

TIP #1: Social connection.

Find a trusted friend and share your concerns. Sometimes just speaking our fears out loud helps diffuse fear. I'm writing this note in collaboration with my cherished friend and colleague, Dr. Gilah Rosner, who is also my partner in GraceFull360. Many of you have met Gilah at one of our retreats in Santa Fe, Nashville or Italy. It really helps to have a trusted friend with whom to share the good and the worrisome. Social isolation significantly increases inflammatory and stress markers, fuels rumination, and decreases the immune response. The antidote is relationship. Human beings are hard-wired to connect.

TIP #2: Mind your breathing.

Slow, controlled breathing techniques have been used for centuries to induce calm because they are SUPER fast, and they work! These forms of breathwork marry the prefrontal cortex to the midbrain. They increase Heart Rate Variability like other forms of focus exercise. Clinically they can be used to quell excessive arousal, like panic attacks. I call this technique "Gearshift Breathing" because it short circuits negative thoughts and quickly shifts us into a mindful space that opens us to calm and peacefulness. You watched me demonstrate this technique in the video. It's a terrific go-to tool that reduces anxiety fast. Here are written directions.

Sit upright in a comfortable position, with a straight spine and chin parallel to the floor. Breathe in slowly through the nose, and exhale slowly through pursed lips as if you are breathing out through a straw. This slows the breathing way down to 4-6 breaths a minute. You'll notice that after you release all the air, there is a delay before the next natural breath. Don't hold your breath, just let the rhythm evolve naturally. Only 1-2 minutes of this breathing is enough to trigger the hormonal drip that calms your fear circuits as you become more present.

Tip #3: Don't freak out!

There is an enormous amount of fear being fomented in the media, and in our communities about coronavirus. Largely, because it is new, and we don't know what to expect.

One thing we do know for certain, is that fear drives us into a 'fight or flight' response and suppresses our immune system. So, calming anxiety is of paramount importance in staying immunologically robust. If you've read anything by our good friends, Dr. Bruce Lipton or Dr. Candace Pert, you understand how stressful thoughts and beliefs affect our neuroendocrine system right down to our gene expression. Yes, fear is felt right down to the cellular level. This is the essence of the Mind-Body connection, something I have devoted myself to for decades.

Stress is largely perception. Your bodymind interprets your world and releases the chemistry that matches the world you create with your perceptions. Stressful thoughts and beliefs change the neural pathways in your brain and cause cortisol and adrenaline to overflow into your bloodstream, resulting in a cascade of cellular events that predispose your body to illness.

Unchecked fear and worry can result in the nocebo effect – i.e. a negative outcome in health that is the direct consequence of relentless worry and unrealistic negative thoughts.

TIP #4: Stick to the facts.

Get your information from reliable sources and don't let yourself get hijacked by the internet or social media. A few reliable sources that you can consult via the Internet are Dr. Anthony Fauci from the Centers for Disease Control; Dr. Sanjay Gupta of CNN; and the new Coronavirus response coordinator for the White House, Dr. Deborah Birx. The New York Times has a carefully updated daily coronavirus update, as does CNBC. You can subscribe to either or both of these.

TIP #5: Listen to the stories you tell yourself, and consciously choose a positive spin.

With the information at hand, it's just as easy to spin a powerful, healing story, rather than a story that makes you sick... or at the least, a neutral story that is realistically hopeful about what the future may bring. And, as I say in the video, you can counteract the brain's negativity bias – a survival strategy that causes us to be more affected by the bad than the good – by taking time to savor the little good things that happen every day: the song of a robin; the taste of a crisp apple; the smile of a stranger... Enjoying sensations of love, warmth and goodness in your body for 10-20 seconds actually results in the formation of new, more positive neural networks.

TIP #6: Refocus your attention on something pleasurable and relaxing.

Relax and enjoy whatever and whenever you can. Read. Talk on the phone. Do a puzzle. Knit or paint. Binge watch your favorite show. Whatever outlet gives you pleasure, go for it. This is good medicine at times when rumination threatens to take over. Even going outside and looking up at the sky expands your attentional field and calms down the worry centers of the brain.

Tip #7: Mind your lifestyle

Your mission, both in times of epidemics, and all times is to keep yourself as strong and healthy as you can be. You already know how... but let us give you some friendly reminders on how lifestyle has HUGE impact on building and maintaining immune strength.

Of course, you want to follow conventional advice, like frequently washing hands, especially before touching your face, staying away from crowds in enclosed spaces, and remaining at home if you do catch a cold, flu or respiratory virus.

Stay hydrated. This means not only drinking enough but getting the quenching structured water stored within fruits and vegetables.

Eat an anti-inflammatory diet. This means eating the rainbow of whole fruits and vegetables (organic is best), clean, pasteurized proteins and wild fish, probiotic foods like natural sauerkraut, plain yogurt, kefir, kombucha, healthy fats like EVOO, cultured organic butter, pasteurized eggs, avocados and nuts.

Ginger, garlic, onions, greens, aromatic herbs, turmeric, cinnamon, cayenne, and miso are some of the best anti-inflammatory foods. Eat some of them in generous amounts every day.

A large part of immunity begins in your gut, and this is a time to stabilize any signs of digestive distress or leaky gut. If a continuous state of low-grade inflammation and the stress signals associated with it, arise in the gut, that's less immune power to ward off infection. Take it easy on (or even eliminate) gluten, sugar, artificial sweeteners, dairy proteins (if you are sensitive), refined oils, processed foods, and overuse of NSAIDs and antibiotics. These can interfere with your healthy gut microbiome. A little red wine would be in order, but not excessive amounts. Don't kid yourself... alcohol is sugar.

Restore yourself through rest and sleep. Your body is repairing itself while you sleep. Your psyche is repairing itself while you sleep. Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the NIH, reports on recent research studies showing how sleep triggers rhythmic waves of life blood and cerebrospinal fluid "that appear to function much like a washing machine's rinse cycle", flushing the brain of toxic waste during sleep. Enough said?

Move a little. Even gentle exercise is great for your mood, helps the lymph system flush out toxins, and helps keep immunity strong. Better yet, put on some music and dance like no one is watching! Make sure to do some serious shaking. Shaking mitigates the cortisol stress response, releases tension, blockages and negativity, and as a bonus, evokes powerful feelings of bliss and joy.

Step outside and commune with nature. This powerful connection is so calming, that it is rated the #1 stress reducer in cultures around the world. As a bonus, 15-10 minutes outside boosts your vitamin D as well.

Be prepared. Preparations not only help when and if they are needed, but they reduce stress beforehand. Make a plan that suits your age, lifestyle, and social connections. Stock up on food, herbal remedies, toilet paper, Kleenex. Know who you'll call, where you will go if healthcare is needed, and how you can optimize your budget in case of work loss.

Last, but surely not least, Gilah offers us some simple herbal advice. Gilah is not only a molecular geneticist and cracker jack western scientist, she is also a fully trained herbalist. In another auspicious synchronicity, the first herbal remedy that Gilah teaches us how to make in our GraceFull360 program is Four Thieves spray, anecdotally known for its use in warding off infectious diseases!

TIP # 8: Try some well-documented herbal and natural remedies. If you want to order high quality products online, we love Tonic Herb Shop. Co-owner Ashley Davis or one of her qualified staff can offer guidance on their hand-crafted products, as well as remedies from top-shelf, reputable commercial, herbal medicine companies. We especially love their Elderberry Syrup, Elderberry Chai, Immune-Building Broth Packets, and Fire Cider.

Here are a few of Gilah's favorite herbal and supplements for immune support.

Elderberry is one of the stars of herbal antivirals. Not only has it been used in traditional medicine around the world for centuries, there are excellent double-blind, placebo studies from Israel, Norway and other countries. The easiest and tastiest way to get elderberry medicine is in a syrup. It's delicious.

'Medicinal' Mushrooms are highly regarded throughout the herbal community for their immune boosting ability. Loaded with polysaccharides, antioxidants and numerous other constituents, mushrooms such as shitaki, maitake, chaga, reishi and cordyceps are available as liquid extracts or capsules. Shitaki, of course, makes a tasty addition to soups and stir-fry dishes.

Fire Cider – wow! This spicy, sweet and sour tonic is traditionally taken to fan the fires of immunity and decongest the sinuses. The vinegar is alkalizing, and is infused with immune boosting garlic, onion, horseradish, ginger, cayenne and other healing foods.

Adaptogens are tonics, or everyday building and strengthening herbs, that bolster resistance to stress, so they keep adrenals and overall immunity strong. Revered worldwide, and often considered more food-like than herbal, adaptogens include such herbs as ashwagandha (an Ayurvedic favorite), eleuthero (formerly known as Siberian ginseng), rhodiola, and astragalus (especially good immune booster). Tulsi, the Queen of Herbs, aka Holy basil, is a delicious and gentle adaptogen and nervine (quiets the nerves). You can drink this tea every day.

Nervines are herbs that help you relax. Favorites include tulsi, lemon balm, bee balm, lavender, scullcap and chamomile. All make a soothing tea, and as a bonus you get to inhale their lovely fragrance.

Vitamin C can become depleted in times of internal or external stress. You might consider vitamin C supplementation at the first sign of illness. Gilah likes liposomal vitamin C for its excellent absorption. [Here](#) and [Here](#) are two good sources.

Vitamin D3 modulates both innate and adaptive immune responses, and many North Americans are deficient. Of course, vitamin D is also essential for calcium and bone homeostasis. Make sure to get it from a reputable company.

Essential oil inhaler. We have friends that swear by periodic sniffing of essential oils to stay healthy and calm. You can even make these inhalers yourself. For gentle calm and gentle seasonal support try a mixture of peppermint, lavender and lemon. Or to ramp up the immune support try a mixture of clove, lemon, cinnamon, rosemary and eucalyptus.

You can take small, daily doses of herbs to boost your immune system, and you can take larger, medicinal doses if you become ill. In case of illness, it's best to be guided by a professional. So, if you're interested in herbal medicine, now would be a good time to develop a relationship with a qualified herbalist in your area, who can consult with you to develop a personalized plan.

And finally, try to think of the coronavirus as an opportunity rather than a threat. Rush, worry and stress are the pandemic that will persist long after the virus recedes. So, in addition to stocking up on a month's worth of toilet paper and canned beans, remember to invest in rewiring your brain and nervous system for calm, healing, and optimizing your immune system. This is the perfect time to invest in your health and your happiness by joining me and Gilah in [GraceFull360](#). Do yourself and your loved ones a real service and [Register Now](#). We can't wait to take this healing journey with you!

And if you found our coronavirus resource helpful, please share it with friends and family.

Blessings,

Joan