



PRT (Pandemic Resilience Test)

Report for: Hardeep Singh

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Summary

During stressful times, there are certain protective traits, and certain helpful skills, that can make it easier to manage challenging circumstances. It's the reason why some people thrive under stress while others crumble. Fortunately, these are competencies that anyone can develop, with knowledge and practice. The goal of this test is to assess Hardeep's psychological preparedness for the current pandemic, to evaluate how well he is coping, and to offer tips to help boost his resilience, and develop the traits and skills that can help him adapt. If he manages to reign in the fear, find the silver lining, and gain some perspective, he can emerge from this tough situation a stronger, wiser, more self-aware and more empowered version of himself.

Overall Score



Given the current state of affairs all over the world, Hardeep has been adapting quite well. Maybe he is just good in a crisis, he has been trained to manage emergencies, and/or he recognizes the importance of not giving in to fear, anger, or negativity. Whatever the case, he is in the right state of mind to deal with the current circumstances. Hardeep just needs to make sure that he is not taking the pandemic too lightly, and is practicing caution, even if it has not spread in the area where he lives. Preparedness, both practical and psychological, is the best approach.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented event. Unless a person has lived through a war, the need to stay home, of limiting trips outside, and of stocking up on and rationing food will feel so alien. Everywhere we look, and every news station we watch, people are talking about the current crisis, along with its physical and economic consequences. It's a reality that many people still cannot fully grasp. Many are wondering what is to come, and are experiencing a great deal of uncertainty, confusion, and fear. And they are struggling to cope.

"Humor keeps us alive. Humor and food. Don't forget food. You can go a week without laughing." - Joss Whedon

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Graphs

Overall Score



Current Stress Level



Dealing with Ambiguity



Locus of Control



Perspective



Critical Thinking



Coping Skills



Hardiness



Community Values



Common Sense



Details

Overall Score (score 83)

Given the current state of affairs all over the world, Hardeep has been adapting quite well. Maybe he is just good in a crisis, he has been trained to manage emergencies, and/or he recognizes the importance of not giving in to fear, anger, or negativity. Whatever the case, he is in the right state of mind to deal with the current circumstances. Hardeep just needs to make sure that he is not taking the pandemic too lightly, and is practicing caution, even if it has not spread in the area where he lives. Preparedness, both practical and psychological, is the best approach.

Assesses how well Hardeep is adapting to the current pandemic on an emotional and psychological level.

Current Stress Level (score 12)

At the present time, Hardeep is experiencing very little, if any stress, as it relates to COVID-19 and its impact. He seems to have been able to stay calm and level-headed in spite of what is going on, even if the people around him have not. He is taking the current circumstances in stride. He may be the type of person who thrives in stressful situations, and who is good under pressure. While it's important to take the current situation seriously, it is best not to act out of fear.

Assesses Hardeep's stress level as it relates to the current pandemic.

Dealing with Ambiguity (score 100)

When faced with an ambiguous situation, Hardeep holds his own. He draws on his knowledge, experience, resources, and perhaps even his intuition in order to delineate a path forward. If there are no contingency plans in place, he will come up with them on the fly. Hardeep fully grasps that life in general is a learning process, because we cannot always predict what will happen. As it relates to the current pandemic, he likely recognizes (or is at least trying to accept the fact) that while there are a lot of unknowns regarding COVID-19, all we can do is learn and adjust as things move forward.

Assesses a Hardeep's ability to cope with the unknown.

Locus of Control (score 75)

Hardeep's locus of control is more internal than external. He feels that for the most part, he has at least some control over his circumstances. While outside factors may interfere, he doesn't see himself as being totally helpless to change things. As a result, he is more likely to take initiative and be proactive in his approach to life because he believes it will make a difference in most cases. This is a good attitude to have in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although Hardeep may not be able to control everything that happens, the steps he takes to protect himself, like preparing contingency plans and mitigating risks (such as washing his hands, wearing gloves, keeping a safe distance from others and self-isolating) will make a difference.

Assesses Hardeep's perceived sense of control over his circumstances, and life in general.

Perspective (score 83)

No matter what is going on around him, Hardeep has the amazing ability to keep things in perspective. He is able to view the current pandemic from different sides, and this big picture orientation helps him to make smarter decisions, rather than taking action out of fear. Instead of jumping to conclusions, he is able to analyze the circumstances objectively. This will help him, and the people around him, to stay calm.

Assesses Hardeep's ability to step back from a situation and see the big picture.

Critical Thinking (score 58)

Hardeep possesses some ability to think critically about information, but doesn't seem to apply this skill in all cases. There are some situations where he will accept what he hears rather than question it. While he shouldn't be skeptical or suspicious about everything he hears, he should be able to analyze information objectively, and he is not always able to do this (especially when he starts succumbing to panic). By developing his critical thinking skills, Hardeep will be better equipped to analyze situations, evaluate risks, and make sensible decisions. This is particularly important in the midst of the current crisis, where a great deal of false information is making its rounds on social media. Hardeep also needs to make sure to look at reliable sources of information, and take what he reads online, especially advice offered by laypeople, with a grain of salt.

Assesses Hardeep's ability to think rationally about a subject.

Coping Skills (score 81)

The current pandemic is generating a lot of fear and stress. Facing this stressor can be a challenge, but Hardeep seems to have good coping skills at his disposal. He is aware of, and uses, several techniques to deal with stress and most importantly, he regularly puts them into practice. When faced with stressful situations, it is likely that Hardeep will be able to cope very well if he uses the strategies that he has developed. It would still be a good idea to learn some new strategies to add to his repertoire. This way, if one particular technique isn't working for him, he can apply another. Hardeep can review the Advice section of this test for additional tips.

Assesses whether Hardeep uses healthy, adaptive strategies to deal with stress.

Hardiness (score 97)

Setbacks and hardships rarely, if ever, get Hardeep down. He possesses an exceptional level of grit - or at least possesses the traits that delineate mental toughness. Even if he has yet to face major adversity, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, his hardy personality will help him to overcome any challenge that comes his way - and leave him a stronger and wiser person than he was before. When life gets tough, Hardeep just gets tougher.

Assesses Hardeep's ability to remain resilient, and to bounce back from hardship.

Community Values (score 90)

Hardeep is doing what he can to be neighborly, and to show compassion towards others, during this difficult time. He is not just thinking about himself, he is also concerned about the welfare of his fellow humans. The instinct for self-preservation during a crisis can push some people to act selfishly, but Hardeep has not fallen into this trap. He understands the importance of being on a united front, rather than only looking out for himself. This is extremely admirable on his part. He just needs to make sure to practice safety measures at all times to keep himself safe, especially in situations where he is offering practical help to others.

Assesses the degree to which Hardeep shows good will towards his fellow human beings.

Common Sense (score 92)

No matter what is going on in the outside world, Hardeep has not lost touch with his common sense. This skill helps him to quickly orient himself in new circumstances, helps him make smart judgment calls, and keeps him safe. He trusts his instincts; when something doesn't feel right, his gut feeling is likely to be on target. Even if this pandemic is a new experience for him, he is learning quickly as he goes. He thinks about the consequences of his actions before taking them, and tries to gather as much reliable information as he can before making a decision.

Assesses Hardeep's ability to apply practical and intuitive knowledge that is not necessarily related to formal education.

Strengths & Limitations

The following is a summarized version of Hardeep's results. The Protective Traits/Skills are his strengths. They will play a major role in helping him adapt to the pandemic with greater ease. The Yellow Flags delineate traits/skills that he should nurture in order to turn them into strengths, and/or issues that he needs to keep an eye on. The Red Flags call attention to traits/skills that Hardeep needs to start improving right away in order to help him cope with the pandemic, and/or highlight areas of concern that he needs to attend to as soon as possible.

"It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change." - Leon C. Megginson

Protective Traits/Skills

- His current stress level is low
- He deals very well with ambiguity
- He is able to keep the current circumstances in perspective
- He has a good set of coping skills that he can rely on
- He is a very hardy and mentally strong person
- He is striving hard to be more compassionate and/or neighborly during the pandemic
- He is putting his common sense to good use during this crisis

Yellow Flags

- He has a mostly internal locus of control

Red Flags

- He does not always think critically about what he hears and reads

Advice

Here is a tip sheet to improve the traits and skills assessed on the test.

Tips to improve coping skills and stress management

- **Choose the right coping techniques.** With a number of healthy coping strategies available for you to learn, chances are that you will find something that works for you. Ideally, have more than one strategy that you can rely on, and strive for a good balance. Here are some general guidelines:
 - First, gauge the controllability of the problem so that you can target the best response. If the problem is something you can change, then adaptive coping methods can be useful. These include seeking the help of a professional (tele-therapy is now offered by most psychologists), joining an online support group, and conducting research on the issue to help you find workable solutions.
 - If the source of your stress is not within your control, it would be best to learn to live with the stressful situation by using emotional management techniques as well as cognitive coping techniques. These include journaling, meditating, applying positive reframing (looking for the silver lining), talking things out with someone, and channeling the stress into a productive activity, like cleaning, exercising, learning a new skill, taking classes, manual work, decluttering your home, organizing your collections, home repairs, art and crafts, and other hobbies.
 - It is best to curb any reliance on maladaptive coping strategies, as they tend to do much more harm than good. These include self-medicating, self-harm, or taking your frustration out on others.
- **Remember, your attitude makes all the difference.** Essentially, it's not the stressor that matters as much as how you react to it. When faced with a stressful situation, ask yourself the following questions:
 - How does this situation make me feel?
 - Why do I feel this way?
 - Is my outlook or attitude influencing my feelings?
 - Am I catastrophizing, generalizing, or succumbing to fear?
 - What aspects can I control?
 - What are some alternative ways to look at this situation?
- **Practice mindfulness when things get hectic.** All it takes is a few moments. Find somewhere quiet and try one of these exercises:
 - Tune into each of your senses individually. What do you smell? What are all the sounds you can hear? What does the chair you're sitting on feel like? What colors do you see?
 - Come up with a calming or happy word for every letter of the alphabet. For example: Abundance, Bountiful, Composed...
- **Reduce some of the burden on your shoulders as much as possible.** While you likely have a fair number of responsibilities to take care of, avoid taking on more than you can handle in a given day. Delegate tasks at work or chores at home whenever possible. Prioritize what you need to get done. Whatever cannot be accomplished today can be done tomorrow. Most importantly, start saying "no" to "energy vampires" who make excessive demands of you. You are not doing yourself any favors by saying "yes" to commitments that you cannot realistically handle. Remember, chronic stress will eventually lead to burnout, and in the short term, it compromises your immune system. Even if you can't say "no," your body eventually will.
- **Take advantage of the benefits of being physically active.** Not only does regular exercise promote good health and high self-esteem, research also shows that it reduces stress, releases tension and "feel-good" hormones, and boosts your immune system. If you are not already doing so, engage in physical exercise every day for at least half an hour. Even if you don't have exercise equipment at home, you can download workouts online, run up and down your stairs, or just put some music on and dance while doing chores, playing with kids, or cooking.

- **Harness the power of humor.** Giving yourself permission to laugh can diffuse both the physical and emotional effects of stress. Even just the act of smiling, whether there's something to smile about or not, can have a positive impact on your mood. Now is not the time to watch doomsday movies. Yes, you should tune into the news to stay informed, but resist the urge to keep checking the stats. Instead, watch comedies, funny or cute videos, or search for jokes and share them. Humor is one of the most powerful coping strategies.
- **Use this easy yet powerful breathing techniques.** When you are under stress, your breathing is more likely to be quick and shallow. Breathe in deeply using your diaphragm, lifting your chest.
 - The 4-7-8 breathing method: Close your eyes and exhale completely. Then breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds. Hold your breath for 7 seconds. Then exhale through your mouth, making a whoosh sound, like you're blowing out candles on your birthday cake or blowing a balloon. Repeat 3 to 4 times.
 - The 5-second rhythmic breathing technique: Breathe in and out through your nose. Use a five-second count to time your breathing - it might even help to say to yourself "Breathe in 1...2...3...4...5, (hold your breath) breathe out 1...2...3...4...5." As you're breathing in and out, repeat calming words, like "tranquility". Continue to do this until you feel your pulse and your breathing pattern slow down to a more natural and calmer pace.
- **Use this 5-minute relaxation technique.** Progressively and mindfully relax your muscles, one part at a time. For example, start with your toes, and move up through your body, focusing longer on areas that are particularly tense. As you're moving through each section, repeatedly tell your muscles to relax. Combine this with deep breathing to enhance your relaxation. You can look up YouTube videos with guided relaxation if you are new to this, or simply play relaxing music in the background.

Tips for dealing with ambiguity and the unknown

- **Knowledge is power.** Part of being able to adapt to ambiguity is knowing where to find information to help you deal with unfamiliar situations. Even having just a little bit of info can provide some sense of control. Starting today, begin putting together information resources, resource people, and protocols to deal with every worst-case scenario you can think of as it relates to the pandemic. Then sit down with your spouse, or connect with a friend online, for a 30-minute brainstorm session. The idea is to allow yourself to 1) focus on the issue at hand in order to develop strategies and put together contingency plans, 2) allow the stress and worry to surface in a controlled way, and then 3) put it aside and relax. It's not about being paranoid or an alarmist, but about being prepared and feeling more in control. Use the breathing techniques listed above to reduce your level of anxiety. Make sure to:
 - Find out which businesses are closed in your area.
 - Have contingency plans in place for renewing medication and stocking up on supplies (many pharmacies and grocery stores now offer delivery options and no-contact pickup).
 - Decide on escalation and isolation procedures if one or more family members contract the illness.
 - Find out about rebates or payment leeway that may be offered by your bank, phone company, cable company, and utilities.
 - Visit reputable websites to get information. This includes your government website, the World Health Organization, and the Center for Disease and Control. Information from social media should be taken with a grain of salt.
- **Take an objective approach to last-minute changes or unexpected events.** They can't always be avoided, so it's best to learn to deal with them. Rather than wasting energy on panicking, focus on practical thoughts. What needs to be done? What does this change impact? Who does this change impact? What do you need to do? Who do you need to contact? In addition, always be prepared for last-minute scenarios by formulating several Plan B's and put them on paper for easy reference. You may not always be able to anticipate what will happen, but you can try to determine your worst-case scenarios ahead of time, and come up with a

strategy to deal with them.

- **Break problems down.** Take things step by step rather than looking at the big picture. What's the first thing that needs to be done? Who do you need to talk to? Who can help you? What is the best next step? Do what is doable, see how things unfold, and then use the outcome as guidance for further action.
- **Keep your mind focused on possibilities.** After you have contemplated and planned for the worst-case scenarios, focus on bringing about the best-case scenario, and keep your mind fixed on that as a goal. When it comes to problems, focus on the aspects of a problem or situation that are within your ability to change for the better. Dwelling on matters over which you have no control will do nothing except undermine your morale. If there is a solution, then you don't need to worry. And when there is no solution, no amount of worry will help.
- **Accept the fear.** Everyone is scared of something. We are engineered to fear certain things if they pose a risk to our well-being. However, if it were impossible to overcome fear, we would still be hiding in caves from potential predators. The most unpleasant aspect of facing your fear is not the fear itself - it's the incessant chatter that goes on in your head...the "what-ifs" and the self-doubt. Break patterns of negative thoughts. Remind yourself that everyone is in the same boat - all we can do is learn to adapt as things unfold. The only way out of this is through it. Breathe through the fear, and distract yourself with a positive activity.
- **Connect but don't complain.** You are not alone in your struggles. Connect with others by phone or online, but avoid complaining and boosting each other's fear. Complaining and ruminating weakens the immune system, and increases anxiety and the likelihood of depression. Do whatever you can to steer the conversation to the positive. What lessons are you learning? How are you improving yourself? How did the situation change your perspective on what is important in life? How are you rediscovering yourself and the people around you? How have you grown? What are you grateful for amid all that is going on?

Tips to increase your sense of control

- **Get to the root of an external locus of control.** If you strongly believe that you have no control over your life, it would be a good idea to explore the origin of this conviction. For some people, it could be the result of growing up with a parent who also had an external locus of control (who always blamed problems on other people, or external circumstances), or who was excessively controlling. It could also be related to a lack of self-confidence and self-efficacy, or perhaps even an undiagnosed anxiety issue. Once you have this information, you can then explore ways in which to modify your perspective by gradually shifting it to a more internal locus of control.
- **Start owning your life.** Although taking responsibility for your actions can be scary, it also leads to greater self-motivation and a more proactive attitude towards life. People who feel they have control over the outcome of their actions are more likely to take ownership of their behavior, and to take life by the proverbial horns. Rather than waiting for things to happen, they create their own opportunities. Even if you fail, the power to try again or take an alternative approach is always in your hands.
- **Be on the alert for "cognitive shortcuts".** These are ways of thinking that have become habitual; the "if-A-then-B" type of thinking. You might think, "I am just a simple citizen, so there's nothing I can do to change this situation." The problem is, if you allow these thoughts to go unchallenged, and passively accept them as true, then you'll be less motivated to change your circumstances. Stop cognitive shortcuts in their tracks by challenging their validity, and then by actively looking for solutions.
- **Recapture your power to choose.** Whenever you find yourself in a situation where you feel helpless, hopeless, or stuck, take a moment to stop and ask yourself the following questions:
 - "How would I like things to proceed?"
 - "What are my options?"
 - "What steps can I take to improve this situation, even just a little?"

Simply taking a moment to recognize that you have the power of choice (to look for a solution, to wait things out, to ask for help) will give you a greater sense of control over your circumstances.

- **The "Thought Log"**. Spend a week keeping track of your thoughts and moods, and your ensuing actions, if any. Take note of your automatic reactions to events, and how you feel about them. After a week, go through your log and ask yourself the following questions:
 - What do I believe is the cause of these events? Why did they happen?
 - Is there another way of looking at these events? Can I come up with at least one other way of interpreting them?
 - What have I learned from this event? What will I do differently from this point on?
 - If someone I love or admire asked for comfort or advice, what would I say?
- **Temper your expectations of others**. Remind yourself that you cannot control other people's behavior, only your own. As soon as you create the expectation of how you think other people should behave, you set yourself up for disappointment. This doesn't mean, however, that you should passively accept how other people treat you because it's "just the way they are". Be tolerant, but make sure you set healthy boundaries as to how you want to be treated.
- **Fill in the gaps**. Think back to the last time you dealt with a situation that you felt ill-equipped to handle. Which skills would have been helpful to have? What knowledge were you missing? In order to further develop your resourcefulness and adaptability, it's important to work on any skill gaps you identify. Conduct an honest self-analysis, and come up with three skills that you think would come in handy right now. These may include learning first aid strategies, effective research strategies, or even how to do simple repairs around the house.
- **Think ahead**. Before finalizing a plan, brainstorm all of the things that could crop up. It will allow you to design specific measures to minimize the chance of problems occurring, or if they do occur, to limit their impact.

Tips to help you keep things in perspective

- **Re-arrange your priorities**. What matters to you most right now? To avoid feeling overwhelmed, which increases anxiety and fear, define your top priorities and focus on taking steps and finding solutions that concern only the most urgent issues - and put everything else aside. For example, staying safe, stocking up only when necessary, and keeping up with your child's education might be the most important things to you right now. Celebrating a friend's birthday, throwing that BBQ, or shopping for new clothes should not be at the top of anyone's list at this moment.
- **Feel, think, analyze, react**. Instead of responding to emotional triggers on impulse, compel yourself to take a few moments to think. For example, imagine you encounter a very rude person on social media who mocks something you post about COVID-19, or who doesn't want to keep his distance while you are grocery shopping, and makes fun of your cautiousness. It triggers a very negative emotional reaction from you. Here's an example of how to wade through the emotional wave:

"This guy is really annoying me. I really want to tell him off, but will it make things better or worse? How will he react if I am rude too? What would be the consequences?"

You can then decide how to react - you can ignore him, walk away, yell at him, be polite, or ask him to explain his opinion. Whatever option you choose, you must accept the consequences.

Once the situation has passed and you have regained control of your emotions, analyze the situation more thoroughly:

 - Why was this guy so rude? Why would he behave this way? Maybe he is lashing out because he is feeling stressed.
 - Why did his behavior bother me so much? What does it trigger in *me*? How does it make me feel deep down? Am I just angry, or do I also feel hurt and disrespected?
- **Put your feelings in context**. Feeling fear in a crisis is to be expected, but don't allow it to feed on itself. A lot of the "what-ifs" going through your mind right now may not even happen. Plan for what you can, but don't assume your worst-case scenario is inevitable. Stay focused on the present, and deal with problems as they

arise - don't go looking for worries. To keep your feelings in perspective, ask yourself the following questions:

- "Is this a 'now' emotion, 'then' emotion, or 'future' emotion?" Essentially, if you're worrying about something that *could* happen but hasn't, then your reaction is out of context - the feeling is based on *potentials*, not *fact*. If you're comparing your current circumstances to something similar that happened to you in the past, your negative emotions are based on "then" feelings, not "now" feelings.
- "Is there anything for me to fear, or to be worried about, right at this moment?" If you are not in any immediate danger, or are not faced with an active problem, then try to let the worry go. It might help to tell yourself over and over, "I am NOT in danger. There is nothing to be worried about."
- **Look for the lessons.** Ask yourself the following questions:
 - "What is this situation teaching me?"
 - "Do I need to be doing more of something, or less of something?"
 - "What will I gain by going through this hardship? How will this make me a better, stronger, or wiser person?"

Tips to help you think critically

- **Don't accept information blindly.** Even if it's proposed by an expert. Do your own research. Seek information from reputable, non-partisan websites, such as FactCheck.org, or your local news station. Most importantly, avoid spreading misinformation.
- **Don't get caught up in the third-party news.** All the information that people share is filtered through their own personal perspective, values, opinions, and needs. This means that sometimes, the information they offer can be slightly, or heavily, distorted. This is also why it's so important not to take information at face value. If you cannot validate a story on a trustworthy website, then wait until it is confirmed before accepting the information as truthful.
- **Separate COVID-19 myth from facts.** For the latest stats about COVID-19, check out the following websites [World Health Organization](#), [CDC.gov](#), [ECDC](#), and [Infodemic.blog](#).
- **Learn how to recognize when you are making decisions based on fear.** Here are some signs to look out for:
 - Your decision is based on a negative, past experience, with the assumption that whatever happened then will happen again.
 - You are choosing an option that encourages avoidance or denial (we are talking about avoidance/denial of information or issues here, not social distancing). For example, rather than confronting the reality of a situation, you downplay or ignore the issue ("It's not a big deal.").
 - You are glossing over alternative viewpoints in favor of what you believe, or cherry-picking only the research that proves your point of view.
 - You're mixing up your gut feeling with anxiety and fear. Gut instinct is an immediate reaction to a situation, and is definitive; you don't *think* something is wrong, you *know it*. It's also not an all-consuming feeling - you are not likely to be overwhelmed with worry or fear when your gut instinct kicks in. Anxiety is almost always based on a past experience or a future worry, is paralyzing and overwhelming, and triggers insecurity rather than certainty. When your gut instinct is triggered, you'll know why, and what to do (e.g., "This decision doesn't feel right. I need to say 'no'."). When your anxiety is triggered, all you'll want to do is run to safety.
- **Think like a detective.** Sherlock Holmes was a master of analytical reasoning. He assessed everything with a fine-tooth comb. Based on the information/evidence he was given from different sources, he examined each piece of info, decided whether it was valuable and trustworthy, and dropped useless or irrelevant information. He then considered different possible solutions (or motives!), and chose the one that made the most sense, based on all the info he had. Seems easier said than done, yes, but it's a skill that takes practice and experience. This is a golden opportunity to learn this skill. See? A silver lining!

Tips to boost hardiness and resilience

- **Outline your assets.** What makes the problem you are facing conquerable? What do you have going for you? Perhaps you've faced - and overcome - a similar problem in the past, or you trained for it. Maybe you have a really good support network. Create a list of all your strengths. If you are lacking in certain areas (resilience, healthy coping skills, emotional management), then create a list of resources you can use to develop these strengths. For example, you can take classes online.
- **Adopt the "1, 5, or 10-year" philosophy.** When you find yourself getting frustrated with your situation, ask yourself the following question: "Will this matter to me in 1 year, 5 years, or 10 years?" If the answer is "yes," then take active steps to find a compromise or a resolution to the issue. If the answer is "no," then take it as a sign that the issue is not worth getting worked up about.
- **Actively seek solutions to problems.** Resilient people are rarely passive when faced with adversity. Most importantly, if a problem is not dealt with effectively the first time around, it can come back, so it is always preferable to put in a conscious effort to resolve it. Even if a solution doesn't work, there is always the opportunity to use it as a lesson learned before trying alternative approaches.
- **Add a little spice to mundane tasks.** Even your every day, boring tasks, or tasks that you consider disagreeable, can be turned into a more joyful experience - you just have to make an effort. For example, you can listen to music while scrubbing the bathroom, watch TV while exercising, break your record for how fast you can fold laundry, or re-arrange your furniture every week we are in isolation. You can either mope and complain about the things you don't like, or you can find a way to make them better.
- **Remember, happiness and joy are not destinations.** They are mindsets, and you can adopt them right now. People who are happy don't necessarily have an easy life - they *choose* to make the best out of any situation. And you always have the power of choice. This means that you can choose to be grateful for your blessings, or you can choose to complain. You can choose to focus your mind on the positive, or choose to be in a bad mood. You can choose to hate people, or you can choose to be kind. You can choose to move on from a negative experience, or you can choose to dwell on it. You can choose to heal from a trauma, or you can choose to relive the pain over and over again. You can also choose to ask for help, or not. This is your power. Step into it!
- **Turn your pain into positives.** Now that you have time on your hands, start journaling about the troubles you have gone through (or are currently experiencing), and how you are working to overcome them. Detailing your journey will be cathartic - research has shown that people who write out their worries actually end up worrying less. You may also end up inspiring and helping someone else.