

Ways to Keep that Brain Busy

I've been struggling lately. I'm not going to sugar coat it. I'm not going to put up this perfect persona that since I've decided to open up my life to the world of blogging that everything is A-ok and nothing's bothering me. Actually, that couldn't be farther from the truth.

I had a **VERY** profound thought this morning. I've mentioned quite a few times that before this whole pandemic hit that I was in the best place mentally that I've ever been. I honestly felt like life could not get better. But then, Covid-19 hit the United States and life as we all know it, has changed, dramatically. ***And that's when this thought hit me...MAYBE, just maybe, the Good Lord was preparing me for something like this.*** I was doing so well, and now am struggling. But I don't think I am as low as I would be if I wasn't in such a good place mentally before. I've always believed that the Lord doesn't give us more than we can handle, and I believe that still holds true today. I'm not at my highest right now, but I'm DEFINITELY not at my lowest right now, and that's good, because I have a husband and babies relying on me.

I have NEVER been so thankful for my Heavenly Father, and for my husband. Those two beings have kept me going through this whole ordeal. Others in my life are my sounding board as well (you know who you are), but having God to talk to WHENEVER I need Him, and Ty to lay next to every night truly is a blessing to me. I always say God gave me the cross of depression and anxiety before I had children so I would know how to handle my postpartum depression after I had my babies, and like I said before, God has given me moments in my life to get stronger and I believe once this is all said and done, my mental fortitude will be even better.

I've had to utilize a lot of different coping mechanisms in the last few weeks; some that I haven't used in years, but I'm sure thankful that I know how to use them. I've also been very open and honest about the fact that my prayer life has increased tenfold. I've prayed more rosaries and read more spiritual books than I have in a LONG time, and you know what? I really do enjoy it all. Actually, I've come to enjoy my evening walk while listening to the rosary on Youtube. (Pictured above are the three books I'm reading currently. I've never actually READ the bible, so now seems like a pretty great time to start).

Blogging has also helped me. I told my mom on the phone yesterday that I really feel like some of my best blogs are written when I don't have anything "planned out" and don't have any pressure to just get something posted. Sure, I like to blog recipes, cute clothes I find, and tips & tricks for life with littles; but in all honesty, I started this blog about mental health to be an outlet for me to share my story and cope with my own issues. I believe MY niche is to share my story about mental health, because I truly believe God wants me to be a witness to how those who struggle are not alone, and can have hope!

So, that is why I'm here today, so share some ways I've been coping. One of the things I've always been taught is if you feel the anxiety creeping in, and manifesting itself into shortness of breath or physical discomfort, you need to do something to keep your mind busy. I want to share a list of things I am doing, plan on doing or have done since we started social distancing and self-quarantining on March 15.

Ways to Keep That Brain Busy (Household Chores/Cleaning):

- Get in a routine - make your bed EVERY morning, put on clean clothes, enjoy a cup of coffee
- Vacuum floors
- Mop/scrub floors
- Wipe down all the baseboards with Pledge or a Clorox wipe
- Go through your AND your children's clothing and pack away any clothing that is too small, worn out, or never worn
- Run vinegar through your coffee pot AND diffusers to break down any mold build up
- Clean your bathtub, shower and toilet
- Clean your bathroom mirror and baseboards of bathroom
- Dust any shelves in your bedrooms and bathroom
- Go through all your jewelry and give away whatever you no longer wear
- Go through your children's books and donate books that are no longer used, played with, or read
- Go through your children's toys and donate toys that are no longer used
- Wipe down any toys that are currently used
- Throw all the Legos or plastic building blocks into the bathtub; wash and dry them
- Clean your ceiling fans
- Clean under the beds in all bedrooms
- Using Murphy's Oil Soap, wipe down all the cabinets in your kitchen
- Go through old makeup and throw away expired or empty containers
- Organize the area under your sink in the bathroom and kitchen
- Organize any storage room and/or cleaning closet (dispose of old, expired products)
- Go through old pictures albums; if you have the capabilities, scan these pictures for digital keeping
- Balance your checkbook
- Clean your microwave and oven
- Wipe down the outside of your washing machine, dryer and dishwasher
- Organize the cans/items in your pantry
- Sweep out and organize your garage
- Keep up on laundry and try to get down to one load of laundry a day
- Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands

Ways to Keep That Brain Busy (Activities):

- Read that book that has been sitting on your nightstand for months that you've never taken the time to read
- Go for a walk or run outside
- Sweep your patio
- Pick up all the random sticks and/or tumbleweeds in your yard
- Mow the lawn
- Watch a new Netflix/Hulu show (if you want your mind blown, watch Tiger King on Netflix)
- Create an obstacle course for your kids to play on outside
- Get out shaving cream and let your kids make a mess
- Paint or color either with your kids or on your own
- FaceTime an old friend (or a friend you talk to every day...seeing a person's face makes it so much better!)
- Write a letter to your grandparents, aunts and uncles, or cousins you haven't talked to or seen in ages
- Have a dance party in your living room, with or without children
- Put the kids to bed and have a date night - literally change your clothes, order take out (or make your own) and have a date in your living room with your partner or spouse
- Slow dance in the kitchen with your spouse
- Exercise, Exercise, Exercise - it doesn't have to be some sort of special exercise or fancy routine, just move - endorphins will make you feel better
- Drink plenty of water, but don't feel bad if you treat yourself to a pop every now and then
- Paint your own or your kids' nails; hell paint the dog's nails if she'll let ya!
- Put on makeup and curl your hair, just for fun; but for the love of God don't cut or color your hair 'til this thing is over
- Make a TikTok (fighting the urge to get this...I think I'm too old) or just watch TikTok, because it's funny
- Try to teach yourself a new language (seriously so many videos about this on YouTube, I've been looking. Who knows, maybe I'll be fluent in Italian by the time this is over, HA!)
- Start a writing in a journal (or start writing a book - this HAS crossed my mind here recently, you never know what could happen)
- Listen to a podcast (I was never much of a podcast listener until I realized you can listen to Dateline!)
- Bake cookies, or make a new recipe you've never tried before
- Create a vision board using old magazines and newspapers
- Build a fort with your kids and play in it with them
- Pray or meditate
- **STAY OFF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SHUT THE NEWS OFF**

So there's a list of things I've been doing (or want to do) that are helping to keep my brain during this uncertain time. I wholeheartedly believe that there *is* a higher power at work with this whole pandemic and I DO believe that there will be GOOD come out of this situation.

Have a great Saturday friends! Safe stay and stay healthy!

TOPKNOTS

AND

TODDLERS