

## A SHOT OF HOPE THE SPEAKING TREE

# 11 Ways To Settle The Mind During A Crisis

**DEEPAK CHOPRA**

A continuing crisis is stressful for everyone and can be overwhelming. Your goal every day should be a settled mind. This is the first and best thing you can do for yourself and the people around you.

The following steps are open to everyone, as follows.

- 1.** Sit down and candidly talk about your level of anxiety with your family. Discuss your feelings in the context of getting past them.
- 2.** Don't dwell on stressful thoughts. When a stressful thought arises, say to it, 'This isn't helping. Go away, I don't need you.' Talking back to the voice in your head is actually effective. If the stressful thought persists, take time out in a quiet place, close your eyes, and follow your breathing until your mind is calmer.
- 3.** Plan rationally for the situation you find yourself in. Problems can be divided into three categories: things you can fix, things you have to put up with, and things you should walk away from. Take each individual issue that faces you, and write down which category it falls into. Most people aggravate their worries through indecision. They vacillate between trying to fix something, putting up with it, and fantasising about running away from it. Be clear in your reasoning, pick one strategy from the three, then stick to it.
- 4.** Empathise with other people's anxiety, but don't make it a daily habit. Be helpful and reassuring. If this doesn't work, you should tune out the most anxious complaints and focus on anything positive that emerges.
- 5.** Be creative with your free time. Idle minds are fear's playground.

**6.** Don't obsess over the news.

**7.** Seek consoling and uplifting things to read.

**8.** Devote some time several times a day to sit quietly, close your eyes, and use deep, regular breathing to reach a settled state inside. If you are patient enough to practice regular meditation, do that.

**9.** Write down a vision of your future as you would like to live it after the crisis passes. Detail all the things you want to achieve and experience.

**10.** Foster hope in your immediate circle, but don't make it up if you don't actually feel hopeful.

**11.** Take time every day to do something that makes you smile and laugh.

As you can see, none of these things are mysterious. They are available to everyone, and if you seriously undertake it, the project of settling your mind can be very effective. This is also a good time to return to your meditation practice if you have one or to start meditating if you are new to the practice. A simple breath meditation twice a day is effective, or a mantra meditation, which is best to start with a teacher to guide you.

A settled mind shows how well you are coping, so this should be something you attend to every day.



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