking action releases feel-good endorphins. Another reason you'll feel better is that you changed your focus from inward to outward. If what you are doing with others is causing a positive feeling, that becomes your focus and our emotions will follow our focus (thoughts).

### **Exercise: Helping List**

Make a list now of everything you could do for others to make a positive difference in their lives. Have this list handy when you need ideas. These could be sending a thoughtful email, opening a door, preparing a meal, or even sharing some of what you learn here with someone who needs it.

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### **Practice Mindfulness**

There are a few different ways to practice mindfulness. The traditional way is to focus on your present state instead of fears about the future or regrets from your past. Get into a comfortable position and begin by observing your breath as you inhale and exhale.

Then move your focus to the sensations you feel in various parts of your body. Traditional mindfulness might end here ... but believers can take this to the next level by selecting an empowering scripture or two in advance to repeat in your mind or say quietly to yourself.



You will notice if you check your pulse before you begin and immediately when you finish your mindfulness meditation, your heart rate should have noticeably decreased. If you have a smart watch like a Fitbit or Apple watch, those statistics are immediately available. Keep a record of your results afterwards.

## Prayer!

Most important is to maintain an active prayer life. Include scripture, praying God's word back to Him as you remember His promises. Below are scriptures you will find helpful.

"When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid ..." ~ Psalm 56:3-4

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." ~ Isaiah 41:10

"For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."  
~ Isaiah 41:13



"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong."  
~ 1 Corinthians 16:13

"The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" ~ Psalm 27:1

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." ~ Philippians 4:13

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." ~ 2 Timothy 1:7

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." ~ John 14:27

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them." ~ Joshua 1:6

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." ~ Psalm 31:24

## REMEMBER YOUR FOCUS...

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." ~ Philippians 4:8

# MORE RESOURCES

It is our recommendation, whenever you can avoid media, do so. Get all your COVID-19 information from either the [Center for Disease Control](#) (CDC) or refer to Advice for the Public at the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). Both websites are helpful to learn how to stay healthy and what is going on in your area. Don't concern yourself with other countries' statistics because they have their own health care systems that may or may not be as effective as those we have here in the United States.

Want to learn more? Stress Relief Coach and Joy Restoration / Christian Grief Coach certification training programs can be found on the [PCCCA courses page](#).



Public Service Announcement

Go



## DO THE FIVE

Help stop coronavirus

- 1 HANDS** Wash them often
- 2 ELBOW** Cough into it
- 3 FACE** Don't touch it
- 4 FEET** Stay more than 3ft apart
- 5 FEEL** sick? Stay home

General public health information

# PERSONAL NOTES