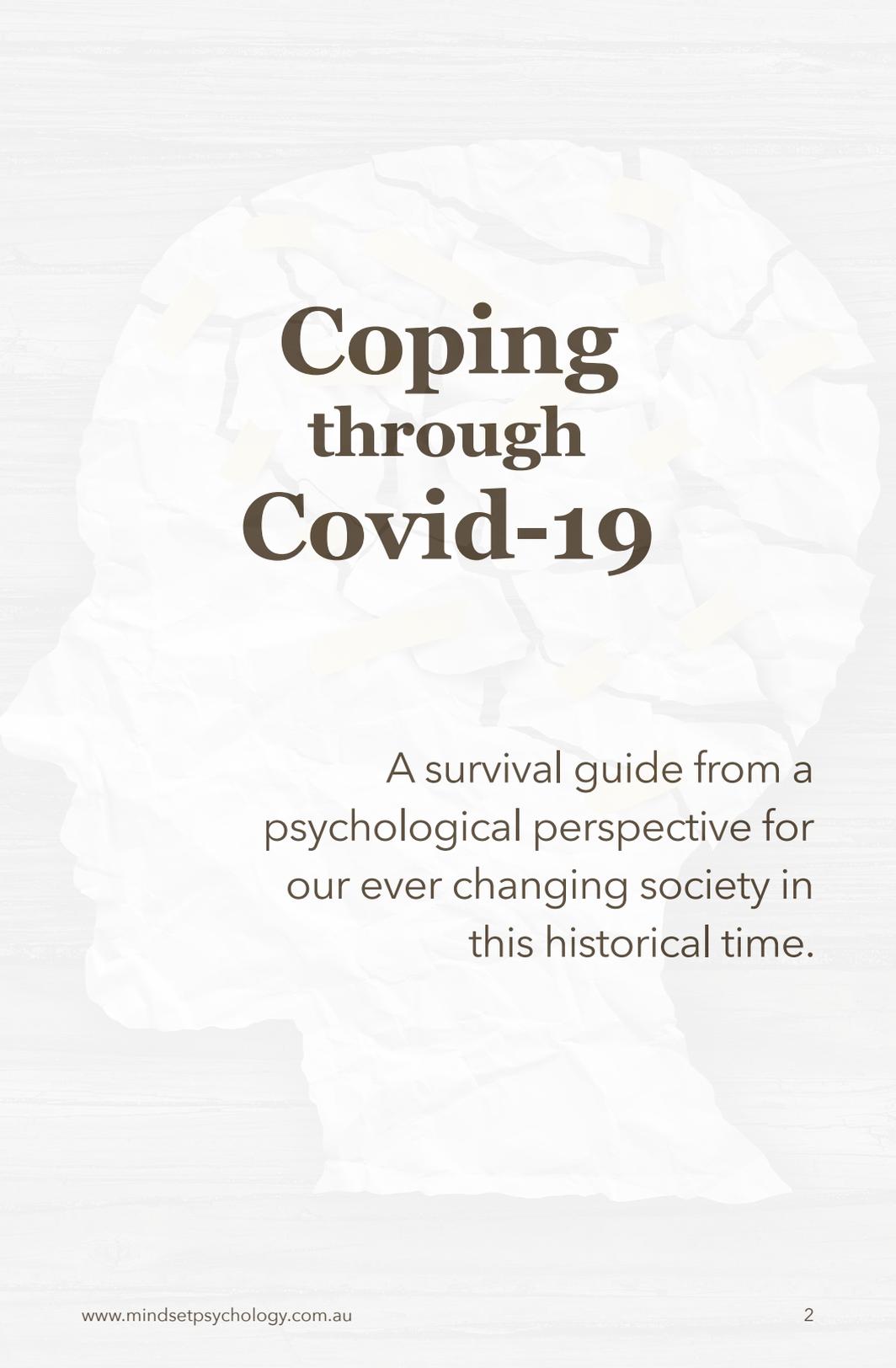
The background of the cover is a silhouette of a human brain, filled with crumpled white paper. Several pieces of yellow tape are applied across the crumpled paper, suggesting repair or stabilization. The entire graphic is set against a dark, textured wooden background.

Coping through COVID

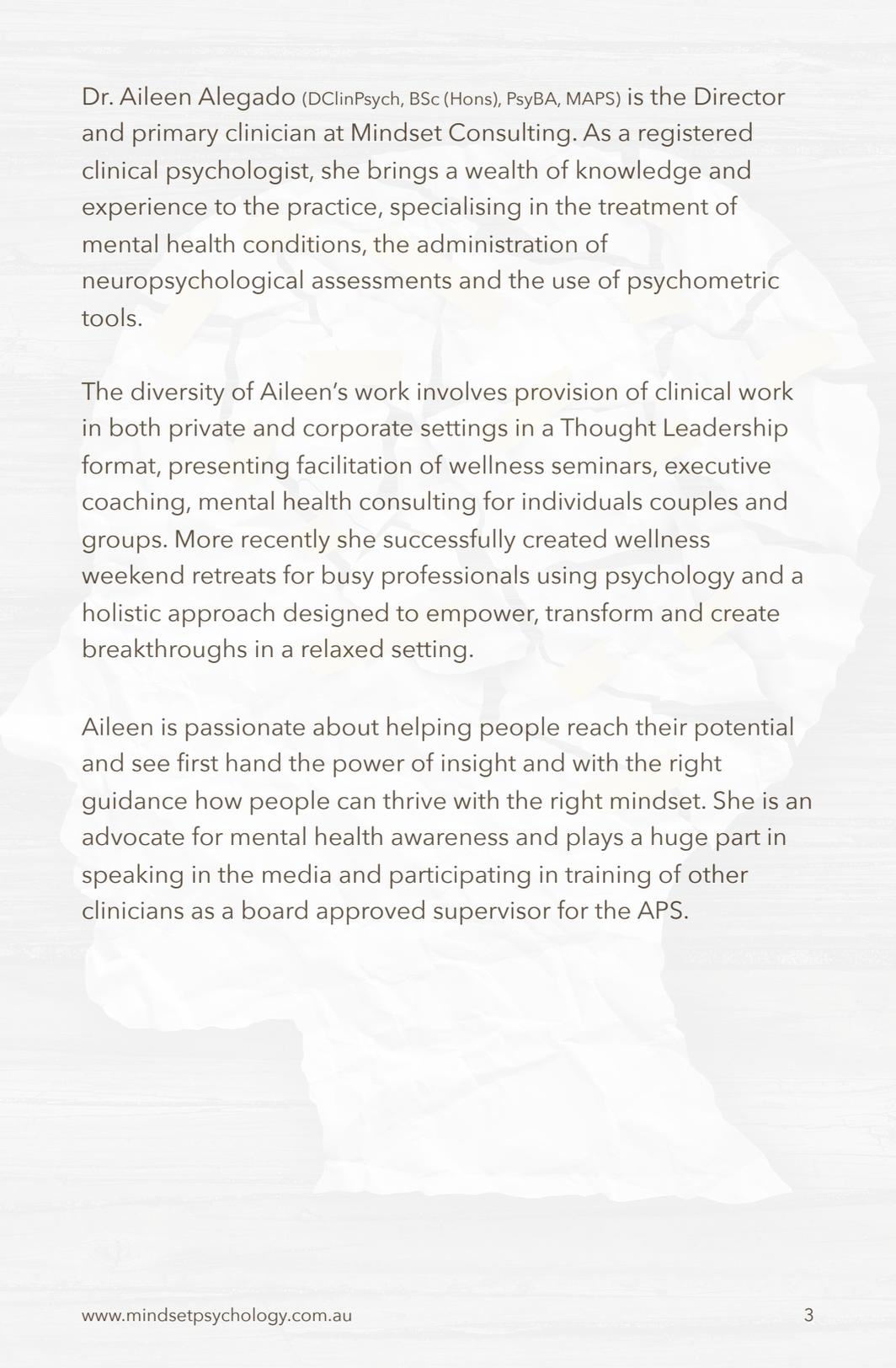
From survive to thrive

**Dr Aileen Alegado,
Clinical Psychologist**



Coping through Covid-19

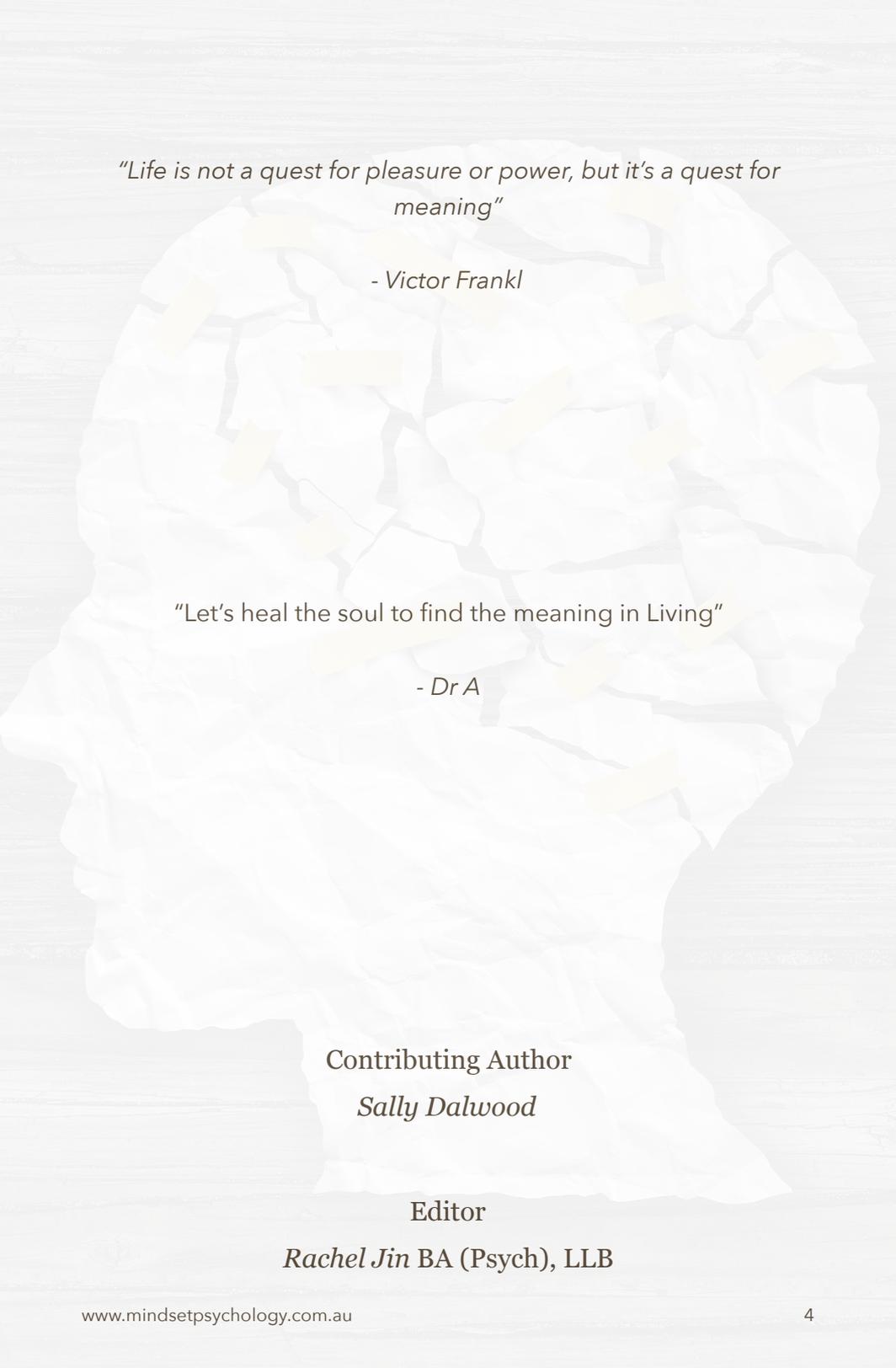
A survival guide from a
psychological perspective for
our ever changing society in
this historical time.



Dr. Aileen Alegado (DClinPsych, BSc (Hons), PsyBA, MAPS) is the Director and primary clinician at Mindset Consulting. As a registered clinical psychologist, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the practice, specialising in the treatment of mental health conditions, the administration of neuropsychological assessments and the use of psychometric tools.

The diversity of Aileen's work involves provision of clinical work in both private and corporate settings in a Thought Leadership format, presenting facilitation of wellness seminars, executive coaching, mental health consulting for individuals couples and groups. More recently she successfully created wellness weekend retreats for busy professionals using psychology and a holistic approach designed to empower, transform and create breakthroughs in a relaxed setting.

Aileen is passionate about helping people reach their potential and see first hand the power of insight and with the right guidance how people can thrive with the right mindset. She is an advocate for mental health awareness and plays a huge part in speaking in the media and participating in training of other clinicians as a board approved supervisor for the APS.



"Life is not a quest for pleasure or power, but it's a quest for meaning"

- Victor Frankl

"Let's heal the soul to find the meaning in Living"

- Dr A

Contributing Author

Sally Dalwood

Editor

Rachel Jin BA (Psych), LLB



*We thank the front line workers for
continuously risking your lives for us.*

DISCLAIMER

The information contained within is designed only as general guide for the unprecedented times through COVID-19. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice of physicians including psychiatrists and psychologists and is meant to supplement knowledge and practice. The creators of this guide have made every effort to ensure that the information in this book was correct at the time of publication and as such disclaims liability to any party for any loss, damage or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause including business and financial advice.

We write this with care and compassion; as we hope our readers shall practice and preach.

Contents

Preface: <i>From Crisis to Opportunity</i>	7
Thrive tip #1 <i>Embrace Change</i>	8
Thrive tip #2 <i>Keep a Routine</i>	11
Thrive tip #3 <i>It's all about Mindset</i>	17
Thrive tip #4 <i>Your AHA! Moment</i>	20
Thrive tip #5 <i>Fear of Fear</i>	22
Thrive tip #6 <i>Mental Health</i>	24
Thrive tip #7 <i>Mindfulness</i>	27
Thrive tip #8 <i>Self Actualisation</i>	30
Thrive tip #9 <i>Relationships</i>	34
Thrive tip #10 <i>Parenting</i>	38
Thrive tip #11 <i>Safety First</i>	42
Thrive tip #12 <i>Your Business, Your Mindset</i>	46
Thrive tip #13 <i>Don't Burn Out</i>	50
Helpful Resources.....	52
Worksheet.....	53

From Crisis to Opportunity

The beginning of this decade has been arguably the world's most challenging period in human history. The spread of COVID-19, now marked as "the Pandemic" has taken countless precious lives, separated families and even collapsed the world economy. So what are the important things we need to be mindful of and not overlook?

Mental Health

Relationships

Priorities in life

What if all we see right now is panic and fear and we miss the hidden opportunities this time could bring?

The next parts of this eBook outline simple explanations and suggestions from a psychological perspective on how to translate well researched studies into practical concepts that will be useful during this time.

www.mindsetpsychology.com.au

Thrive Tip #1

Embrace change

Humans crave consistency. It is a known human need that equates to protection and stability. This is not to be confused with our need for variety. Consistency we are talking about here is not the bland and boring sort. It is about our safety in knowing that our existence and the world as we know it makes sense – that is why our brain likes forming habits, why we respond well to organised plans and being able to set expectations for our time, from people and things accordingly.

As humans we are conditioned to fear change, and that is what the pandemic is doing. Its changing every single aspect of life as we know it, what we become used to. We know that without change we would not evolve for the better. However, in order to get to the good side of it, we must overcome fear. We must go down the trenches and do the work. The human spirit is stronger than we give it credit for.

The concept of Radical Acceptance is something that is practiced in many therapy frameworks including Dialectical

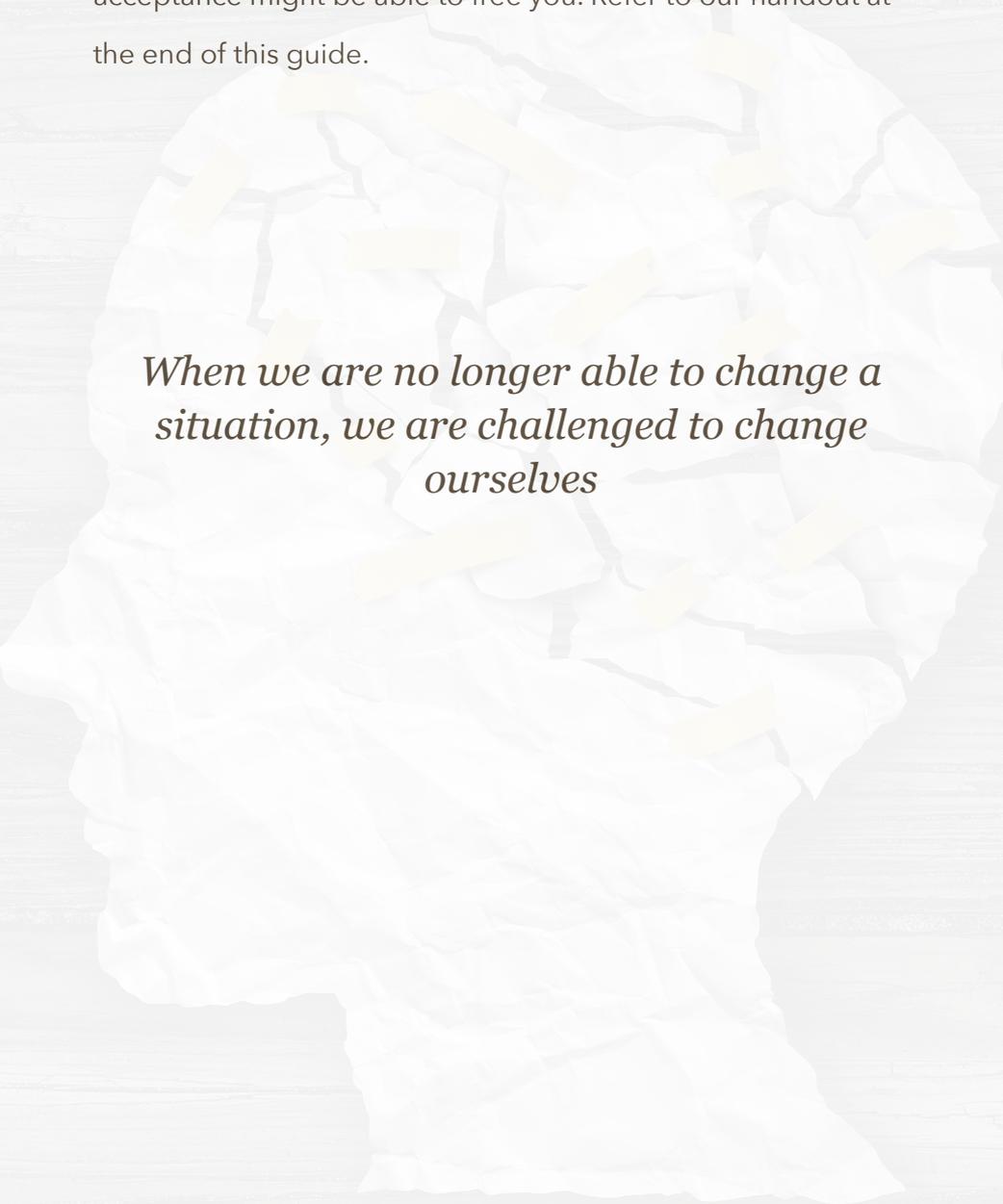
Behavioural Therapy (DBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

It assumes that our resistance to things outside of our control is really the source of our pain and suffering. Radical Acceptance is when you stop fighting reality and you step back from being 'fused' with pain, like an observer, and you stop responding with the impulsive or destructive behaviours that you feel compelled to do. It is essentially a practice of mindfulness of the present and a process of letting go that may be keeping you trapped in a cycle of suffering.

Of course, it sounds easier said than done but you should try it as it might just give you peace from the chaos you are experiencing. As mentioned before, humans fear change but once we understand and commit to what is important to us, then we might be able to create a comfort in the discomfort of both negative and positive emotions if we give it a higher meaning/purpose.

I've attached an exercise that therapists give clients to clarify what's important to them (values they live by). By asking yourself are these thoughts or actions representative TOWARDS your value or AWAY from it? It's a good place to start evaluating if you

are holding on to suffering that is unnecessary and how radical acceptance might be able to free you. Refer to our handout at the end of this guide.



When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves

Thrive Tip #2

Keep a routine (that includes self care)

In a world of chaos, we will naturally want to control and seek order. Physiologically, it's unnatural that we are cooped up in a small space or how we are not able to physically run our minds and bodies in quite the same way. Whilst we are getting used to the idea of self isolation in the home, keeping a routine will help tremendously during this difficult time.

If you have work: ensure that you have everything you need to set up a home office. Plan at least for one or two days ahead and set up times for meetings, breaks and ending your day at the same time you would as if you are in the office.

Dedicate a workspace – away from noise with adequate light and comfortable desk and chair

Change out of pyjamas each morning - try to get ready for the day as if you would be going to the office. It psychologically helps put you in a working mindset rather than a day off mindset.

Set a strict schedule - just as a much as you would be expected to be in meetings or complete tasks in a certain way, define your day's tasks with regular breaks.

Keep in touch - continue to communicate with colleagues or manager through emails, phone video conferencing to help keep you engaged and accountable.

And whether you are working or not, science shows us that our minds and body run better when it is utilised in the way we would as if we were cavemen.

Sleep

One in three Australians are NOT getting enough sleep. Women in particular take longer to fall asleep than men. Whilst it is **recommended for an adult to have at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night**, more than 30% sleep less than 6 hours, with roughly 66% of the population waking up between 1 to 3 times. Having good sleep hygiene can ensure a productive tomorrow as well as replenishing your body and mind from the previous day. Your body operates in circadian rhythms which regulates your physical, mental and behavioural patterns. These rhythms

are essential to your sleeping patterns in terms of hormone production, brain wave activity and cell regeneration. Irregular rhythms can impact various chronic conditions such as obesity and depression.

According to one study in the UK, sleep was a strong predictor of happiness and it beat measures of other stressors such as disposable income and overdue debts. Another study reported by the Washington post showed that an extra hour of sleep a day can be correlated to 1.3% to 5% in the long run, because people who sleep are not only healthier, happier but also earn more income.

Nutrition

As a nation, Australians generally have poor diets. A study conducted in 2015 showed more than 7.3% of total disease burdens was due to poor diet. This is because the food we consume play a vital role in our health due to the nutrients and energy provided. Between 2017 - 2018, 9.1% of adults consumed sugar-sweetened drinks daily as well as less than 1 in 10 met the recommendations for daily vegetable consumption. On average, both males and females aged 18 and over did not

meet the requirements for daily servings of each food category, in particular a whopping 92% of adults did not eat the **recommended 5-6 serves of vegetables.**

Insufficient consumption or an excess in any particular food group can lead to chronic problems such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Whilst diseases may not be solely attributed to diet alone, a balanced supply of nutrition will help the body to repair, grow and protect. Think of balance as thirds; 1/3 protein, 1/3 fibre, 1/3 vegetables on your plate and regular meals throughout the day.

Exercise

Exercise is as important to our health and wellbeing as sleep and nutrition. Regular physical activity reduces biomedical risk factors that contribute to disease burdens in Australia. As well as improving physical health, exercise also helps mental and emotional wellbeing. In 2015, more than 2.5% of the total disease burden was due to physical inactivity and between 2017 - 2018, and more than 55% of Australian adults did NOT meet the physical activity guidelines. These include between **150 to 300 minutes** (2.5 to 5 hours) of **moderate intensity** physical activity or **75 to 150 minutes of vigorous intensity** physical

activity per week such as running, playing sport or getting your resting heart rate up. Females were found to be more inactive than males at 59% to 50% and this rate generally increases with age.

The period in isolation usually works in one of two ways. The first, a self disciplined individual might go about their day as usual - cooking breakfast, sorting through emails, going for a run. Then after say, two to three weeks, their motivation starts to wane. Breakfast becomes rolling out of bed at noon and their laundry pile looks like the stock market on a good day. So far, this is the challenge we face.

Isolation can also trigger and exacerbate underlying vulnerability eg. If one has a previous history or an active eating disorder - this can turn isolation into having more time being more preoccupied with food/weight/appearance. Similarly if you have existing coping mechanisms to soothe boredom or distress through online shopping this can also become problematic.

Remember the problem is not TIME but how where we previously used distraction and busy-ness to fill in our days. We are going to have to be better with identifying our weaknesses more than ever - that includes training our monkey brain to

become disciplined to do what we tell it to do not what is familiar to us (which can sometimes be dysfunctional).

Here are some tips for keeping physical and mental boundaries:

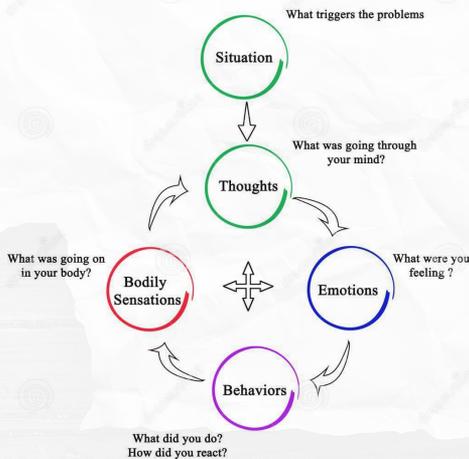
1. Wake up the same time, eat during meal times and finish your working day when you're supposed to ie. clocking out of work.
2. Create distinct places for different activities. Remember, clutter in your environment can translate into a cluttered mind and mindset. Keep areas clean and don't cross-contaminate activities ie. do work at your desk, watch tv and relax on the couch, take personal phone calls in your lounge not sitting in your office.
3. Move energies around the home so just like we physically move to get to our office, then get lunch and then get home, create a routine to demarcate these functions ie. shower and put on work clothes, go for walks and breaks every couple hours if possible, end the day with a shower and putting on comfy "home clothes" and "leave the office".

Thrive Tip #3

It's all about mindset

Let me tell you about the years of my study in psychology and any self help literature you read. It posits that with every situation we have an ability to choose how we interpret what is happening to us and that creates thoughts, feelings and behaviours accordingly. That is why if something happened to the both of us, we can walk away from that experience having two different realities. The more you understand the concepts of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) at this time, the better your ability to cope would be.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



In a situation where there is anxiety we tend to cognitively interpret situations in one of two ways:

1. Overestimate the level of threat or danger - we think the likelihood of a negative outcome is higher than it actually is. Partly we might be pessimistic or catastrophising in this type of thinking. This can be due to what is previously experienced and what was modelled (what bad things have I been told or seen in others).
2. Underestimation of ability to cope - we often forget the wins vs hardships. When we think of failures, disappointments and heartbreaks, we recall the distress but minimise that we coped. This is largely due to our brains being wired for survival; we remember negative events so we can be better next time.

If we had the power to change both (1) and (2) above in a manner that is favourable to us, we will not only survive but we will thrive. The freedom we have at this time when freedom is limited, means we should encourage choosing an interpretation that motivates, inspires and creates a helpful narrative to keep going.

It's all about what you do in this short time in the context of your life span that separates you from the rest. Even studies about those who are traumatised through war and adversity talk about survival by developing a victor's story not a victimised one.

Remember all the times you said you don't have enough time to do something and the abundance of excuses that came with it? Well now you do, unless it involves being social. But there are ways to combat that too, including use of our modern technology and shipping facilities. Take advantage of what you have, what you can make and the amount of time that has fallen into our laps. And for those who have been carving out extra time out of your daily routine to build your dreams, count this as a blessing, as the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for your world to freeze and let you do what you need to.

In the busyness of today's world, we get an opportunity to practice stillness. That is one skill that will serve you for a lifetime

Thrive Tip #4

Your AHA! Moment

A core human need is connection. For many, social distancing and self isolation comes as a shock to the system. We are so used to a world of hyper connectivity that we fear loneliness, often mistaking that for the state of being alone. This is because society has used solitary confinement as punishment for centuries and thus self isolation seems very scary. Theorists such as Freud have also linked solitude and darkness with anxiety, depression and panic. As such, solitude has become much more devalued as humans have become more “groupish”. We tend to use social markers and cues to understand, define and place ourselves within the community.

However some of the world’s greatest thinkers and philosophers champion solitude including the likes of Emerson, Lao Tzu and Woolf. They highlight the importance of solitude in the sense of marvelling in one’s own thoughts rather than other forms of entertainment.

Note here that I have purposely used the word solitude rather than isolation (refer to tip #3). The underlying notion of solitude is self reflection and self awareness. It provides a window to reflect on our deepest values and as a result, our behaviours, thoughts and actions. This requires a lot of self discipline and sacrifice to an extent, where you elect to forgo a temporary dopamine hit in order to discover what is truly important to you. It's also a period to slow down and to take a moment to breathe, to appreciate and be thankful for all that we have in our lives, be it food in our bellies, a roof over our heads and love from somebody.

Many will synonymise self isolation with loneliness and engage in confirmation bias to perpetuate of cycle of fear. At the end of the day, it's all about how we perceive the idea of isolation and social distancing. Some will dread the potential loneliness yet others may view it as a chance for rest and recuperation. Most importantly, the most productive way to perceive our current situation is to see this opportunity to keep your mind and body as healthy and as happy as you can be.

Self isolation is just a hidden retreat.. in disguise

Thrive Tip #5

Fear of Fear

Without a doubt, the Pandemic is not something to be taken lightly. There are social and political regulations that are put in place in order to protect ours and others' health and safety. We must find the balance between being responsible and creating fear that is disproportionate to the situation. As we experience this loss of freedom, this triggers a threat response. Fear is an emotion that is a human response designed to keep us safe. Ironically too much of this emotion creates a very dangerous environment for us physically, mentally and emotionally.

The psychology of fear operates on the instinct of survival. Those that feared correctly survived to pass on their genes down the lineage. This response is biologically necessary as the primitive goal of human life is to survive and reproduce. Translate it into the 21st century and fear becomes synonymous to stress and anxiety. Whilst these terms all relate to a body's physiological response to threat, the high functioning society in which we live means that the slightest perception of danger may trigger our collective fight or flight responses. In a sense, this draws together an allied front for defending against enemies but when

the enemy is an invisible bioweapon, the illusion of fear becomes disproportionate to our possible response options.

We have included some useful information to help manage anxiety at the end of this book.

Doing something that scares you and getting to the other side is what makes people resilient. There's nothing brave about doing something that DOESN'T scare you.

Thrive Tip #6

Mental Health

Why the pandemic is triggering mental health issues:

1)

Grief & loss

Job Loss

Death

Loss of lifestyle

2)

Living



Survival

Triggering arousal mechanisms of:

1. Fight
2. Flight
3. Freeze

3)

Uncertainty & Instability

Fear of the unknown and a lack of perceived control

Triggering feelings of:

Hopelessness & despair

4) *Health Anxiety* for oneself and for loved ones, including those who are vulnerable (elderly, children and the sick)

Promotes

Withdrawal

Social
Isolation

Loneliness

Depression

There is a predicted surge in the detrimental psychological impacts during and following the aftermath of this Pandemic. The conditions of our current society, filled with irritability, fear,

and exhaustion create the perfect environment to sap motivation, sending us into a state of indefinite hibernation.

Not only does the susceptibility of your genes play a role, stressors caused by situational factors including isolation, loss, and financial pressures increase your chances of falling into clinical depression. If you think about it, the physical facets of depression are quite similar to those of social distancing - avoiding or losing interest in social activities, becoming reclusive or withdrawing from friends or family.

There is a unifying theme of loneliness which explains why many fear self isolation. The importance here is to prevent yourself from falling into this state whilst self isolating, and it all starts with your mind. Your mind - including your attitude, perception and thoughts - is the deciding factor between utilising this time wisely as opposed to wasting it.

*Look in the mirror, that's your
competition*

Thrive Tip #7

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the opposite of mindlessness. How often do we go through the motions, multitask, forget what just happened earlier during the day because we weren't paying attention?

Mindfulness by definition, is doing something that requires you to pay attention to one thing that exists between you and the present. It is about being present. Many practice meditation which may come in different forms - some get lost in art, some in music or visualisation or in some a form of trance like movement such as running or dance. We all heard that true happiness is found within but what does that really entail? Well for starters we need to pay attention. Pay attention to being present.

Mindfulness leads to an appreciation and gratitude of the simple things in life. On a philosophical level, it allows us to immerse in the status of our current relationships, connections with other humans to build more intimate bonds without expectations. Practicing being mindful is difficult but necessary because it forces our mental system to pay attention to the present moment without any judgement or contempt. It forces us to

experience things for what they actually are, rather than what they could be.

As humans, we have a great ability to focus on things that are not happening right now. Whilst it can be a tool for analysis and anticipation, many use it in self destructive ways that are detrimental to our mental health and happiness. That is because it is easier for the mind to wonder if we are not fully captured in the activity in front of us, unless it captivates you and you want to be engaged by it. Therefore it is vital that we practice being mindful during the most mundane parts of our day-to-day lives. We know that this may not be the most comfortable experience (especially at the start), so let's begin with something easy.

One fantastic method to help discover interior solitude is journaling, which is also used by people with depression or anxiety. Many mental health experts recommend journaling to improve mood, even if it's just scribbling a thought. It puts pen to paper what is bothering someone and helps pinpoint what is going on in someone's mind. This eventually leads you to become more self aware as you start developing an insight to the patterns, attitudes and schemas that influence your thoughts which impact your behaviour. Journaling also helps you take control and turn chaos into manageable ideas and may also

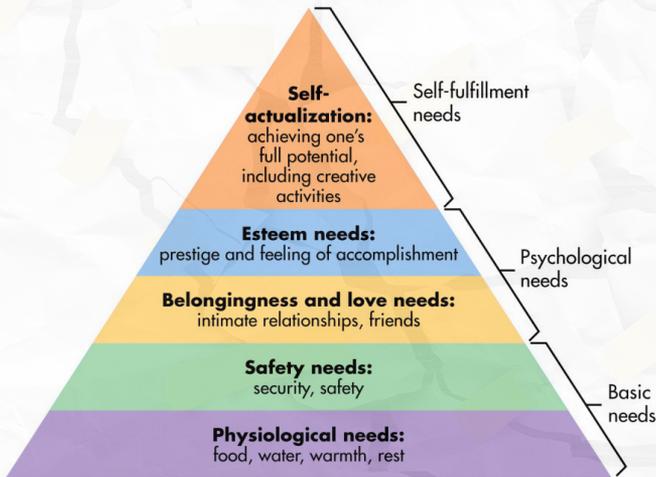
retrain your way of thinking by putting a different spin on your perspective about certain things in life.

Another invaluable technique to practice mindfulness is through meditation. Meditation is the exercise of transforming the mind to focus on awareness through the senses. It helps to reduce stress, improve a sense of presence and promotes clarity of thought. It is essentially to the mind what exercise is to our bodies. Meditation improves mental and emotional wellbeing as well as positively contributing to your physical performance of every day tasks.

Be present in the present

Thrive Tip #8

Self actualisation



In a time of chaos, we seek comfort. That's only natural as evolution showed us that a collective force is stronger than a single unit. As times change however, so does the manifestation of our instincts. Instead of succumbing to biological reactions, we now have the power of higher order thinking.

Whilst it is more tempting for us to seek out support and comfort from others, there is a window here to explore solitude to

address aspects of yourself which may be concealed in front of others. By removing ourselves from a social context or setting, we have the chance to objectively evaluate how that context influences our behaviour, thoughts and attitudes. In order to make an empirical assessment of anything, you must emotionally distance yourself from the subject and the easiest way to do this is through physical separation. Therefore social distancing can help you become more self aware and provides the necessary space and time for self-improvement.

Now turning your self awareness into personal development requires internal exploration that initiates a self reconfiguration process. Initially this can seem very uncomfortable as it forces you to confront who you are beneath all the smoke of our daily distractions.

Without time, location and human diversions, there is no choice but to eventually come face to face with yourself, and it's during this inward-focused solitude that some of the greatest personal epiphanies are born.

Do you like the person you are?

Think of social isolation as an extended retreat. The focus is on the present and on yourself - to be the healthiest version of you, and the happiest you can be. You see, when we are over run with errands, professional duties or even household chores, many of us may end up neglecting ourselves. Some may turn towards entertainment whilst others practice meditation as ways to slow down and relax.

These options are choices that we are able to make on our own terms, which is in part the reason why they are so enjoyable. We have the freedom to choose and thus half the enjoyment of doing something is having the ability to choose to do it. For example, if you were forced to wake up at 5am every morning for your work as opposed to you waking up at 5am to pursue your dreams, which would you choose? The answer is obvious because choosing our dreams is inherently the concept of doing something you *want* to do, rather than you *have* to do.

Self isolation forces us to interact and therefore depend on others much less than if we were physically present. Even through use of technology, much of our lifestyle are much more independent now and as such we should have a lot more time to focus on ourselves. That means utilising this period to improve sleeping patterns, eating habits and exercise. It also means

taking advantage of social distancing to improve mental wellbeing and focus on self reflection, planning for the future, hobbies that you enjoy and building stronger bonds with friends and family. You can use this time to discover what small things make you happy, what nourishes your soul without distractions.

If it was easy then we all would have done it

Thrive Tip #9

Relationships

There have been reports and predictions that mental health, domestic violence and divorce rates will spike following this Pandemic. For those fortunate enough to live by themselves, relationships can be easily managed through discretionary use of FaceTime or Zoom. For others who live with family members must learn to navigate life together for abnormal amounts of time in a confined space. As such, it is unsurprising that conflict is bound to happen, leading to painful cases of resentment, divorce or even violence. Not only does a lockdown enforce stillness and slowing down within us, it also brings a wealth of untapped relationship dynamics that may play out differently when we are confined into a shared space for a period of time.

It all comes down to how relationships are managed and what boundaries are set between each individual. Things like waning motivation, financial stress, loss of loved ones, boredom, lack of communication, clash of ideas, restlessness, and agitation begin to surface. These, combined with the fact that there are limited

physical boundaries means invasion of personal space becomes inevitable.

Personal Space

Our peripheral space serves a huge range of functions but is primarily a tool for protection. It operates in all aspects of our lives, from slicing fruits with precision to driving a car. We need space (be it physical or emotional) to calculate what we aim to achieve and how we achieve it. When our space is invaded upon however, there are three distinct elements that trigger psychological discomfort. These are the lack of control, privacy and autonomy.

Our responses to such offence of our basic human rights range from discomfort and annoyance through to anger and conflict. Over a prolonged period of time, these feelings may very well turn into resentment and depression, presenting all sorts of mental and behavioural issues.

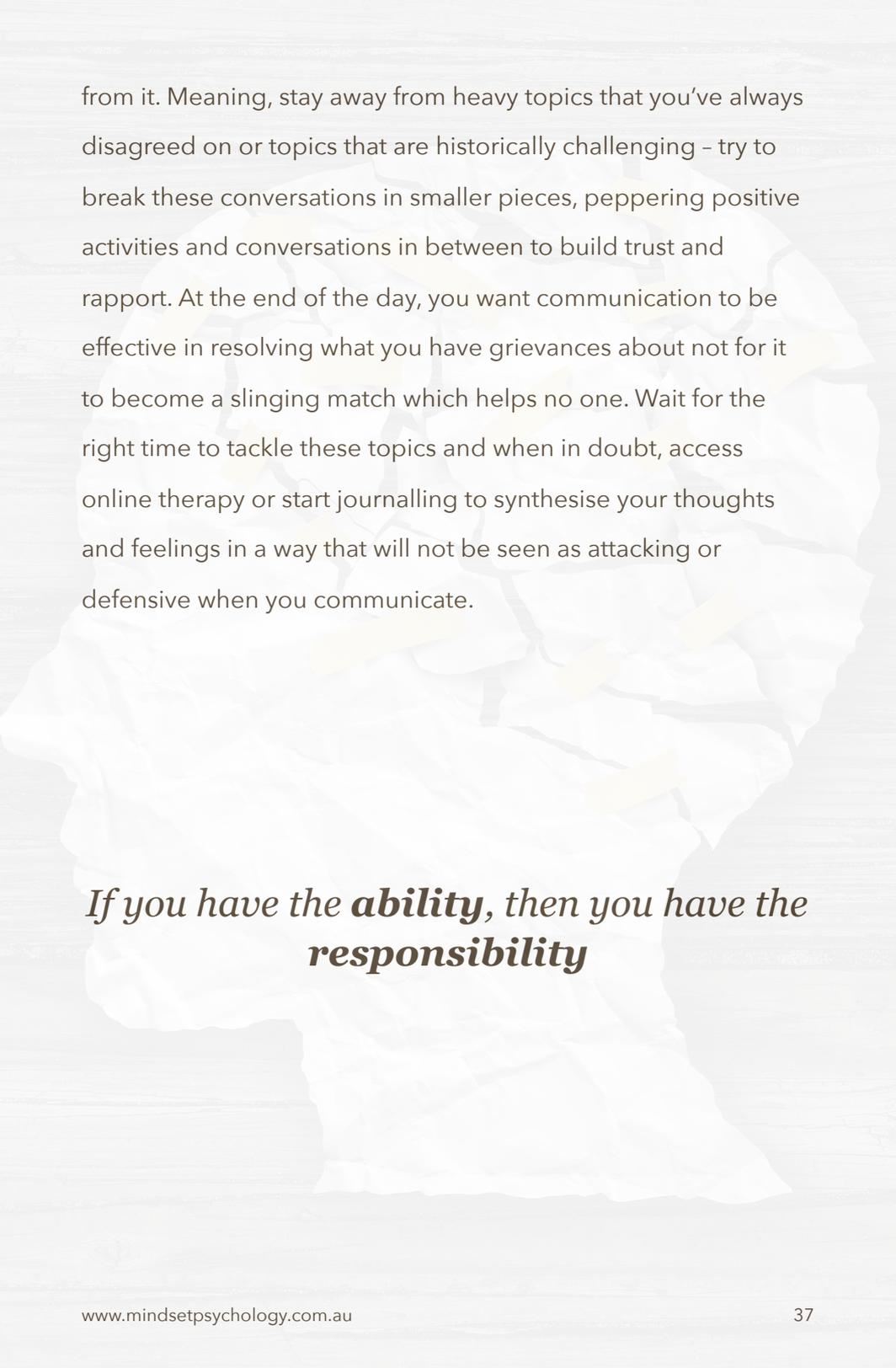
You should keep in mind that culture and personality plays an important role in our spatial preferences. How we were brought up, how we currently are in our relationships and the physical features of the room makes a subconscious difference to the

management of personal space. However, the easiest and most effective way of co existing harmoniously is by communicating your needs to others.

Communication is not enough; the key is comprehension

How you communicate and what you comprehend are critical in this time of uncertainty. More often than not, your family members are feeling similarly agitated, anxious or stressed due to this Pandemic. Sit down with them and establish some boundaries if you can. If you can't however, due to culture or other social factors, then learn ways to cope with these stressors. Make time for yourself and make use of what you can. Get resourceful and get creative because if you don't, no one else could ever make you happy. You have to make the best out of this situation and whilst it won't be easy, it'll be worth it.

And just on a side note, there is nothing wrong with using this time to resolve conflict but just be mindful that when personal space is limited and you're living together 24/7, you might want to build up enough "credits" in the bank before you withdraw



from it. Meaning, stay away from heavy topics that you've always disagreed on or topics that are historically challenging - try to break these conversations in smaller pieces, peppering positive activities and conversations in between to build trust and rapport. At the end of the day, you want communication to be effective in resolving what you have grievances about not for it to become a slinging match which helps no one. Wait for the right time to tackle these topics and when in doubt, access online therapy or start journaling to synthesise your thoughts and feelings in a way that will not be seen as attacking or defensive when you communicate.

*If you have the **ability**, then you have the **responsibility***

Thrive Tip #10

Parenting

Piece by Sally Dalwood

For parents and families, stressors can become heightened during this time of isolation. Not only are you holding the line for your own mental health and well being, you have the responsibility of keeping a healthy household for the sake your children's well being too.

In households where two parents are living it is important to be cognisant of your adult relationship and partnership first and foremost. Communication has never been more important than now, when one parent is having a time of stress, the other parent should be able to know this and help the family through, whilst knowing their partner will do the same.

If one parent is usually the primary carer and one is usually outside the home for work, the new dynamic is one that can take some adjusting too. In this situation normally one parent may take on more of the emotional and physical labour around the home, and now this should change. It is important to

communicate well around this new dynamic for parents - no one in your home is a mind reader.

No one can escape the change COVID19 has brought to how we work and how we can play. It is important to consider each parent's obligation to their work if they're working from home, as well as division of household work and the need for children to play during the day. Sit down with as a team and work out the division of the day and of the labour. Do this knowing that things are liable to be fluid. If you both need to work, set out the division of work time to child time, work out a quiet room in the house that is child free for conference calls. Include in this planning, finding time where you can have space for yourself as an adult alone during the day. Self care is not a soft skill, and if parents don't implement methods of self care for their own wellness, the rest of the family could suffer. NO matter how stable the home already is, the family dynamic change will effect children in some ways, so it is important to recognise this in children too. Set up conditions, habits and rituals for your family to thrive.

1. Children respond to routine above all things, so ensure that their bedtime routine remains the same and that during each

day they have a general “timetable” as much you can with young children.

2. Have children become involved in learning about the value of community - explain that putting a picture of a rainbow in the window can make other people feel some joy, or how delivering food to grandparents is helping them during this time.
3. Take this opportunity to gently begin some new routines or learnings you may have been postponing in the business of “normal” life without adding extra stressors. This could be giving younger family members a new “job” like setting the table, so they have a new challenge too and something to focus on. Have them help more with meal preparation or washing. There is no need for this to be too onerous or stressful on any party, but an opportunity to grow and form helpful habits.
4. Accept that there may be tension and frustration, but be equally cognisant of how this plays out in you home. If you have a robust discussion with your partner in front of your children, be aware of the tone and words you’re using. If this is difficult, and you aren’t able to argue well - make sure your children see you apologise and resolve this argument in front

of them also. This way they can see the value of apology and resolution. Equally, this will be a time your children may see you express emotions you may have before worked to keep from them. It is important to try and explain why this is heightened. "I am missing my mummy at the moment, so that's why I feel a bit sad and had a cry. When we can again, we will see Nana and have a lovely time but it's ok for me to miss her and feel sad.

5. Make sure you keep dishes done and the house tidy so you have the clear mind space. Housework can weigh heavily, but on the whole keep it moving along
6. Give yourself grace - some days the obligation of holding the line can weigh too heavily. Your child may have more screen time than you feel is ideal and eat cereal for dinner - but that's ok every now and again. The laundry may be piling into a mountain because it all seems too arduous, but know you will do it one day - today's not the day.
7. Recognise that this situation of being together will never again happen in our life time, and that there are significant positive opportunities for connection and growth as a family unit.

Piece by Sally Dalwood. For more articles like this, visit suiteset.com.au

Thrive Tip #11

Safety First

In Australia, the police deal with a domestic violence matter every two minutes. Overall, the count is approximately 239,846 per year. An ABS personal safety survey conducted in 2012 showed that 1/6 women and 1/20 men had experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner.

As it stands, **1 in 4** women had experienced emotional abuse from a current or former partner and **1 in 5** women had experienced sexual violence. *Women* were most likely to experience physical and sexual violence in their home, at the hands of a current or former partner.

The economic cost alone for family violence in Australia is estimated at \$13.6 billion per annum. However, it's the personal and social cost that is incalculable. Often there are also other factors involved in a domestic violence situation.

Globally, there are up to 39 million people addicted to drugs or alcohol worldwide with more than 300,000 drug related deaths among people aged 15-64 years and only 1 in 6 have access to

treatment services. In Australia, males in their late 40's and late 20's (at 32%) and 18-24yr old females (at 14.6%) are most likely to drink at risky levels, leading to more than 1.7 million people who have been physically assaulted by a person under the influence of alcohol in the past year.

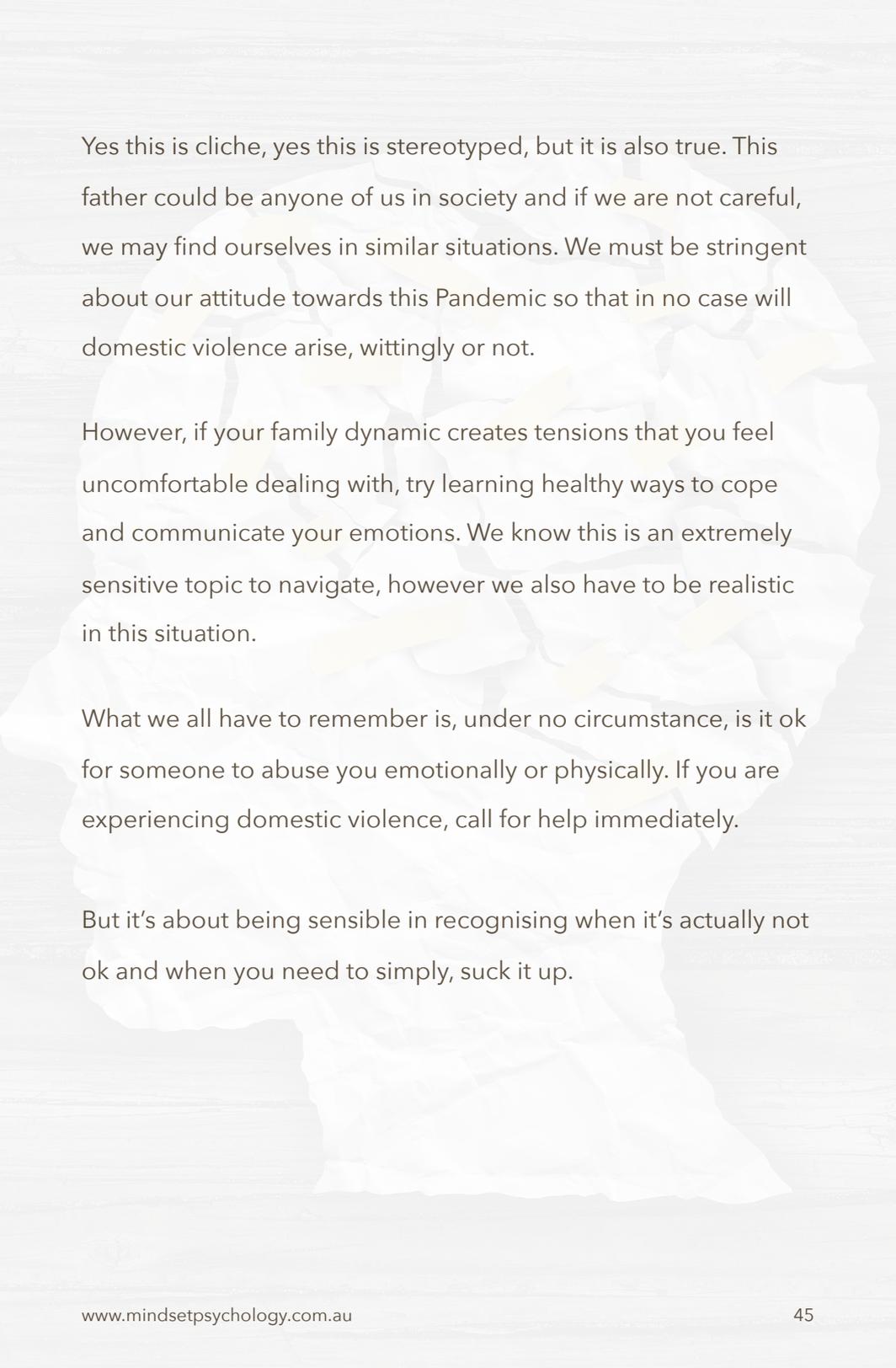
Whilst alcohol is the most common drug of concern (at 49%), this is followed by cannabis (at 22%) with the number of people participating in illicit drug use increasing per year. Of these, more than 1.8 million or 8.3% of the population have been victims of an illicit drug related incident.

It's unfortunate that the words domestic and violence appear in the same sentence, but it's even worse when the word rise is there too. Heartbreakingly, this is what is happening in our society. Whilst not caused directly by the Pandemic, it is a by product of our situational factors that aggravate this atrocity. First of all, many victims are unable to call for help during 'usual' periods of distraction such as work or going out. Self isolation means they are often in close proximity to their abusers with little to no privacy.

Remember what has been said in this document again and again that quarantine removes the time for us to distract from the

busyness of the world. Sometimes we soothe distress with not so helpful ways that provide a 'band aid' for the moment. Let's imagine that drinking is your stress soother. Then imagine how isolation and the cost of Covid from predisposition to mental health issues to financial insecurity to health anxieties we all of a sudden are now faced with. What we used to do on an 'evening' or Friday nights to relieve stress can be something we have access to 24/7. All of a sudden that coping mechanism turns bad. Alcohol disinhibits our behaviours, does not solve the actual problem and if anything creates more problems - let's not add that is actually a depressant.

Other households who experience domestic or intimate partner violence for the first time may justify or even defend the perpetrator's behaviour as the result of this Pandemic. Let's go hypothetical. Imagine your dad, someone who prides himself on being able to support his family loses his job. His view in life is that a man should be able to provide and if his wife and children are suffering, then he has failed in his basic duties. With no income, financial instability and a household to feed, pressure begins to pile and soon he turns to alcohol. Considered one of our 'essential' services, he drowns his worries every day into every night. Soon his motivation declines and his irritability peaks at an all time high.



Yes this is cliché, yes this is stereotyped, but it is also true. This father could be anyone of us in society and if we are not careful, we may find ourselves in similar situations. We must be stringent about our attitude towards this Pandemic so that in no case will domestic violence arise, wittingly or not.

However, if your family dynamic creates tensions that you feel uncomfortable dealing with, try learning healthy ways to cope and communicate your emotions. We know this is an extremely sensitive topic to navigate, however we also have to be realistic in this situation.

What we all have to remember is, under no circumstance, is it ok for someone to abuse you emotionally or physically. If you are experiencing domestic violence, call for help immediately.

But it's about being sensible in recognising when it's actually not ok and when you need to simply, suck it up.

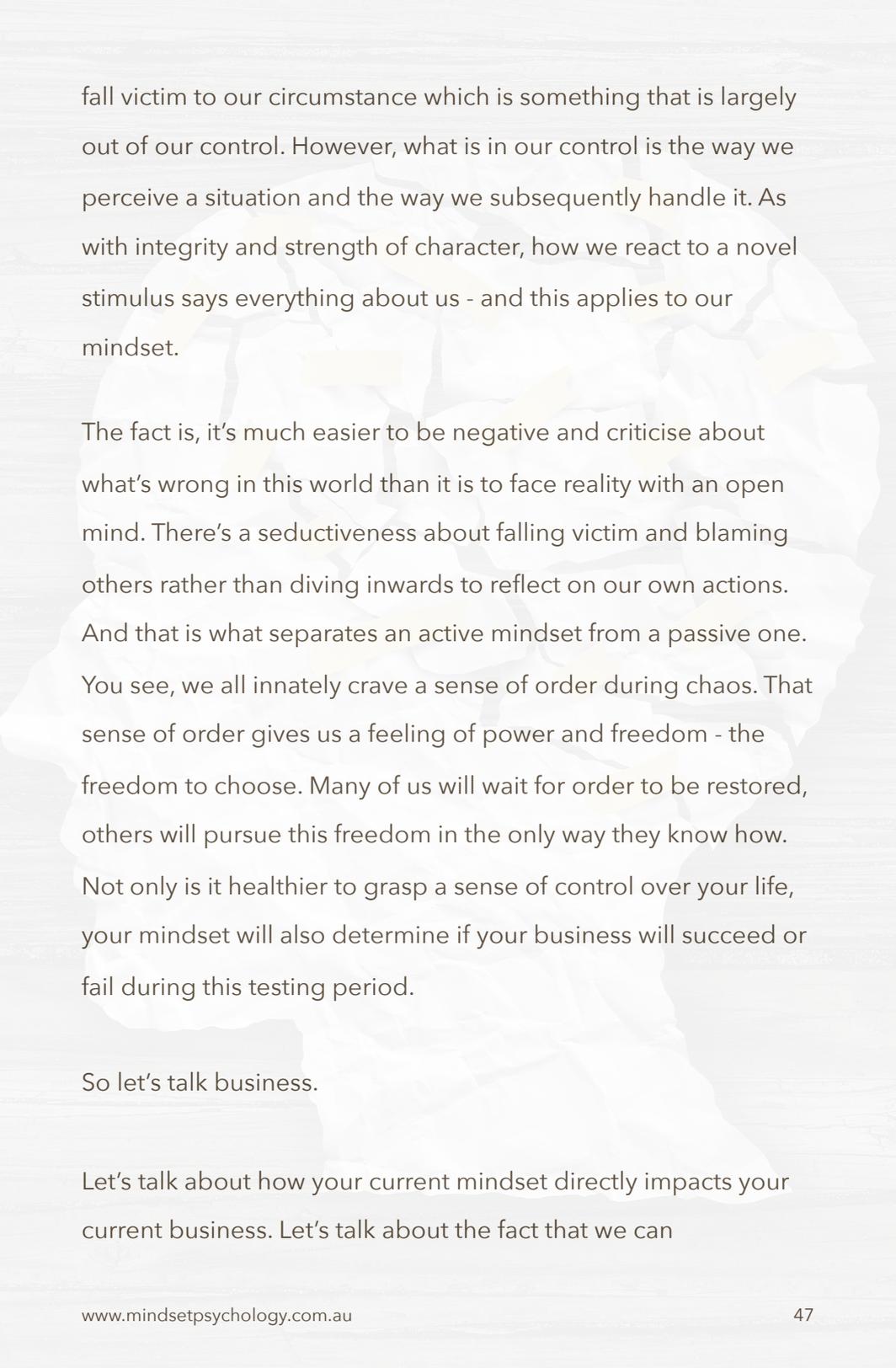
Thrive Tip #12

Your business, your mindset

They say “those who are crazy enough to think they can are the ones who do”, and they are pretty much right, because it all starts with a mindset.

In business, a mindset can be the one thing keeps you going when you really just want to give up. A mindset can be your make or break it tool as well as your entire support system. That’s why having a positive and healthy mindset is your single greatest asset. Now more than ever, holding onto a positive outlook can be the most daunting feeling during these unprecedented times. Looking around us, we see fear in the media, panic on the shelves and a ghost town where the new norm is 1.5 metres apart. People are being confined to their homes, with no certainty to their future.

Many are struggling - and it’s easy to understand why. But here’s the thing. We are literally, all in this together - which means we know exactly what we are going through with one another. This pandemic does not distinguish between race, gender or socioeconomic status. That means any one of us, at anytime can



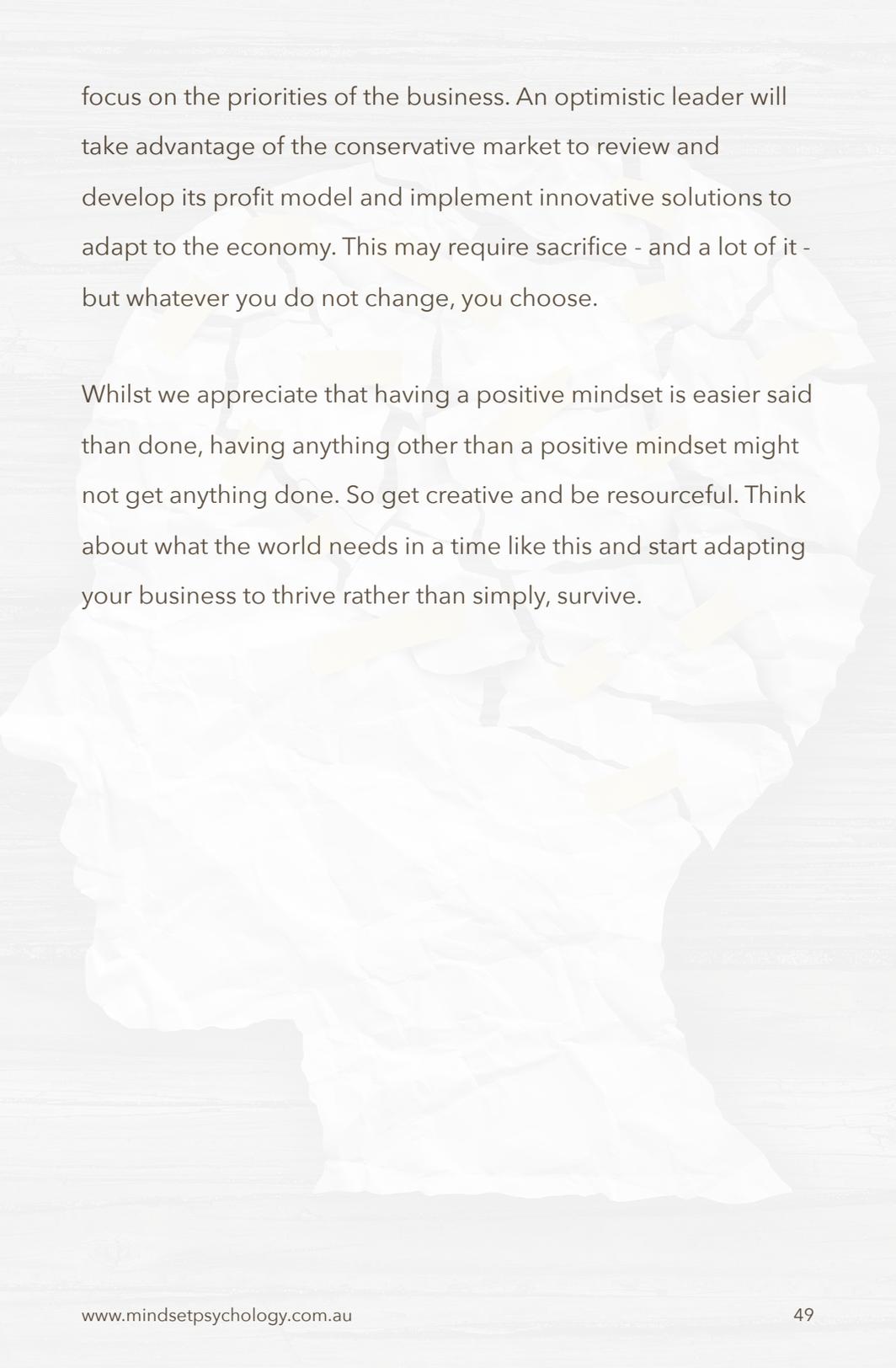
fall victim to our circumstance which is something that is largely out of our control. However, what is in our control is the way we perceive a situation and the way we subsequently handle it. As with integrity and strength of character, how we react to a novel stimulus says everything about us - and this applies to our mindset.

The fact is, it's much easier to be negative and criticise about what's wrong in this world than it is to face reality with an open mind. There's a seductiveness about falling victim and blaming others rather than diving inwards to reflect on our own actions. And that is what separates an active mindset from a passive one. You see, we all innately crave a sense of order during chaos. That sense of order gives us a feeling of power and freedom - the freedom to choose. Many of us will wait for order to be restored, others will pursue this freedom in the only way they know how. Not only is it healthier to grasp a sense of control over your life, your mindset will also determine if your business will succeed or fail during this testing period.

So let's talk business.

Let's talk about how your current mindset directly impacts your current business. Let's talk about the fact that we can

acknowledge what is happening to our economy, how times are changing and how we can adapt to it, accordingly. We can appreciate that both small and larger businesses across many industries are struggling right now; that is not a fact to deny. However, we can also tentatively begin to shift the way we perceive our losses at this moment. Take a look at the models that are thriving; there is a distinct pattern. Where the business does not engage basic survival needs, those that are still alive are those that are capable of adapting to the economy. The key word here is adaptation. Think chameleon, or jellyfish. Creatures like these survive some of the harshest conditions of nature and how? Because they know when to adapt to a situation. Whilst these might be biologically ingrained, our adaptation skills are heavily controlled by our mindset. We have to know when to adapt ourselves and our business models to the changing landscape in order to survive. This goes for everyone, both small and larger enterprises. It highlights that the size of the business is largely irrelevant to its existence if its leaders hold a fixed mindset. That is why many corporate giants have succumbed to their demise simply because they could not, or did not, choose to adapt. Yes, larger businesses often have more reserves to rely on during hardship, but smaller businesses have more flexibility in its leadership and decision making process. This means faster strategising, more efficient resolutions and a clearer vision to



focus on the priorities of the business. An optimistic leader will take advantage of the conservative market to review and develop its profit model and implement innovative solutions to adapt to the economy. This may require sacrifice - and a lot of it - but whatever you do not change, you choose.

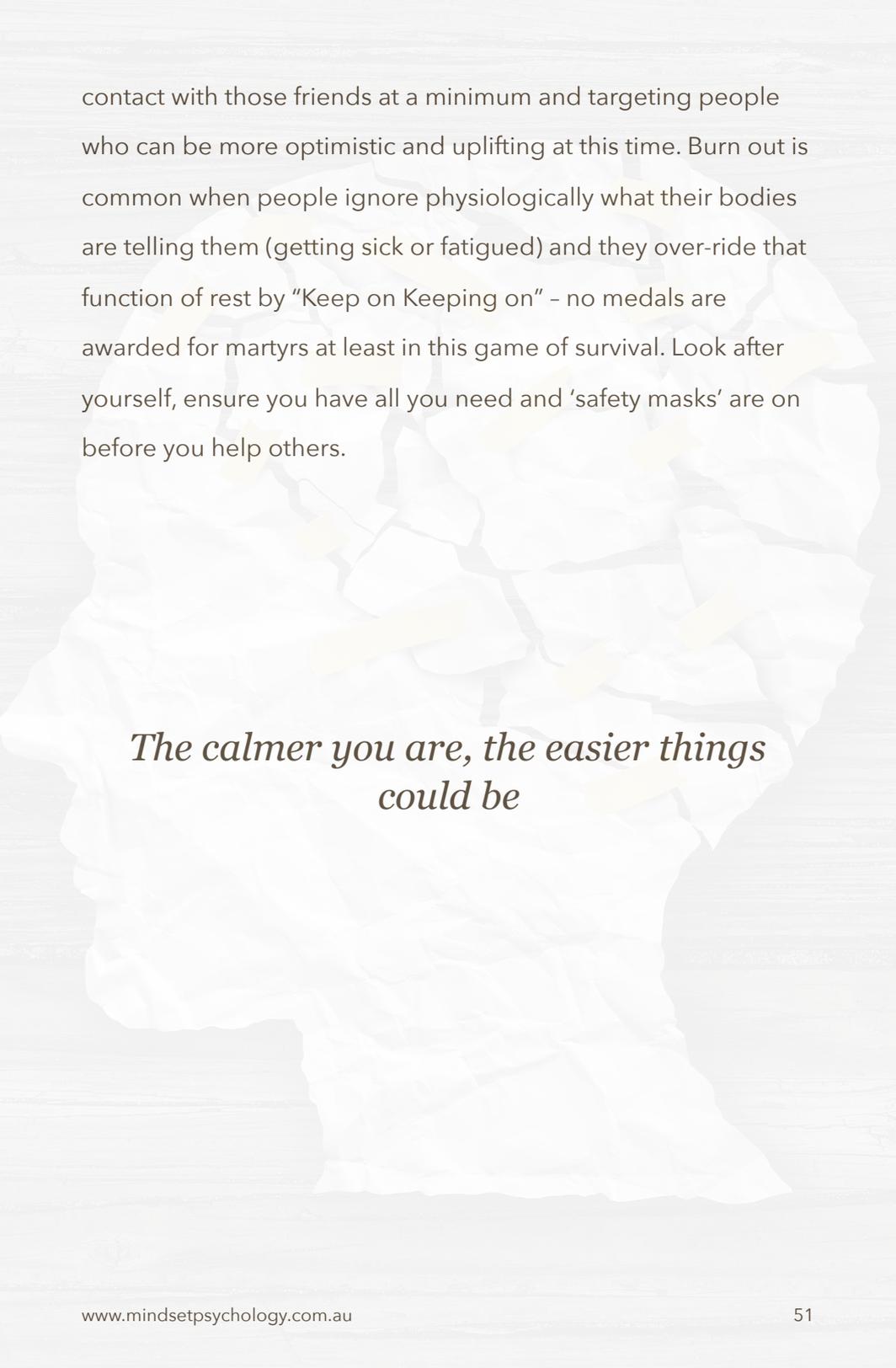
Whilst we appreciate that having a positive mindset is easier said than done, having anything other than a positive mindset might not get anything done. So get creative and be resourceful. Think about what the world needs in a time like this and start adapting your business to thrive rather than simply, survive.

Thrive Tip #13

Don't burn out

The process of isolation is exhausting. If you're an extrovert then you probably cycle between pressure of creating self stimulation that leads to fatigue in the absence of real actual social connections and variety. And if you're an introvert, sharing your space and the lack of ME time is draining for you. One thing we are sure about is slow and steady wins the race. We want to create a balance between routine, rest and achievement activities that we can keep consistent until we can put things behind us.

Many of you might have heard of the term Compassion Fatigue. It's a term used generally to describe a feeling of burn out in people who are empaths, in caregiver roles or those who are naturally self sacrificing in their relationships. The struggle is real and people can be heavy during this time. Understanding this whilst practicing radical acceptance can help you define clearer boundaries, this time is really about self care and survival. For some you might like to limit watching the news if you notice this negatively affects your mood. Those that end up lending a shoulder to cry on for others might consider choosing to keep



contact with those friends at a minimum and targeting people who can be more optimistic and uplifting at this time. Burn out is common when people ignore physiologically what their bodies are telling them (getting sick or fatigued) and they over-ride that function of rest by “Keep on Keeping on” - no medals are awarded for martyrs at least in this game of survival. Look after yourself, ensure you have all you need and ‘safety masks’ are on before you help others.

The calmer you are, the easier things could be

Helpful resources

Links to some useful organisations & websites:

The Wellness Society

wellnesssociety.org | Corona Virus Anxiety Workbook

Face Covid eBook by Russ Harris

imlearningact.com

Beyond Blue

beyondblue.org.au | 1300 224 636

Lifeline

lifeline.org.au | 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

suicidcallbackservice.org.au | 1300 659 467

Headspace

headspace.org.au | 1800 650 890

Butterfly Foundation

thebutterflyfoundation.org.au | 1800 334 673

1800Respect

1800respect.org.au | 1800 737 732

Open Arms

openarms.gov.au | 1800 011 046

Worksheet

'AWAY'

Moving away from the outcome you want, acting *ineffectively*, behaving *unlike* the person you want to be

Write possible 'away moves' here.

'TOWARDS'

Moving towards the outcome you want, acting *effectively*, behaving like the person you want to be

Write specific goals and actions here

What difficult feelings and thoughts show up in response to the challenge?

Choice point

What values do you want to live by?
What kind of person do you want to be?

What skills and strengths can you use to help live your values?

What Challenging Situation, Task, or Activity are you facing?

At the choice point, STOP:

- S**- Slow down - Slowly breath; or slowly press your feet down; or slowly stretch
- T**-Take note - Notice what you are feeling & thinking; notice the world around you & what you are doing
- O**-Open up - Make space for your thoughts & feelings; allow them to freely flow through you
- P**-Pursue values - Remember your values, and find a way to act on them (no matter how small)

The 'Choice Point' worksheet – from *The Weight Escape*, © Ciarrochi, Bailey, and Harris, 2013