

# **NO NONSENSE ADVICE**

**7**

**RIDING OUT THE STORM**

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# PROLOGUE:

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## Look at Crises as Opportunities

The impact Covid-19 has on Sri Lanka - and the entire world, is unprecedented in living memory. Never has any pandemic caused this much panic, and economic impact. Entire nations came to a grinding halt: and for the first time in Sri Lanka's history, day after was declared a public holiday, and then curfew imposed to 'halt the spread of the disease.'

What we observed through all this is how ill-prepared we as individuals are to absorb the unexpected disasters that are bound to shock us from time to time. We are so blindsided with the 'everyday routines' that we never plan for situations such as these: financially, emotionally, socially or practically.

Every crisis offers an excellent opportunity to learn and to ensure that we are better prepared next time round. It is a fantastic time to reflect - and understand how interdependent we are: and how we need to, at times, reduce this to ensure we are able to manage without the general support structures we rely on, simply to live.

This book was inspired because none of us were prepared - even though we are all trainers who espouse 'wisdom' to others. We took a deep, cold and hard look at our own selves, and asked ourselves how well-prepared we were to actually face times of crisis: and were horrified to learn that we too, like most, had never quite planned for a situation like this...

We learn: all the time: and what we learn, we try and ensure becomes a steppingstone for a better future...

So, here are some broad guidelines we set ourselves - which we hope will become a framework for anyone who must face this type of calamity in the future!

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# CHAPTER - 1

## TAKING STOCK OF THE SITUATION - AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

The first reaction to any situation is understandably a sense of uncertainty and panic. What is critical in crisis situations is to ensure you are calm, collected and sensible in how you deal with the situation: rather than simply giving into fear. Before anything else, you need to come to grips with the situation and ensure you have a plan of action - and, ensure you have the right information to deal with it.

### Get reliable information

First and foremost, make sure you have reliable information to work with. The world is full of misinformation and 'fake news' - NEVER get swayed by this. Whatever you do, be certain you are acting on actual facts - and not here-say.

- Verify your information from reliable sources
- As much as possible, get first-hand information - not third hand information
- NEVER pass on information on social media unless it has been verified and 'cleared'

### Take precautions

Take all the precautions you can. Don't get pedantic - nor get 'cocky' thinking 'this will not happen to me.' Understand that risks are very real - and you are at risk like everyone else. The fact that there is no one in your city/district/area that is not 'sick' is no guarantee that it is not spreading to your corner of the world... So, make sure you are taking all the required precautions possible.

- Adopt better hygiene - and even when the dangers are no longer there, continue the best practices
  - Make sure you limit social interactions
  - Use Personal Protective Equipment where applicable
- Avoid unnecessary gatherings - and postpone what is not essential
- Ensure you do everything possible to increase your immunity

### Talk to your family

Face this as a family. Don't go into panic mode. Talk about it as you would any 'situation' and establish a certain level of confidence and hopefulness overall. There is precious little point in turning 'being at home' into a 'self-imposed prison sentence'.

### Take stock of the biggest risks - and plan for them

We may not be able to actually control all of it - but there ARE things we are very much in control of. So, do a sensible risk assessment and identify the biggest impact areas - and see if you can put plan contingencies for these...

### Get help and give help

Get all the help you can get. See if there are those who can assist you in this time of need.

- Talk to your GP or Family Doctor and see if you can go over or if he/she can come over, if you are sick, for an initial screening
  - Talk to your trusted taxi or tuk tuk driver and see if they can deliver rather than you going to the supermarket
- See if you can have local producers bring things to your home - and make deliveries to your street
  - Get together as a community to do community purchasing - reducing the impact and interactions overall
- Look at the most vulnerable groups - such as the elderly - and see if you can help as a community

### Some Useful Links

- To verify if information is correct or not : Watchdog:  
<https://watchdog.paladinanalytics.com>
- For information on how to face epidemics and pandemics:  
<https://www.who.int>

## CHAPTER - 2

### MANAGE YOUR FINANCES

We have a certain lifestyle: and generally, we are rather slow to adapt ourselves based on the 'realities' outside. Change is possibly the hardest with regards to lifestyle: but it is also, most crucial with regards to lifestyle itself. Even though 'shocks' like a pandemic ease out, its economic impacts linger decades sometimes. So, ensuring you can be 'financially viable' as a family, and ensuring you don't get into debt (or more debt) because of situations like the Covid-19 pandemic, is essential. Take this time to readjust your budgets - and see how you can ensure you have your lifestyle - BUT - in a more 'cost effective manner.'

## Make a plan for the next 3 months - take a worst-case scenario

Under normal circumstances, you know what you are going to earn, and spend on. In times of crisis, earnings can get hit, and expenses can increase exponentially if you are not careful. So, make sure you make a rather detailed plan and take the worst-case scenario into consideration.

- Take the lowest earnings you will make - or, if you are self-employed - zero income coming in for 2 months
- Break major expense areas like food into small components like groceries, vegies and meats
- Take into consideration all utility payments, loan repayments etc
  - ALWAYS buffer for eventualities

## EVERYTHING you eat has cheaper options

The first thing is to make a quick budget of how you spend your money (if you don't already have one.) Now, take the line items, and see how best you can find alternatives that are cheaper...

- Certain vegetables are cheaper during certain times - take the cheaper varieties. This also brings the benefit of having a wider variety of nutrients consumed
  - Find cheaper protein sources. We all have our favourites - sure - but, see if there are substitutes and buy them during these times. Small fish is generally cheaper than big ones, curry chicken is generally cheaper than broilers, beef is cheaper than mutton etc
    - Keep away from all luxury food items - they are the most expensive. Substitute local bananas for more commercial varieties, substitute local oranges with mandarins, etc.
    - Switch brands - there maybe generic brands (such as supermarket brands for spices etc) which are generally much cheaper than popular brands

## Meals and Meal Planning

Generally, quite a lot of our money is spent on food - and that too - on takeaways. Now that you're in your house all the time, try and cook at home as much as possible. Also, make sure you plan out your meals carefully - knowing fully well that it is not 'business as usual' and that access to food may be reduced during this time.

- Cook simple meals. They are generally easier to cook too!
- Cook once for the entire day - and heat up as required. This saves time, also, gas/electricity and, if you don't like cooking too much - you have to do it only once!
  - Consciously eat a little less
  - Don't eat in-between meals - stick to the 3 main meals
- Completely take out 'desserts' (with the exception of fruits) - it will be healthier too - and generally, of all meal types, desserts are the most expensive (the price of a Mars bar, for example, is more expensive than a kilo of rice!)
- In a typical meal, carbs are the cheapest, proteins and fruit the most expensive in SL (this may differ from country to country). Try and portion out what is more expensive, and load on the others - but be conscious of your health factors too (discussed elsewhere in later chapters)

## Keep a tab on the 'utilities'

Electricity, water, internet, mobile bills, etc., are all monthly expenses that MUST be met. Try and focus on reducing the bills.

- If you have 3 rooms with AC for yourself, and one each for the two kids, try and sleep together - so that you only use one AC each night
- Look at how you can reduce electricity: tips from the CEB (Ceylon Electricity Board - or equivalent organization in any country <https://www.ceb.lk/save-electricity-commercial/en> ) can be very useful

- Use water sparingly. Wash all your clothes together, cook all the meals at the same time, wash all the dishes at the same time etc.
  - Consolidate internet usage: and see if you can get 'unlimited packages' if you are a heavy user

Remember - crisis or no crisis monthly bills will come - so, given your income may be hindered because of the prevailing situation - consciously reduce the monthly utility bills.

### Consolidate travel

We generally think nothing of a 'trip to the shop' - and do countless little trips up and down without a second thought. Use this opportunity to see how you can make 'route maps' so that you can do a 'lot' in one trip - rather than multiple trips. This not only saves fuel - it also saves time.

So, each day, plan out the trips you need to make - and do it all at once. Forgot something? If it is not ESSENTIAL - then, put it on the list for the next days' travel plans.

### Be clear about what is ESSENTIAL and what is NOT

Take the time to really scrutinize what is essential and what is not during times of this nature. You need to have spares of the essentials so that in case of prolonged curfews or lockdowns, you are all sorted. Ease out or eliminate the non-essentials - and stock them only once things settle down...

- Don't forget to stock up water - in case you have no access to clean drinking water on tap
- Always have basic medicine in times of crisis - especially when you have conditions like pressure, diabetes or even allergies
  - Have basic detergents and washing powder, etc., to hand
- Have basic utensils for small Do-It-Yourself (DIY) repairs - you may not be able to call someone in a hurry at a time like this

## See if there are avenues of cover for you

In times of crisis, governments and other organizations offer certain benefits:

- If you have insurance cover that looks at loss of income - see if you are covered
- For medical related insurance, find out whether your medical bills can be sorted during this period
  - Look at what the government is offering as subsidies or relief packages, get the relevant information, and apply for them
- Talk to your banks and see if you can delay your loan repayments, etc.

## Lessons for the Future

This is a great opportunity for us all - to understand how 'dependent' we are. So, why not look at reducing that dependency in the future? Being financially independent is a huge relief: and enables you to not be 'too' affected by all that happens around you...

- Consolidate all loans into one loan if possible. Commit to paying off your loans sooner - and 'saving first' and 'spending later' rather than 'spending now and paying later'
  - Try and grow your own vegetables. You can grow vegetables even in the balcony of an apartment! Having your own vegetable patch will be both healthier and cheaper than buying veggies
  - Have space? Why not have a few chickens and start having your own eggs (if your religious beliefs allow you this option) A vegetarian? Try growing your own mushrooms as a source of protein...
  - Invest in passive income. A house given out on rent is a classic example of income that will come regardless of any situation. Have a few passive income methods so that you are cushioned during tough times
- Most of all, try and see if you can reduce your 'expenditure' and have a modest lifestyle even under normal circumstances

Ideally, you must have enough liquidity to last 12 months even if you have zero means of income. This is a good start to ensure you are ok regardless of what happens in the macro economic factors. Keep growing this 'fund' to ensure you are able to absorb volatility that is bound to increase over time...

### Some useful links

- Reducing your expenses : advice from the American Debt Help Organization :  
[https:// www.debt.org/blog/10-easy-ways-cut-your-expenses/](https://www.debt.org/blog/10-easy-ways-cut-your-expenses/)
- Tips on how to make your own vegetable garden : From the Old Farmer's Almanac :  
<https://www.almanac.com/vegetable-gardening-for-beginners>

## CHAPTER - 3

### MAKING THE MOST OF THE 'DOWN TIME' AT HOME - COMMITTING TO QUALITY FAMILY TIME

Our daily grind has us playing catch up! Whether it's work commitments, family commitments or life in general, we always find, we are behind on time. There is never adequate time, and there is something that is always on the back burner: for most, what we generally take for granted and neglect, is our family! Now with a lockdown situation we have been given the gift of time to spend with family and self: but now it's the 'where to begin', that is the challenge. How do we use this 'gift of time' productively to nurture familial bonds and ourselves? Here are some starting points to consider: don't waste the opportunity: *carpe diem!*

## Home Chores

As a routine there are the general basic chores we complete on a daily basis: but there are always the chores or tasks that are eternally pushed to the bottom of the to-do list owing to the sheer 'project' nature or the less-urgent nature of it. This 'pause' in your daily grind is exactly what is needed for you to launch these projects. Here is the fun part: you get to enlist the help of the family if the task calls for it. Here are some of the things off the top of my personal list:

1. Organize your toolbox, storeroom, kitchen drawers, bookshelf, etc.
2. Sort out your CD, DVD collections...organize them or give them away
3. Deep clean the fridge, dishwasher, washing machine, oven, etc.
4. Clean your phone, laptop – organize and backup
5. Clean your email, 'folderise' your mails and do the same with your phone
6. Clean your accessories box (jewelry, watches, cufflinks, etc.)
7. Spring clean
8. Get handy and fix the leaks and change that bulb

Even daily chores can be divided and shared amongst the family – the responsibility which generally sits with mom or the domestic: that way it becomes a more meaningful contribution, and each family member becomes a contributor...and more self-sufficient in the process.

<https://bit.ly/2JeK0qV>

## Spending time with parents and relatives

While some of us make it a point to keep in touch with friends and relatives regularly, many are guilty of passing on this opportunity.

YES, we know life gets in the way: but with this new surplus of time, you can now renew bonds and work on relationships.

If you happen to live with your relatives or are in the same neighbourhood, then this a great opportunity to bond with them or share moments with them. Find out about their lives, have a conversation.

For those of us who live separately, do make it a point to make a phone call, get everyone gathered and pass the phone around for a few quick words - which is fun. Where technology permits, do have a Skype or Zoom call and get everyone in on it.

<https://bit.ly/3aj2oux>

<https://bit.ly/2UA9GDB>

## Wish List

We are wonderful procrastinators: who forever put off for tomorrow what we can do today. We forever add to our 'bucket list' or 'wish list' and eventually forget about it. Break the cycle, make a list of these things that you can accomplish from the comfort of your home. Be it a hobby you wanted to pick up or continue with, the book on your side table that is half read, the movie you have wanted to watch, the TV series you wanted to binge on...now is the time!

### Self-Educate – learn a new skill

The one thing you will notice in highly successful people is their constant drive to better themselves. This is a ritual we need to emulate for personal growth, and we need to incorporate this into our daily routine. The best time to research this is now; decide on what aspect you would like to focus on first: Language development, technology, an online course in data analytics or even cookery. Research on the best site, best publications or courses and start it now!

The objective is to be more skilled than you initially were. It does not have to be a big commitment like an online degree: for some it can be growing their vocabulary which means subscribing and then committing to read articles every day or improving your advanced Excel through watching YouTube tutorials. While you are at it, also do some research for your family, the kids maybe, and make sure they too get in on the 'learn a new skill' bandwagon! So, you can all work on your skills as a family.

### Self-Reflect

Probably the harder part of a lock-down is having to deal with yourself: but you must do so before having to deal with others. The internet is going crazy these days with slogans on self-care and personal time. But really, without the dramatics and romanticism of candle lit, flower filled bathtubs, which now depict "Self-Care" - really use this time to retrospect on self and decide if you are aligned with your dreams and goals for at least the next 5 years. An effective way to do this is to create a personal goal tree. – Map out your rituals and your task. Print it out and stick it where you will see it frequently.

Now roll this out for the family, apply it to maybe the next family vacation, or for the older kids their study goals, work towards creating a plan to get closer to your goals and implement them STAT! That way when quarantine is lifted you are hitting the ground running!

<https://bit.ly/2JdGjBN>

<https://bit.ly/2xkRICG>

<https://bit.ly/2QKwj7v>

### Plan for post lockdown

While self-isolation now seems tedious and unending, it too will pass, and we will soon be back in the thick of our daily schedules, trying to catch up for lost time and getting back to business as usual. It's best to start planning your POST LOCKDOWN modus operandi!

List out the next meetings you need to urgently schedule, send out LinkedIn messages for connectivity and tentative meet ups, time block in advance where possible. Work on the family schedule; things are bound to get hectic, from extra classes for the kids, to the chores that had to be deferred. Just have a tentative priority list prepared...for work, home, kids, etc.

### Build and solidify a routine

We were all virtually handed a “RESET” button, and it would be absolutely unfortunate if we let this opportunity pass us by. If you ever wanted more structure to your day, life, family schedule, routine, now is the time to DO IT! You have ample resources in terms of time and technology. Get yourself some productivity apps, plan out your time, your day and aim for that structure in your day!! ADD in time with family, time to connect with family and friends!

### Some useful links

<https://bit.ly/2WJep8W>

## CHAPTER - 4

# IDEAS TO INVOLVE THE KIDS IN THEIR 'EDUCATION' AND MOVING BEYOND THE BOOKS

In the face of a Pandemic and the urgency to self-isolate, there is a lot of pressure on parents; to keep their offspring occupied! Added to the pressures of dealing with stocking up, rationing, managing finances, and trying to work from home...every parent dreads the...loud THUD from the depths of the kids rooms...the banshee like wail that emanates from that general direction....and the drama that ensues...

The trouble is that we either overcompensate or don't pay any attention to helping our kids stay occupied! - Please note I said 'helping'. When we were growing up, we were often, left to our own devices to figure out how we would occupy ourselves for the day – there was never the complaint: 'I am bored!'

This generation however lacks the ability to keep themselves occupied, and us as parents constantly scramble to make excuses for them, and endeavour to eliminate every obstacle for them including their 'boredom' – which does not help anyone! – It merely creates dependency and an entitled attitude. IF we want our kids to become responsible adults, they need to understand accountability!

Here is how to cease this wonderful opportunity to bust boredom and weather the storm at the same time.

## Keeping them informed

Children are often neglected when it comes to information sharing, and we often discount that it does not affect them: or they need to be shielded from negative news. The truth is children are more alert to feelings, vibes, and the little snippets of information they glean from overhearing adult conversations or tidbits from the news: this information could be fragmented and jumbled creating a whole new scenario in their minds.

Even in implementing a new management initiative the first thing we seek is buy-in from the employees. If we want our kids to corporate with us, don't we need their buy-in too?

In an age appropriate manner share information of the situation with them. For older kids there is a wealth of information to read up on and videos to watch. For the younger ones, there are the hand washing tips and how to properly sneeze or cough in the crook of an elbow. Informed children respond better and will feel included in the family unit. Discuss any questions openly and calmly.

Kids are transient with their attention so don't worry about scaring them. The worst thing you can do is to leave them alone with half facts and a vivid imagination.

Here is a link that may help with the current pandemic:  
<https://bit.ly/2UBEpjD>

## TIME - Schedule it!

With the cancelling of the regular school and activity schedule, adults and kids alike are left with a feeling of dread! What do we do with all this extra time! Triggering an existential crisis for many! We, who suffered from a lack of time, now are struggling with a surplus of it, and in a confined space! The best thing to do with time is to spend it! The best way to spend it is schedule it!

So, this will require a bit of time investment to create in the first instance: but all hours between waking and sleeping need to be scheduled! Kids like predictability and structure. Especially in a time where everything is in an upheaval, a schedule will provide them and, you as a parent, with some consistency to the day.

There are scores of schedules – holiday schedules and downloadable formats on the internet that you can refer to. But in general ensure that you schedule: creative time, online learning, time for school studies (worksheets/study packs that have been provided), free play time, reading, family time, and even the little things like tidying the room, putting away toys and showering!

This way you always know what they are supposed to be doing. Mix it up, don't always have all the learning together, or all the playing together. Mind that you don't schedule a high energy activity just before studies, and chores are best scheduled before an activity which is eagerly anticipated. Create variety: this means that they are not sitting in front of the screen half the day, and the other half fighting with a sibling or demolishing the house.

Elementary Enrichment & Learning 		
8:00 AM	<b>Wake Up!</b>	Good morning!!! 
9:00 AM	<b>Mindfulness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playdough &amp; Whiteboards</li> <li>• Coloring</li> <li>• <a href="#">Mindful Activities for Kids</a></li> </ul>
9:30 A M	<b>Online Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Khan Academy Kids</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Eight Words Games</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Brain Pop</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spanish Brain Pop</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Star Fall</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Adventure 2 Learning</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Geographic</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Metropolitan Museum</a></li> <li>• Istation (use classlink)</li> <li>• Discovery Education (classlink)</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <b>Multilingual Platforms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bartolo</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rockin'agua</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PBS Kids</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Story Place</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hello Kids</a></li> </ul> </div>
10:30 AM	<b>Let's Move</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play outside</li> <li>• <a href="#">Go Noodle</a></li> <li>• Chores- <i>help out your family!</i></li> </ul>
11:00 AM	<b>Creative Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">STEM Ideas</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Art Activities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Create a Flipgrid video!</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hour of Code</a></li> </ul>
12:00 PM	<b>Lunch</b>	School meals being served at <i>May Ranch Elementary, Triple Crown Elementary, Val Verde Academy, March Middle School, Tomas Rivera Middle School</i>
1:00 PM	<b>Read Aloud</b>	Read To Me! Any age. Any Stage. Share your favorite story! *For fun post a picture on Instagram with the #vreadtome
1:30PM	<b>Unplug</b>	Relax, go outside, family time <a href="#">Offline Activities</a>
8:00 PM	<b>Bed Time</b>	Good night, sweet dreams 

Site	Link
Storyline Online	<a href="https://www.storylineonline.net/">https://www.storylineonline.net/</a>
Starfall	<a href="https://www.starfall.com/h/">https://www.starfall.com/h/</a>
TumbleBooks	<a href="https://www.tumblebooks.com/">https://www.tumblebooks.com/</a>
Storynory	<a href="https://www.storynory.com/">https://www.storynory.com/</a>
National Geographic Kids	<a href="https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/">https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/</a>
Adapted Mind	<a href="https://www.adaptedmind.com/">https://www.adaptedmind.com/</a>
Khan Academy Kids	<a href="https://khankids.zendesk.com/">https://khankids.zendesk.com/</a>
Scholastic Learn at Home	<a href="https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html">https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html</a>
Classroom Cereal	<a href="https://www.classroomcereal.com/">https://www.classroomcereal.com/</a>
Wonderpolis	<a href="https://wonderopolis.org/">https://wonderopolis.org/</a>
Art for Kids	<a href="https://shorturl.at/hyS89">shorturl.at/hyS89</a>
GoNoodle	<a href="https://www.gonoodle.com/">https://www.gonoodle.com/</a>

### Keep in touch

These mini humans are social creatures too, and during a time of social distancing, they tend to get quite anxious too. Don't discount that they too would want to speak to their grandparents over the phone or Skype, or their classmates over WhatsApp chat – and that is okay. (Within limits). So do encourage them and allow a little time in the schedule for communication with their school buddies to discuss study packs, their latest place in the game they are playing, etc.

## Go Offline

While technology keeps us afloat at difficult times like these, it's imperative that we go offline for a while – and have a “Technology -Cleanse”. We require this as much as our kids do, and this is perhaps a great opportunity for the whole family to jointly handle the withdrawal symptoms. Kids specially spend far too much screen time, just so they are entertained. So, plan a portion of the day where everyone (adults & kids) unplug from their devices.

What are the screen time recommendations?

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/parents-need-to-drastically-cut-kids-screen-time-devices-american-heart-association/>

## Incorporate fresh air/outdoors where possible

In your schedule try and incorporate an activity that puts you in proximity to the great outdoors. For some this maybe a garden, balcony or window, whatever the context, to make sure that an activity takes place in a space other than their bedroom/playroom.

For example, reading or painting time can be done from the balcony or garden. When scheduling activities, try and keep the activities and the locations different to break the monotony!

## Old School – home improvement projects

Go old school, take on a home improvement project, that everyone even the littlest member must contribute to even if it's in the form of lift and carry! Now this does not need to be an elaborate project, like remodelling a house...but rearranging a bedroom or common space, reorganizing a bookshelf, spring cleaning or donating to charity, get the whole family working as a unit. It could be as simple as picking mangoes off the tree...but with everyone on board, it's much more fun and a great memory to make.

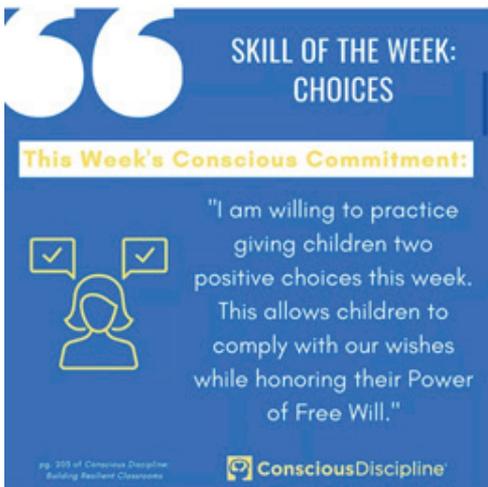
## Look at new ways to build skills

Apart for the academic regime, try and see how you can build your kids personality beyond the books. Utilize this time to look at essential skills, like teamwork, empathy, tolerance, responsibility.

Think of things that make them whole as a person!

Have them take on an additional chore or have them handle a small component of a budget spend or appoint the younger one as an 'energy cop' – turning off all unnecessary lights, etc. or just let them make a meal. Find ways to praise, reinforce and inculcate the behaviour you want to see in them. We are building adults of the future, focus on that for the moment and give them responsibilities that will help them for the future.

Check this site for more on skill building:  
<https://consciousdiscipline.com/free-resources/>



**SKILL OF THE WEEK:  
CHOICES**

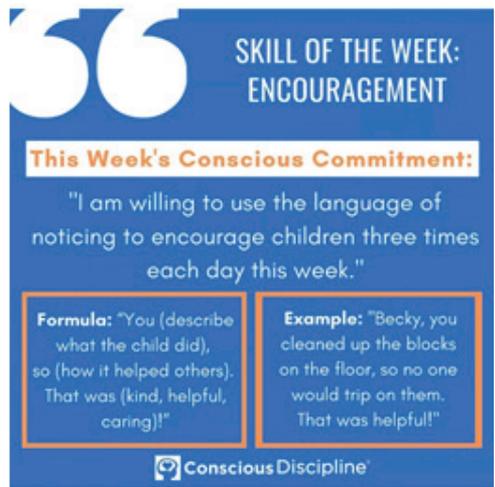
**This Week's Conscious Commitment:**

"I am willing to practice giving children two positive choices this week. This allows children to comply with our wishes while honoring their Power of Free Will."



pg. 205 of Conscious Discipline  
Building Resilient Classrooms

 **Conscious Discipline**



**SKILL OF THE WEEK:  
ENCOURAGEMENT**

**This Week's Conscious Commitment:**

"I am willing to use the language of noticing to encourage children three times each day this week."

<b>Formula:</b> "You (describe what the child did), so (how it helped others). That was (kind, helpful, caring)!"	<b>Example:</b> "Becky, you cleaned up the blocks on the floor, so no one would trip on them. That was helpful!"
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 **Conscious Discipline**

### Maintain limits and discipline – always!

House rules stand no matter what! Even in the best of times or the worst of times, limits and discipline must stay in place. Do not allow these boundaries to be tested, nor lose control even for a moment.

Your YES is a YES, and NO is a firm NO!

Hopefully, you already have limits and house rules in place. You will need to get a little creative with your punishments now, as grounding them in a quarantine situation is not even a punishment. Look for something creative, like a cleaning chore or something tedious. Pre-warn with said task and if compliance is not seen, implement. Do not differ or delay!

Remember to reward good behaviour and keep in mind like attracts like, and it's a great incentive!

## CHAPTER - 5

### KEEPING YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY ENTERTAINED: AND DEALING WITH BOREDOM

“There is nothing like staying at home for real comfort.”

(Jane Austin) How many of you would have said this to yourselves repeatedly and just longed for the luxury of being where we are today?

However, add the word ‘stuck’ and it changes the entire mood and context. Being compelled to stay home as opposed to making the choice to do so is a totally different thing. Add the threat of impending doom to the compulsion and you will most certainly need to find ways of distracting yourself from all the mayhem around: social media, rumours and panic buying; staying entertained; and maintaining an optimistic, healthy frame of mind.

Furthermore, you will also have to be an inspiration to motivate your family to do the same so that you create a happy space around you, despite your circumstances. In order to do this best, begin with YOU. Once you sort yourself out, you will begin to radiate the positivity and it will spread to the rest of the people ‘stuck’ with you. No one wants to be ‘in the face’ with a ‘grouch’. So, relax, and pull out your positive thinking cap. “You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”

### **Kick boredom in the face!**

What exactly is boredom? – It could be having too much energy and not having anywhere to direct it or feeling dissatisfied or unstimulated with what you are doing. In this light, it then becomes necessary to come up with ways of directing your energy, and formulating activities that your family and you would find stimulating. Do this!

### **Begin at the beginning - YOU**

Have quiet moments – ‘Me time’. With everything that is going on around you, you will find that you could feel quite lost without your regular routine, workmates, workload, challenges and all that went into keeping you satisfied and feeling fulfilled. Take this time out to console yourself and regain control of your inner self: meditate, listen to music, have a chat with yourself – whatever works for you.

### **Strike a balance**

Trying to do it any other way would not work in the long term. You would only end up feeling miserable and demotivated if you do not engage yourself in activities you enjoy. Similarly, if you try to manipulate everyone to suit your fancies, you will have to deal with resentment. Given that by now you have a fair idea of the likes and dislikes of your family/others living with you, come up with a healthy balance that would keep all of you happy. If you don't have a clue, then this is a good opportunity for you to invest time and get to know the people you live with.

### **Make a list & make it happen!**

Listing always helps. Think of all the things your family and you can do, obviously within the confines of your home. Add a variety so that you will be engaged in different activities catering to all the members. Remember, now your kids are at home 24/7, particularly in the context of curfew/lockdown when you're so ‘totally in the face.’ If you're at a loss, imagine THEIR plight!

### Spend quality time with your family

Isn't it ironic that we spend so much time working, in order to spend on our families with whom we have so little time to spend? Most of us run from one thing to another and do not have much quality time to devote to our families. Hence, you could consider this time a bonus and use it constructively. Being stuck at home has its advantages. You might as well capitalize on them.

### Get to know your kids better

When was the last time you actually sat and had a conversation with your children? Do you know what their favorite color is or who their Superhero is? Do you know what makes them angry, happy or sad? Enjoy your kids! You might be back, behind your desk before you know it. Or, on the other hand, you might be within the confines of your home for much longer than you expect. Either way it is to your advantage to make the experience worthwhile. Make memories with the time you have been gifted with.

### Don't expect too much too soon

You need to understand that it takes time to change patterns. If your family is not used to spending time with each other, don't expect them to clap their hands and do the jig the moment you decide you want to have fun and you're ready to spend time with them. They need to get used to the 'new you', particularly if you have maintained an iron rule/distance. Give them time.

### Leave no one behind

Take into consideration the fact that this is a difficult time for everyone – not just you. Regardless of age or relationship, it is not just being stuck at home, but the fact that everyone is in each other's faces that could be quite difficult to deal with. For example, a disgruntled maid, pining for her children whom she can't get to, is likely to make life miserable for you. Pay some extra attention and provide her with some activities that would keep her entertained as well.

### Build lasting bridges

Use this time to build bridges between your family and you, and between the other members in your household. If some of the relationships have soured over time. This could be an opportune moment when you can heal as a family. There is no better medicine than laughter to heal wounds and shape healthy memories. Spend time enjoying each other's company.

### Be creative

Find ways of converting those things your family and you enjoy doing when you go out and redesign them to suit the situation. For example, if you go out bowling usually, try instead, stacking some tins one on top of the other in the form of a pyramid and breaking them with a ball. Some of you, if you are old enough, would have played this game in your childhood. Pull out those board games. Or you could try some party games, depending on how many people you have at home.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IP285d2b-Q>)

**CHAPTER - 6**  
USING THE 'LOCKDOWN' TO  
GET FIT - AND ADOPT A MORE  
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

(Locked) Down but not Out!

### Capitalize on the time!

This is really great; you can save time on things like showering and getting things ready. You can also cut corners on wearing shoes and socks if you need to.

The extra time on hand also means you can help warm up and stretch those weaker muscles and spend more time working on the workouts you hate doing. If you hate or are weak at doing pushups, start with a lower intensity version like with your knees down on the ground.

### DO's

- Working out on an empty stomach using up fat to fuel your workout
- Use that saved time sleeping a bit extra, you'll need the rest for your tired muscles
- Use, on the workout, the saved energy traveling to the gym

### DON'Ts

- It's easy to get lazy and complacent, so use the 5 sec rule
  - Getting distracted at home is easy...don't give in!

### Get set - and plan things out

Some Gym rules still need to be applied; you will need water, a mat and a towel too ideally

### DO's

- You can work on almost any schedule you like depending on how much equipment you have at home
- Focus on having separate days for workouts Day 1 - Core, Day 2 - Legs , etc.

### DON'Ts

- Having less access equipment can push you to use unsafe alternatives

### Get others involved - why not workout as a family?

This is great way to get the kids active as well. If you have a spouse who is on the fence about getting active, he/she can watch and be tempted to join in and not have to worry about watching the kids who are already part of the workout.

### DO's

- Get your partner and or kids involved
- A family that plays together stays together, so this can be family time as well
- Start simple and work your way up the routine

### DON'Ts

- Kids mimic parents' actions so be wary when using items such as barbells, dumbbells, plates, kettlebells, etc.
  - Overdo the exercise routine
- If the kids are tired, don't push them to a point of hating the idea!

### Nutrition, Water and Rest...

While everything will be at proximity, do ensure that you have proper nutrition, plenty of water and that you do get plenty of rest. This is all part of the process.

### DO's

- Eat healthy food after a workout so that you gain the lost energy
- Get proper rest to ensure that the muscles have enough time to heal and build up

### DON'T's

- Overdo the routine, simply because you have time on your hands
- Eat unhealthy items

## Taking it up a notch - after all, you can sleep it off a little!

Your muscles are damaged on purpose during a workout, literally. This is essential in order to improve them, provided that the body is fed and rested thereafter. Being at home is an amazing solution for this. While at the gym we tend to have a quick post workout bite in our gym bag or in the car, being at home gives you a whole kitchen at your disposal!

## DO's

- Get plenty of rest and give a chance to your body to build those muscles
  - Push reps and time where you can just manage. E.g. if the workout you are looking at online is 20 reps, and you can just manage only 15 reps, that's fine, you have nothing to prove
  - Write down a workout if you need to off the net or YouTube

## DON'Ts

- Exceed safe levels of intensity, if you get TOO sore access to a hospital or a physio is harder to get to
  - Push too hard outside your comfort zone

## Some useful links

- Keeping fit and staying active:

<https://www.itv.com/news/london/2020-03-19/keeping-fit-and-staying-active-at-home-during-coronavirus-crisis/>

- 5 ways you can work out during the crisis:

<https://www.benzinga.com/general/education/20/03/15564140/5-ways-you-can-work-out-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

## CHAPTER - 7

### DEALING WITH THE STRESSES THAT INEVITABLY WILL TAKE PLACE

COVID-19 or the Corona Virus has taken over the whole world, where WHO has declared it a global Pandemic. The death toll is on the rise daily & the whole medical community is trying hard to save people. With the guidelines of the WHO, governments of every country are striving to prevent the spreading of the virus. Most of the countries have gone to the extent of 'locking down' the country.

It was highlighted that Social Distancing is the best way to prevent the spread COVID-19. The whole world is at a standstill which in turn has created a very stressful situation. This situation impacts every individual in every household, as they fight not just to protect their homes and loved ones, but also to be able to provide for them. This now increases the stress for everyone to another level.

Despite providing a lot of information and the subsequent instructions to stay clean and to avoid public gatherings, many still don't seem to follow through. The question is why do people ignore these instructions? Is it because they lack IQ or is it the lack of EQ to understand the gravity of the situation? I would say it is greatly owing to the lack of EQ/EI (Emotional Quotient/Intelligence), rather than IQ.

Daniel Goleman defines EQ/EI as the "individual's abilities to recognize and manage their emotions, and the emotions of other people, both individually and in groups". EI consists of two main competencies which is Personal Competency & Social Competency.

**Personal Competency** is about how well you understand your own emotions & understand the impact you create because of these emotions. Social Competency is about how well you understand the emotions of other people & how well you manage it.

### **What's the relationship between COVID-19 & EQ?**

The Sri Lankan government, with the help of the Medical community, did instruct fellow citizens to have social distancing, keep distance while talking, stay home, not to travel if not urgent.

How many of our countrymen followed this? As of now we have reached over 72 cases (21st March 2020), it's just that we lack EQ to understand the seriousness. If we have self-awareness, which is understanding our own emotions which in turn leads to being self-safe and healthy; we will adhere to the given guidelines. Because we do understand the gravity of the virus and the impact it can create to the self & society. As we are aware, we will not be stressed about the situation.

However, we also lack Social Awareness where our concern for others in society is at the lowest. Case in point is, when the curfew was announced, the Supermarket queues demonstrated a lack of understanding as people were lining up right next to each other. Many didn't even wear a mask or protective clothing. This panic behaviour is a direct result of the stress created.

We could be a carrier, but while our immune system may be healthy, we run the risk of passing the virus across to someone else: someone who could be the sole bread winner of the family or someone who has an elderly parent at home, which leads to another set of risks. China was successful in facing the Virus due to strict quarantine measures and the public adhering to them 100%.

Another case in point, many ended up purchasing a lot more than what was needed and never once thought about the next person, who might have been looking for that one packet of milk powder or that loaf of bread. We cleaned the shelf and left nothing for those who were not able to make it earlier. Even here your Social Awareness is tested, and you can see the amount of stress it creates.

The constant flow of information about the symptoms of COVID-19, requires our understanding. This is only possible through your *BQ, or body intelligence*, which reflects what you know about your body, how you feel about it, and how you would take care of it. Your body is constantly telling you things; are you listening to the signals or ignoring them?

- So, listen to your body if you're getting these symptoms, please visit a doctor without ignoring them. Or you can call the special telephone numbers provided.
- Stay fit, exercise regularly. You don't need to go out to do this. You can stay indoors and continue to exercise. Involve your family members as well. This will help to reduce the stress level.
  - Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables to support your body function.

Another area of concern is **MQ (Moral Intelligence)**. Owing to the fear of being highlighted, stress levels have risen beyond control. This has driven people to avoid telling medical staff of their travel details, whom they have been in contact with and not fully disclosing all the symptoms. This is simply a lack of MQ (Moral intelligence), which deals with your integrity, honesty, responsibility and sympathy. During this outbreak our MQ should include honesty & responsibility.

- Be honest with yourself. If you are infected or feel that you have the symptoms, call the *National Operation Center for Prevention of COVID-19* or visit the nearest doctor

Finally, *CQ (Culture Intelligence)* is an important element to fight COVID-19. As per Harvard Business Review, CQ “means an outsider has a seemingly natural ability to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures in just the way that person’s compatriots and colleagues would, even to mirror them”. We have been asked to have distance when interacting with people, avoid shaking hands. Our Sri Lankan culture of greeting (Ayubowan or Vanakkam) has been a great asset to prevent the disease. Many world leaders are adopting this gesture, even prince Charles.

We are a country with a very rich culture, where our people with different religion and ethnicity always end a helping hand to the authorities by eliminating cultural and religious gathering which is a very thought-provoking action.

- Maintain your cultural and religious activities at your own home with the family and not by gathering people.
- Let’s greet people in our Sri Lankan Cultural way, so we don’t need to shake hands.
- While you are socially distanced, don’t forget to check & connect with neighbors, family & friends through social media or by making a call.
- Being compassionate is our culture, it is about helping people. There may be people who could not buy their groceries due to financial difficulties. Let’s reach out to them & provide a meal pack (within government guidelines)

All of the above will help us to lower our anxiety and stress levels.

COVID 19 is a test of our stress management in many ways. Stress of “*will I get infected from the Virus; will I be spreading it*”.

## How can you manage your Stress during this global pandemic?

- We need to seek more Self-awareness & Social awareness.

Follow the guidelines given by the relevant authorities. When you are more Emotionally Intelligent (practicing both Personal & Social competencies) the chances of you getting stressed is very low, because you are now aware about the situation. It's not only EQ you will develop in this crisis; you will be developing MQ, BQ & CQ as well, while managing your stress.

- Keep your mind occupied with chores, family, exercise, etc., and this will divert the attention from stress, while improving your social competency.
- Please note adults and children respond differently to stress. Be vigilant with kids during the crisis, show a lot of compassion to the children.

It is important for all of us to have positive mind-sets to fight any sort of crisis. You can maintain your positivity through your Emotions. Being Emotionally Intelligent can help you to manage the stress from any crisis.

### Some useful links

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/robinryan/2020/03/17/how-to-manage-workplace-stress-dealing-with-the-coronavirus-pandemic/#6b89765c64d6>

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>  
(Taking Care of Your Emotional Health)

## CHAPTER - 8

### WORKING FROM HOME

Working from home sounds awesome, however, if you're not used to it, it can be quite a daunting task. Most of us are not used to it: and are ill-equipped to do it given how we generally work. Having internet access and having a desk to work on doesn't quite cut it to work from home! The trick is to try and mimic work environments as much as possible. Remember - you are working from home as a temporary measure - as such, the rule book for you is a little different from that of someone who actually works from home as a practice.

### Try and make a 'proper' workspace

When you go to office, by the time you travel, you're ready to start work. But when you're working from home, getting off the bed to your desk could be daunting. It's important that you are mentally ready to 'work'. The best way is to pretend that you're going to work. Set your alarm as usual, get ready (yes, change your pyjamas), pick a table/chair/place as your home office, arrange the place, de-clutter, voila! Your place is ready to work!

### Plan your workday

You're your own manager when you're working from home. This means you've no pressure to stay focused nor peer pressure to stick to your work. However, don't break routine. Stick to it, even if your workday is not fully 'loaded'.

Plan your workday as usual. Based on your energy levels, slot in your report writing / analysing work to be done in the morning hours and take calls/ online meetings towards afternoon. Allocate time for each task, so you will not drift away. It's important to let your schedule change, if you need to, but it's equally important to commit to the plan in order to make the most out of your day. Try and commit to do more work in one day. So that you would end your day with most of them completed.

### Avoid Distractions

Though you don't have co-workers stopping by your desk or invites for lunch outs, you're not out of distractions. It's easy for you to become your own enemy. Yes, all the news alerts and notifications are important to stay updated. But having the social media tabs open, will easily get you carried away browsing throughout the day. Ensure all social media tabs are closed in your browser. Check them only during breaks.

When you work from home, at times, your motivation could just swing away, and you will have the urge to take multiple breaks. Be disciplined, take scheduled breaks. Be it a coffee break, or lunch, see that you stick to the allocated time.

It's strange how all the errands and laundry work come to your mind when you try to work from home. It's fine to do your laundry while you work and focus on the work in-between the cycles. But ensure that you don't get carried away. Even though you're physically at home, remember that you're supposed to be working. So, buckle up, avoid distractions, and do justice to the work at hand.

### Communicate your 'work time' with the people at home

Isn't it great news for your family, even for your pet dog that you will be at home? Well they would miss out the 'working from' part out totally. It's a given. Make sure everyone at home respects your space during work hours.

Let them know your work hours, break times, and your work mode, so that they will not distract you. For example, if you're working with your headphones on, or sitting in the place you've planned for work, which means you're working. If you communicated your break times, those would be the time where you might get your turn to baby sit, do some quick errands or even help a sibling with some of their work. Even kids could be made to understand your work from home arrangement.

Remember, you're working from home. Not on the moon. So, it's ok to occasionally talk to people at home, just as you would do with co-workers at office. It's not that you should wait for a break to see someone's face and smile or have a quick word.

### Have a clear time for work

We usually think that working from home would give us more work-life balance. If you do it right, yes it would. But be careful of getting too bogged down with work and ending up working more hours than usual and losing complete track of time.

Get someone at home to remind you half an hour before your set ending time or keep an alarm. So, you know that your workday is coming to an end, and you should wrap up work. It's not a must to end sharp on time. At least you know you've got to wrap up and be mentally prepared to disconnect.

It's nice to be working from home, but don't let it take control of your personal life and lose the difference between staying at home and working from home. Have a set time to start work and end work daily with few exceptions you would allow yourself to make.

### As much as at 'work' - ensure you don't procrastinate or postpone

You might be overwhelmed with the tasks you've scheduled to complete during the work from home period. Don't let this be an excuse to procrastinate. Break down the bigger tasks into smaller assignments, set deadlines, and just do it. Remove all distractions and focus on one task at a time. Reward yourself each time you achieve a milestone and you would complete the main task without a hassle.

### Some useful links

Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time

<https://hbr.org/2007/10/manage-your-energy-not-your-time>

Finding Your Productivity Rhythm

[shorturl.at/uwAFL](http://shorturl.at/uwAFL)

7 Tips for Managing Your Schedule Like a Pro

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/243962>

## CHAPTER - 9

### DOING YOUR PART FOR THE WIDER SOCIETY

There's indeed nothing quite like a crisis to highlight both the beauty and the ugliness of society.

Some of us are caring, empathetic and generous and some of us are selfish, rude and arrogant. Regardless of who is what, remember that it should never be 'Us' vs 'Them'. While it is tempting to look and judge people who might be 'panic shopping', standing too close in long queues or even choosing to cover up their noses and mouths with their bare hands, we must identify as the collective 'Us' rather than the right 'Us' vs. the very wrong 'Them'.

So, what can you actually do? Here are three simple suggestions:

## SAY

- Be conscious about the casual conversations you engage in with family, friends and neighbors. You might think that you are merely talking about death tolls and relatives of relatives who have contracted the virus, but you wouldn't know the impact this information has on people who have anxious tendencies.
- Ask yourself if you are speaking for the sake of speaking, or if you have something useful to say. Sometimes saying things out loud might be cathartic, but in a time of crisis, there is enough chaos going around without people adding to the mental load of others with information that isn't going to do them any good.
- Think about things you can say to uplift spirits. No doubt we are experiencing a colossal shit storm, we need to educate people on safety and hygiene, but we also need to make sure our voices of good are not muted, we need to ensure that people have something to look forward to while they weather the storm.

## SHARE

- Take responsibility to ensure credibility. There are people out there who for the sake of audience engagement or some other unknown reason, take pleasure in spreading fake news. More often than not, these articles and images have clickbait captions that can be very tempting to 're-share'. If you are choosing to re-share, you can no longer use the excuse; 'I don't know, I saw it on the net'. You have the responsibility to do a quick Google search to verify the content you choose to share.

- It's not just about bad news, it's good news too. The best example is the series of images/articles circulating the internet about how Swans and Dolphins have returned to the canals of Venice due to the slow-down of tourism. While this was a heartwarming story in a time of crisis, National Geographic provided evidence of how the news was fake. To quote National Geographic: "The swans in the viral posts regularly appear in the canals of Burano, a small island in the greater Venice metropolitan area, where the photos were taken. The "Venetian" dolphins were filmed at a port in Sardinia, in the Mediterranean Sea, hundreds of miles away". (11)

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2020/03/coronavirus-pandemic-fake-animal-viral-social-media-posts/>

- If you feel the dire need to share, make sure it's from verified news sources. If you're living in Sri Lanka Watchdog by Paladin Analytics (<https://watchdog.paladinanalytics.com/>) is an excellent platform for verified news along with their verification sources. For international news, it isn't too hard to first check for the URL of the article you're sharing, if it seems like it's from a dodgy looking site, the news probably is too. Go for the more trusted BBC, CNN, etc., type news sources.

# HELP

No doubt we are all struggling, there isn't any industry (perhaps apart from Telecommunications, due to the heavy data usage these days), that hasn't taken a financial hit. During this time we need to survey the varying degrees of help we can choose to give to anyone who might have it worse than us, while at the same time hope that those who have it better than us will do the same.

Help isn't always financial; it might be sending over a warm home-cooked meal to the elderly neighbour (while maintaining stipulated safety guidelines), it might be getting on the phone and listening to a friend who's watching their small business collapse, it might even be spending time in self-reflection to reassure yourself that you will indeed ride out this storm and rise yet again. Help whoever you can, in whichever way you can, whenever you can.

Let us look at some things we can start doing, in day to day situations, proactively that will contribute to society on some scale.

- Buy your groceries and supplies from small shop owners rather than the bigger supermarkets.
- Try and pay for your app-based cab/tuk tuk rides with cash instead of card
  - If you obtain the domestic/labor/other services that are weekly/monthly pay based, consider temporarily making the payments daily. As an extra step consider paying them (If you are able) even if they are not working during these times.
- Try and buy items (even if you don't need them) from people selling on the pavements/traffic lights
- Offer to provide volunteer groups/medical professionals with any rations/supplies/funds they may need in order to reach out to the less fortunate.

**Remember.** It's not 'Us' versus 'Them', it's the collective 'Us', you get to decide what 'Us' means to you.

# EPILOGUE:

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Through "NNA for Riding Out The Storm" there is the one common theme that emanates across all the chapters which were written by different contributors on varying topics: The Indomitable Human spirit!

The word "quarantine" itself, derived from the French word "quarantaine", has accompanied us since the dark ages, and is a process that has been repeated many times over the course of history.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/04/us/coronavirus-quarantine-word-history-trnd/index.html>

Guess what? Humanity has survived!

Not only have we survived but have emerged - triumphant.

So, take comfort in the fact that this too will pass, and we will indeed overcome.

What we can do, perhaps during these bleak and dire times is uplift one another and focus our energies on positive aspects. Reconnect with the essence of what makes us human!

Spend time in retrospect, seize the present day and plan for the future.

Change your perspective: Shakespeare most likely wrote "King Lear," "Macbeth," and "Antony and Cleopatra," during a plague-inspired quarantine between early 1605 and late 1606. Newton in 1665, laid foundations to calculus, theories of optics and gravity, under quarantine for the bubonic plague while at Cambridge.

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/620764/productive-people-in-quarantine>

Don't let the momentary pause dull your perspective: aim for more: time is fleeting make the most out of it.

**Ride Out The Storm!**

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Vidusha is currently the Destiny Architect at High5 Consultancy and Training and also the organization's founder member. His areas of expertise lies with strategy facilitation, HR strategy development and Leadership Training. He has conducted assignments in 15 countries regionally and consulted for the World Bank, the UN as well as some of the top corporates in Sri Lanka and the Region. He is also a member of the board of directors for Chrysalis, a social enterprise working to empower women and youth by fostering inclusive growth in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.



## ANTON THAYALAN

Anton is a multi-faceted professional who has had over two decades of hands on experience in process improvement, change management and strategic management. As the former AVP at HSBC DPL Anton won accolades for his superlative work there; and won the prestigious HSBC Group Service – Global Talent Management Member two years in a row. Anton currently works as a consultant focusing on efficiency and productivity improvement and process optimization for local and regional Clients.



## TATUM DE SOUZA

Tatum started her career in the banking sector, working both Locally and Internationally, culminating as a Corporate Relationship Manager. Her 18 year career includes exposure in the areas of Sales and Marketing, Content Creation, Creative Writing, HR, Event Management & Social Media Management, covering industries such as Hospitality, Telco, Recruitment and Education.



## RUWANTHI WIJESINGHE

Ruwanthi Wijesinghe, an educator in English for over three decades, at both secondary and tertiary levels has her roots in the corporate/development sectors. Her tenures with Wespac Banking Corporation (Australia), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) gained her international exposure while her quality of work earned her awards of excellence. She is a graduate of the University of Peradeniya with an honours degree in Sociology.



## JIMMY ROSAIRO

Jimmy is the founder of SweatShop Fitness: who prides themselves as the pioneers in 'brining the gym to your doorstep.' Rather than having to go to a gym, Jimmy and his team goes to the offices of their Clients, taking away the excuse 'I don't have the time to exercise!' Specialising in Corporate Wellness, Exercise Prescription and Lifestyle Consultancy and NCD Management Programs since 2012, Jimmy is also the proud winner of 4 Gold and 3 Bronze medals in swimming representing Sri Lankan at the Asia Pacific Masters Games in Brisbane, Australia.



## AZEEM SAHEER

Azeem holds a Masters in Business Administration from Napier Edinburgh Napier (UK), Level 3 Qualification in Advance Diploma in Teaching, Training & assessing learning- City & Guilds (UK), is a Certified Neuro Linguistic Program (NLP) & also holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Islamic Banking & Insurance – IIBI(UK).



## ZAFRANA NAFEES

Zafrana started her career with Classic travels as a Corporate Planning Executive. She soon discovered her niche in Marketing and has since risen to being the Head of Marketing & CSR for Classic Travel & Expolanka Leisure Group. Zafrana in 10 short years has added to her list of accolades: the youngest member to be a part of the management team, party to the team attaining the Gold Award for best B2B Brand at SLIM Brand Excellence 2018, and was identified as one of the 'Most Influential Global Marketing Leaders' (Annual Global Marketing Excellence Awards ceremony organized by the World Brand Congress at Taj Lands End in Mumbai in 2017).



## FAHAD FAROOK

Fahad Farook is a Certified Transformative Coach (ICF), International Trainer, and Motivation Specialist who has carried out numerous training and consultancy projects in the USA, Australia, Japan, India, Dubai, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. Fahad is a CIMA (UK) passed finalist, although he has stayed away from the management accounting profession as his passion lies in the areas of Individual Development, Transformational Coaching, Habit Building, Team Dynamics, Interpersonal Relationships, Personal Brand Development and Communication Skills. Fahad is also an energetic emcee, involved in a range of events including dinner dances, awards nights, pageants and other corporate events.