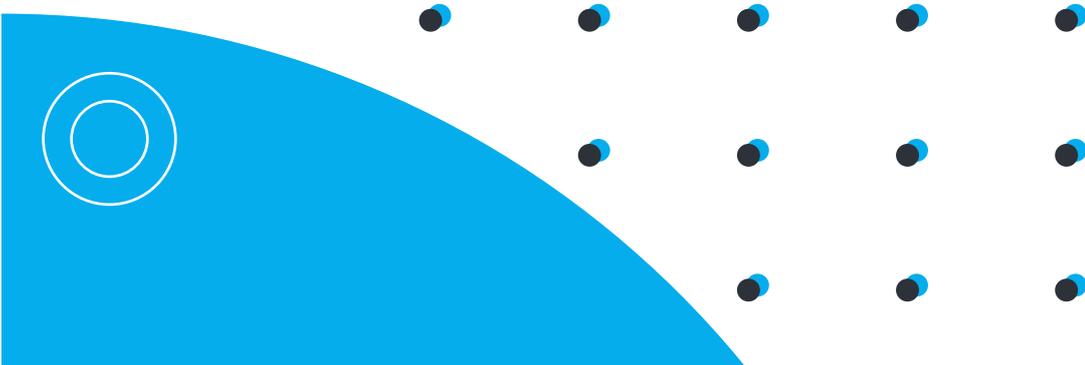


POWER
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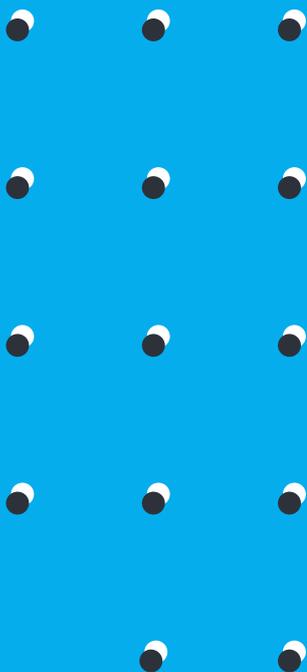


Organisational Resilience for the Post COVID Era

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Overview

We have never faced the challenges the way we do so today. Our lives have been changed by COVID and many of us are struggling to make sense of what is going on around us and make a meaningful difference in a sustainable way. There a steep curve ahead to transition into a new way of working and to find inspiration and belief that we are capable of making a positive impact in the work that we do.

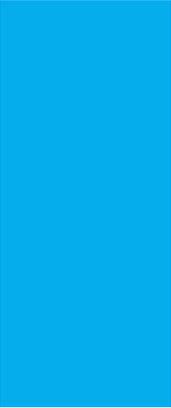
Now is the time to give our people within the organisation the tools that they need to be more resilient in their work life and beyond. When we have the tools and the confidence we need to adapt in the face of adversity, it is then that we are compelled to give our best in the work that we do.

In this paper, we describe the seven principles by which resilience can be instilled into the way we live, work and communicate. We put forward the approach to training resilience training that is based around the specific needs that you might have within the organisation and describe five ways to measure resilience to ensure that the progress is made.

The biggest barriers to building resilient culture come from within. We describe four critical roadblocks that stand in the way of building resilience and how to get around them without sacrificing their unique ways of working.

We discuss the core capabilities every organisation needs to support a resilient culture within the organisation and outline specific real-world how-to strategies to put resilience into practice.

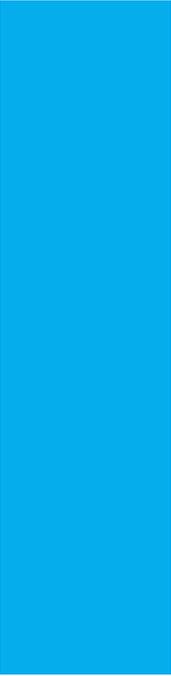
Organisational Challenges Beyond COVID



The COVID-19 global health crisis created a sharp rise in levels of anxiety and distress [1,2,3] and major economic difficulties [4] in organisations across the world. Restrictions were put in place to slow down the spread of the virus. These widespread changes have created a new state of constant transition, with our people staff and clients having to adopt the new realities of remote work, home schooling and social distancing.

With the promise of new vaccines for getting COVID under control, what does the return to normal look like? When some 10% of our workforce can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder on their return to work [5], there is a pressing need for supporting those who find themselves in a constant state of flux. If resilience and well-being are key factors in coping with the COVID-19 crisis [6], then it is here that we can make the most impact.

Resilient culture at work



Resilience is not about how much we can endure when in the face of trauma, tragedy, or threat, but how we respond to life after the event. It is the ongoing process of adaptation that helps us we feel capable of managing change, make choices we want and develop stronger bonds for happier, more fulfilled life [17].

Not only is the resilience essential to our personal life, but it is also crucial for improving our well-being at work. To bounce back from the COVID induced crisis, we need to invest in individual health given how crucial it can be for achieving organisational success [1,9]. Organisations that support their people in a time of crisis and transition will reap the benefits of increased performance, improved morale and keeping hold of their talent [12].

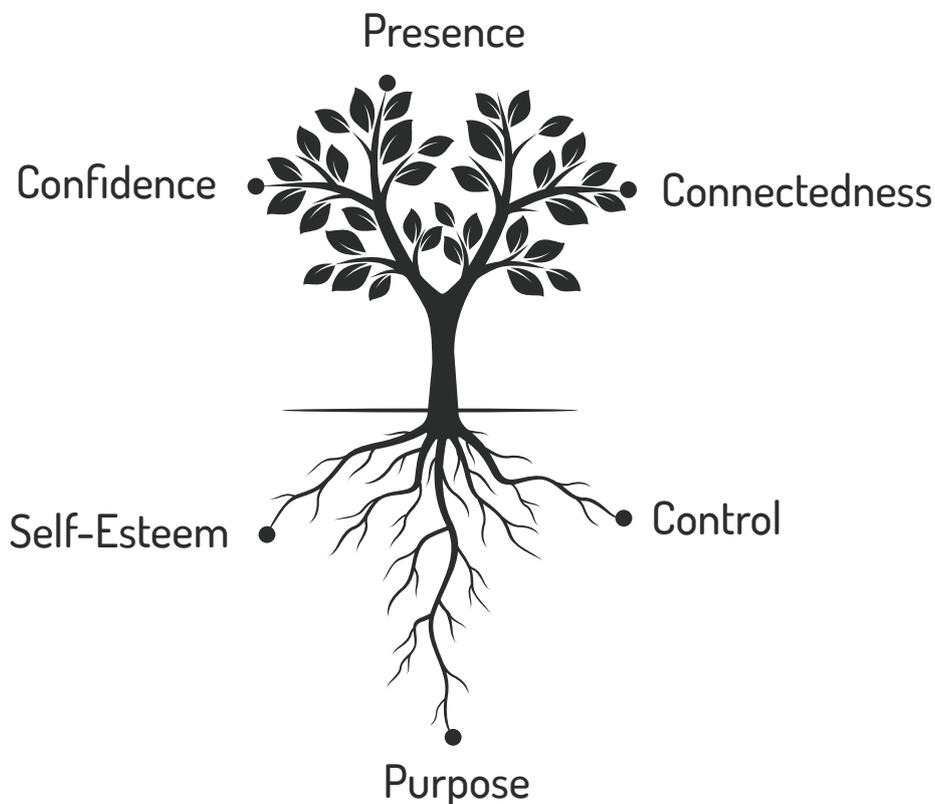
While most organisations invest in comprehensive Employee Access Programs, the proportion of employees who access the EAP services may be as little as 3% [11]. It does not mean that the support is not needed—1 in 3 fulltime employees report that they deal with extreme stress and often struggle with various challenges on a regular basis [11], but they might not know how to how to access the services that they need, or do not believe that the resource is going to help them. More so than ever, there is a pressing need to find flexible, innovative ways to promote better health and engage people in their well-being.

Inspired Resilience

Resilient organisations need resilient people to bounce back after COVID—so how can we create and foster a resilient culture at work? There are three key elements that we can work towards:

- ✓ Create a stress-less environment that inspires people to succeed
- ✓ Provide skills and tools to cope with challenges of daily life
- ✓ Support those who might be facing adversity now

We nurture resilience when we equip our people with the necessary skills and tools to so they can contribute more to the success of organisation and help them cope with the challenges of life at the workplace and beyond.

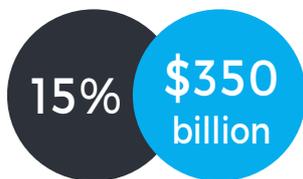


We can assume a constant state of transition that our people are facing in their personal and professional lives and empower them to find better ways to tackle stress and uncertainty. We are only beginning to understand how the resilience-focused vocabulary can impact post-traumatic growth and enhanced performance [13].

But building resilience is not enough. Research shows that our ability to bounce back from difficult situations and tackling the stresses of daily life can prevent burnout, but it does not lead to better engagement at work [20].

Only 15% of employees worldwide report being engaged [18] and the aggregate cost of disengaged employees in US companies alone has been valued at \$350 billion in 2017 [19]. When you face the pressure to innovate, or risk falling behind the competition, engaged employees can be your source of competitive advantage [14].

This is the reason behind Inspired Resilience. In this model, the roots are the three elements of resilience to help us hold our ground in a challenging time and the branches are the three elements that help us to reach towards the people around us and be more present and more engaged in the key activities of daily life:



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Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is seeing yourself as being competent to cope with basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness. How you see yourself is critical in the way that you deal with stresses of working life, how you interact with people around you and how you respond when things don't go to plan. High level of self-esteem can help you aim high and find ways to stay the course despite the obstacles that you might be facing along the way.

Strategies for improving self-esteem at work:

- ✓ Ask your employees to identify the biggest challenge they might be facing today so that they can be prepared
- ✓ Create opportunity board where work-mates can share simple, easy to implement ideas to improve their productivity and contribution
- ✓ Encourage each person to give praise or offer encouragement to their colleague each day without expecting anything in return
- ✓ Ask your people to share one story of the support or encouragement they received from their colleague each week
- ✓ Encourage employees to share personal achievements, roadblocks and frustrations with their team at the end of each month
- ✓ Give praise for any task that helped the person learn or grown in their role



Purpose

Purpose is our sense of moving in the right direction. It's our personal reason to persevere in the face of difficulty for the benefit of the greater. When we align personal purpose with team function and the mission that the organisation aspires to bring to life, we create the sense of belonging that people want to be a part of. In challenging times, we may lose our sense of connection with our colleagues and customers and it is vital to build in rituals to reconnect with our purpose and willingness to serve daily.

Strategies to reconnect with our sense of purpose:

- ✓ Bring out the connection the between the individual, their team, the organisation and the community that they serve (line of contribution)
- ✓ Start the day by visualising who you are wanting to help and why
- ✓ Schedule in your long term ambitions and short term goals and the skills that can help get you there



Control

We lose our sense of control of the situation when there is a surge in circumstances and events beyond what is within our influence. To regain our calm, we must separate what we can change and what we cannot so we can direct our efforts towards that which we can impact or direct.

Taking personal responsibility for your goals and ambitions that may can give us a feeling

Strategies for taking back control:

- ✓ Explain the rationale behind every decision in plain terms that cannot be misinterpreted or misunderstood
- ✓ Write out a list of specific challenges that you might be facing right now without censoring yourself and pick one that you are going to take on today
- ✓ Every task and every interaction should lead to a meaningful outcome for a specific person, or not done at all
- ✓ Focus on getting results that inspire you to share them with others

Confidence is when we recognise the need to perform at the highest level and put in the necessary effort to get ready. We want to show up at our best, and so we borrow confidence against our desire to succeed.

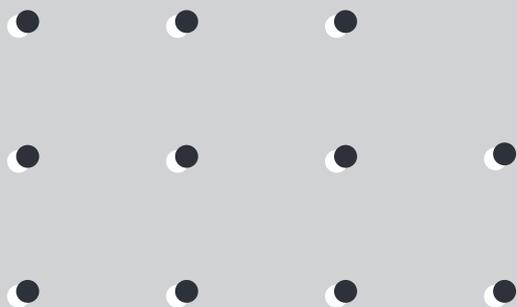


Confidence

Confidence is when we recognise the need to perform at the highest level and put in the necessary effort to get ready. We want to show up at our best, and so we borrow confidence against our desire to succeed. Confidence is not a personal trait, but a practice that shows willingness and a commitment to learn and figure out the best way forward. To generate confidence, it's crucial to recognise the progress we make along the way to achieving our goals and realising our ambitions.

Strategies for generating confidence:

- ✓ Prime yourself for obstacles that you are likely to face ahead of time when you are facing an important situation or a difficult decision
- ✓ Each morning, use bullet form to reflect on what you have achieved the previous day
- ✓ Create a visual walkthrough of an important situation ahead of time
- ✓ Consider the one ambition that you want to grow into in your role and why it matters the most right now
- ✓ Identify top three skills that you will want to work on each week to bring your ambition to life
- ✓ Identify top three qualities that you will aspire to work on each week to bring your ambition to life
- ✓ Rate yourself each week on the progress you make in the qualities and skills that get you closer to realising your ambition





Presence

Presence is our ability to be immersed in the moment, experiencing a state of flow where you can express yourself fully, without reserve. When you are fully present and engaged, you can respond in high stake situations and build genuine rapport with those around you. The influence you create is effortless, and nothing is forced or out of place.

Strategies for generating presence:

- ✓ Stimulate your sense of flow by creating situations with a clear goal, appropriate level of challenge and regular feedback for improvement [15]
- ✓ Reconstruct a meaningful, happy memory engaging as many as senses as possible to bring you into positive, grateful state
- ✓ Ask yourself what you would do today if there was no tomorrow



Connectedness

Connectedness is experiencing joy and understanding with people around you. Cultivating social bonds can help us find our sense of belonging within our team and the organisation at large. We become more fulfilled, productive and engaged in our work when there is a positive environment that fosters the sense of togetherness.

Strategies for forging a stronger connection:

- ✓ Look out for the underlying message that someone may be trying to get across, but may not be able to put into words just yet
- ✓ Ask follow up questions that value the person's perspective and lead them towards
- ✓ Share a personal story that is meaningful and relevant in your life today
- ✓ When giving feedback, focus on the person's virtues rather than what they can improve on
- ✓ When someone is angry or upset, listen for clues as to why this person feel excluded, or misunderstood
- ✓ Thank or acknowledge someone that you care about without an explicit reason for having to do so

Seven principles of resilience

1

When you own the struggle, it's no longer running your life

We can't turn away from the tough times we had—they are here, but we can't live in the struggle. We need to figure out a way around it, or learn with to live with it as best as we can, and it begins with the acceptance of the challenges that we are facing today. We don't have to love the struggle, or even make sense of it, but to accept that it's there. When we accept that that the struggle is there, and we can find ways to share our story of struggle with others. This is not only so that others can relate to you more, find themselves in your truth to connect on a deep, personal level, but it is then that the struggle loses its grip on you.

2

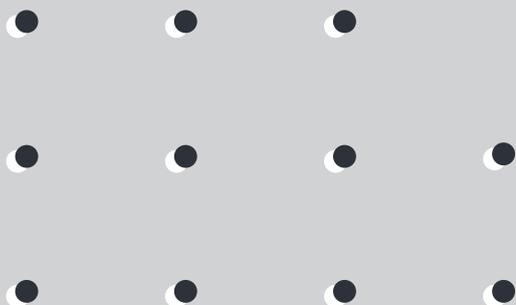
Show up for the life you want, not for the life that you think you have

We hold on to the past that's been filed away and fret about the futures that we are likely to avoid. This moment we have today is the one time that matters. It's another chance to be at our best, to be fully present. When you immerse yourself in the moment, distractions and worries will step aside to reveal a life full of colour and possibility. You have the freedom to create, explore and connect with others at a deep, personal level. To find ourselves in the moment, we embrace the fact that life is precious and fragile and we can only live for today because any day, it can be taken away. So why worry about what else could go wrong when there is so much that we can make right today?

3

Accept people not as they are, but as they want to be

We are not perfect, and yet we have dreams and aspirations to guide us. The road may be long, and we can stumble or lose our way at times, and what we crave most of all is to be seen for the aspirations that we have. We want to be celebrated not only for who we are today, but who we want to be tomorrow, with all the crinkles and imperfections. It's hard to accept someone at that level of vulnerability, but it's the least they deserve—a position that is not obstructed by circumstance, misdirection or judgement.



4

You own everything that you will ever have

No one will ever tell you—here is the moment that you have been waiting for to step up and follow your dreams. There won't ever be the perfect opportunity to speak up or stand up for what you believe to be right. But you already have everything you need to make a change. You have suffered, and yet you have found the strength to get through it. After everything you have been through, you are enough! You are here and you deserve to have a life that you're proud of. Yes, it is true that making a decision can be scary, but it sure beats the alternative of living with indecision, doubt and regret. When you have a goal that you want to make true, then you are entitled to make it happen. By the virtue of having the right intention, you are ready!

5

With purpose, we belong

We want to belong with people who believe in us and value what we do. It's a feeling we generate when we move towards something that we believe in. It is our need to help those we care about to live a better life despite the challenges they might be facing right now. And so we choose who we want to help, and why. This reason is what keeps you going and gives life meaning when you're lost and not sure where to go next. With purpose, you belong, and taking the necessary steps towards that which you believe in is but an afterthought.

6

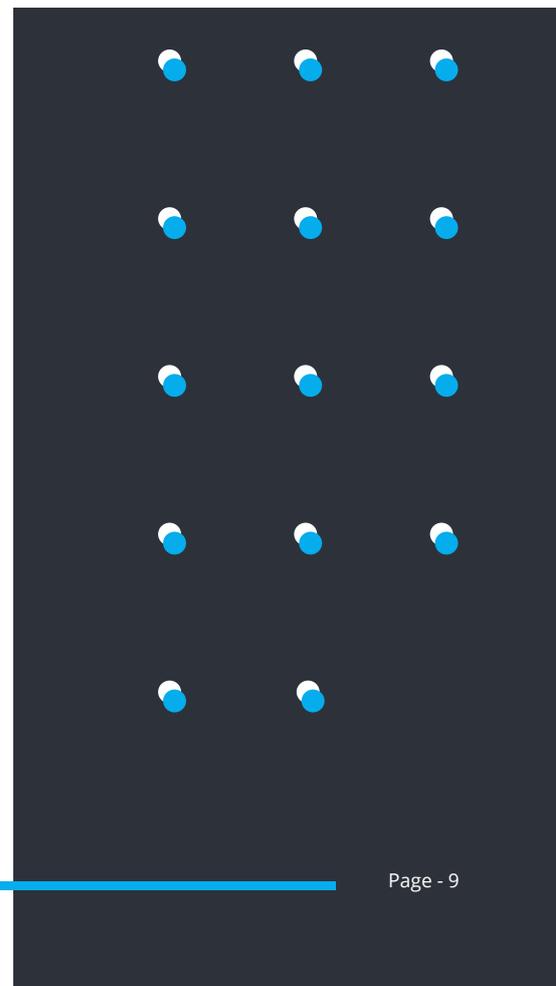
To lead is to show the way

Nobody wants to be told what to do. Nobody likes to follow because they have no other choice, but because it is the way that takes them to where they want to go. To lead, you do not need a mandate or special permission, but a genuine intent to help others. We listen to those who are honest, passionate, and have an open mind. They are willing to dig in, get involved and make things happen for others. This is what good leaders do—they guide you towards the place you were looking to get to anyway.

7

The path opens in the place that you begin

There will never be a perfect time, or a perfect way to get things done. We cannot wait for things to change when there is an opportunity to make things happen. It is up to us chart our own path to change. So start where you are as you can only find the way forward from the place where you begin.



How to implement resilience

Resilience building programs can be delivered in several ways depending on what you want to achieve:

Deeper understanding at your own pace

A book can inspire you to take meaningful action on your own terms. You can pick and choose the parts that speak to you the most and apply what you learned at your own pace. When the book is built around a memorable framework, it helps the reader to get through it quicker and absorb the information better because it's easier to follow. Storytelling makes good ideas more relatable and brings home a teaching point without feeling forced. Getting a book as a gift from the organisation can be a sign of appreciation.

Greater motivation and growth

A training session delivered in the form of a speech or a seminar has the greatest impact when it combines storytelling with practical takeaways. Ideally, it brings people together in a way that not only gives them greater affinity with their organisation, but also gives them tangible value that they can apply in their personal lives too. A virtual summit can be a great alternative where you can take part in the experience within the comfort of your own home.

Learning from others and taking part

A workshop with a smaller group is an opportunity to share and reflect on challenges of daily life. Lived experience is what brings us closer together to inspire and give our best for each other. A helper from outside the group can help guide the group through the process. This approach is best to complement training.

- » **Deeper understanding at your own pace**
- » **Greater motivation and growth**
- » **Learning from others and taking part**

What gets in the way of building resilience within your organisation

When training is an obligation

We are fine tuned to pick out things that are authentic and real. If the message or the intent behind it does not ring true, and so we recognise it as false. When a well-being program comes across as a box ticking exercise, we lose interest and tune out.

When the language is fancy and impersonal

When you hear about getting buy-in, thinking outside the box and lots of moving parts, you don't get a warm, fuzzy feeling of being valued or understood. These are the catch phrases that we default to when we want to be more expressive, but in a training context it can come across as fancy, impersonal and detached and sophisticated. Resilient language must be relatable, trustworthy and clear cut.

When learning feels like therapy

Nobody wants to be a problem that is waiting to be fixed. We want to support those in need, but also show people that we see them as resourceful and capable of adapting in the face of challenging circumstances. Instead of correcting flaws, resilience training should create the sense of empathy, liberation and growth.

When help is a mountain to climb

The problem with saying "My door is always open" is not only asking the person to acknowledge they have a problem that needs fixing, but they must also inconvenience someone to get it resolved. These are the traps that we fall into with the best intentions because we inadvertently put the responsibility on the person. Getting help and support through their place of work (e.g. EAP) should not be an uphill task. If there is no clear and obvious value for the person and there is no easy way to apply the learnings in their own life, they will choose to opt out or disregard the support that is available to them at any given time.

- » **When training is an obligation**
- » **When the language is fancy and impersonal**
- » **When learning feels like therapy**
- » **When help is a mountain to climb**

How to measure resilience

To understand the impact of training for resilience, you want to measure where you are at currently and after the training is done to understand progress. Common ways to measure resilience include:

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CS-RISC)

This scale has 25 items across personal competence, acceptance of change, trust, control, and spiritual influences.

The Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA)

Has five items and measures personal and social competence, social support, family coherence, and personal structure.

Smith's Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Consists of 6 items focused solely on resilience.

Psychological Capital (PSYCAP) scale

Measures hope, efficacy, and optimism and with 6 items attending to each domain, totalling 24 items.

Time Growth Engage Scale (TIGRES)

This toolkit is using the Inspired Resilience model to measure resilience across the domains of self-esteem, purpose and control as well as the engagement domains of confidence, presence and connectedness. The 18 item scale helps you pick out your adaptation style by bringing together your aspirations and willingness to change.

Regardless of the measurement method you choose, the results will inform the progress made with your resilience training and help to pick out areas where support is needed the most.

Concluding remarks

We have never faced the challenges the way we do so today. Our lives have been changed by COVID and many of us are struggling to make sense of what is going on around us and make a meaningful difference in a sustainable way. There a steep curve ahead to transition into a new way of working and to find inspiration and belief that we are capable of making a positive impact in the work that we do.

Now is the time to create a resilient, purpose driven culture and bring forward innovative training that will engage people on a deep, personal level. This training must connect with their personal challenges and the obstacles they face at work through lived experience and storytelling to create real empathy and trust.

It is when you believe yourself worthy and capable of living a happier, more fulfilled life both at home and in the work that you do that you can contribute to your organisation in the best way that you can to learn, grow and improve together.

We strongly advocate new modes of resilience training in addition to the existing EAP program and internal well-being services to give people more tools that they need to thrive in a time of uncertainty.

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Joe Bakhmoutski

Celebrated speaker, author, and podcast host Joe Bakhmoutski uses his lived experience with cancer and mental health to share inspiration and advice to lead a happier, more fulfilled life.

He trains people on how to be more resilient so that they are compelled to give their best in the work that they do and make a difference in a significant way.

In his latest book "Finding Hope in Times of Uncertainty: A Guide to Thriving in the Challenging World of Today", Joe shares practical ways to tackle uncertainty in your daily life and help you bounce back after a crisis:

- » How to stop worry from taking over your life
- » How to find joy in small, everyday things so that you are excited about life again
- » How to find a greater sense of confidence to reach your goals faster
- » How to forge even stronger bonds with the people around you
- » How to rekindle your sense of purpose and belonging so you look forward to the future and give hope to those around you

