BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THRIVING IN CRISIS

A COVID-19 Mental Resilience Thriving Kit

3rd Edition
COVID-19 is a challenging time for us all, as we deal with uncertainty, anxiety, fear, frustration, anger, worry, stress, negative thoughts and/or tensions in our relationships.

I personally went through burnout, not once but at least 5 times thus far for various reasons. You can read my story if you are keen. I went on a quest and developed the PRISM© model to help people, families, organizations and communities to thrive through the building of mental resilience and to prevent burnout.

We thought this might help during COVID-19 and as such, my team and I set to work out a COVID-19 edition of the model. We also rallied people together through the Hack Care mini-hackathon where we discussed ways to help people cope with the stressors of COVID-19, especially with Singapore’s Circuit Breaker in place.

What you now have in your hands is thus our labour of love in helping people to navigate through this pandemic and stay mentally resilient. Here, you will find 80 suggested handles, some inspired by God’s word. This is not a “survival kit”, but a “thriving kit”. Do review them, identify which you would like to work on (choose one or a maximum of two) so you will not be overwhelmed and burn out in the process. This is still pretty much work in progress and we would love to hear from you too. #StaySafeStaySane.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

James Lim
Lead Thrive-Synergist & Founder
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2. THE PRISM® MODEL

The PRISM® model came about from our quest to understand how we can build mental resilience and thrive over burnout.

You will find an overview of the model below.

- **Personal Mastery**
  I am aware of what is happening inside of me and I have strategies to keep me growing as a person and to be resilient.
  
  *Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. ~ 1 Corinthians 9:25 (ESV)*

- **Rhythm**
  I have a sustainable rhythm in the various aspects of my life.
  
  *And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he (Jesus) departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ~ Mark 1:35 (ESV)*

- **Interpersonal Bonds**
  I have healthy relationships with others & the community.
  
  *No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ~ 1 John 4:12 (ESV)*

- **Support**
  I have a support network; I’m open to being supported & supporting others.
  
  *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. ~ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a (ESV)*

- **Meaning**
  I see meaning in the world I live in and in whatever I do.
  
  *I (Jesus) came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ~ John 10:10b (ESV)*
PERSONAL MASTERY
Self-Talk - Manage the inner dialogue you have about yourself; practice self-compassion by accepting that things are volatile during this challenging period and this is affecting you. Take our self-talk audit.

Beliefs - Reflect on how the beliefs you have inside you (what you think is right and your expectations) affects your feelings and behaviour. For example, must everything be perfect? Must the house be tidy at all times? Must we be liked by everyone?

Others’ Expectations - In dealing with expectations, ask yourself which of these are perceived and which of these are expressed expectations of you? Be kind to yourself by dialoguing with others about their expectations of you.

Your Expectations - Take stock of the expectations you have of yourself and identify unrealistic expectations (e.g. I must engage my children all the time vs I will dedicate time to be with my children and also to care for myself). It’s OK not to be OK.

Thinking about Challenges - Do we blame ourselves and ignore other factors at play that may have caused the challenge, are we aware of the pervasiveness of the challenge (e.g. it is affecting many others too) and do we believe that the challenge will blow over eventually?

What’s Possible - When something happens, ask what we can do about it rather than focusing on what we can’t (e.g. in view of safe distancing and not being able to access gyms or cinemas, what about an online workout session/movie with friends).

Feelings - Beware of your feelings about feelings (e.g. you may feel angry when family members disrupt you while you work from home. How do you feel about your anger? How would you advise someone if they feel the same way?)

Stress - Gain insights into what is stressing you up and take small steps to address it. Take our COVID-19 Stress Quiz.
3. **PRISM - PERSONAL MASTERY**

Please pick ONE to work on at any one point in time.

- **Spiritual Growth** - Develop yourself spiritually (e.g. bible reading, prayer and singing praise and worship songs) to find peace, hope, meaning, love and guidance from God. Join us on our 12 Day “The Walk” devotional to overcome burnout.

- **Personal Development** - Read books/go for online courses to develop yourself. Join us on our learning events to further build your mental resilience.

- **Learning from Others** - Learn formally or informally from others. Find a mentor.

- **Nature** - Allow natural light into your house and/or spend time in nature. Or do some gardening or grow some plants.

- **News** - Obtain your news and updates about the pandemic from trusted sources. Subscribe to updates from the government here (Whatsapp) and here (Telegram).

- **Keeping Calm** - Beware of fake news, scam calls and news of panic buying. Be aware of your panic level when something happens and it unnerves you.

- **Messages** - Identify emotional guzzlers in your messaging apps and gracefully exit these groups.

- **Daily Wins** - Reflect on your long-term goals and break it down into achievable short-term objectives and have a system (e.g. see Daily Wins Checklist) to keep you accountable. Reward yourself for reaching those objectives.

- **Recharge** - Identify self-care activities you can activate to help you feel more joyful and rested. You do not need to feel guilty for taking care of yourself to recharge for the journey ahead.

- **Quotations** - Inspire yourself with meaningful quotations; place it in a visible place to constantly remind yourself.

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Meals & Sleep - Ensure you are getting timely, healthy and nutritious meals and as well as adequate sleep (at least 8 hours daily). Avoid stocking up unhealthy snacks around the house

Exercise - Engage in physical workout with your family. There are various free online workout videos you can access for this

Routines - Establish and honour routines for work, self-care, rest, and for family. This creates some consistency amidst the current volatile circumstances. Use activities (e.g. meal times) as cues to your brain that you are transiting through your routine. Change into your work clothes on working days, even as you work from home

Weekend & Public Holiday - If you are working from home, honour your day offs and weekends and public holidays (where applicable) as days for resting

Alarms - Make use of alarms to provide auditory cues for your routine and appointments

Rules - Establish age-appropriate rules for children to help you work effectively e.g. for younger children, place a visual cue with an emoticon holding his finger up to his mouth. Place this on the door leading to your work area

Zones - Establish dedicated zones in your house for work and for personal life, as you work from home

Work Area - Set up your work area for success e.g. having the necessary tools, your favourite drink, music/earphones etc
4. PRISM - RHYTHM

Please pick ONE to work on at any one point in time.

☐ Screen Time - Limit your screen time; install apps to help if needed, change the phone to grayscale etc. Practice “safe distancing” with your phone

☐ Non-Phone Alternatives - Use non-phone alternatives e.g. use a watch for time, use a notebook instead of a note-taking app

☐ Desktop – Choose to perform your work on your desktop/laptop rather than on your handphone

☐ Checking Messages - Commit to checking and responding to work messages and emails during your established work hours

☐ Social Media - Avoid the zero-sum game for everyone by only creating & sharing only meaningful & useful contents online. Take a social media detox if you find that it is feeding you negative and destruction self-talk. Beware of falling prey to cyberbullying

☐ Automation - Effectively use technology and automation to help you stay productive (but not keep you on your screens)

☐ Emails - Use emails effectively (see Email Charter). Pick up the phone and call when necessary, instead of relying on emails as the sole mode of communication

☐ Spam - Unsubscribe from spam and unnecessary emails

☐ Auto-Reply - Use an auto-reply for your email and messengers to let people know you are away outside of your working hours
4. PRISM = RHYTHM

Please pick ONE to work on at any one point in time.

- **To-Do** - Focus on up to 3 daily most important tasks (MITs) rather than trying to complete everything on your to-do list. For more Work From Home tips, see our video on How to Work Effectively (& Sanely) from Home.

- **Prioritization** - Use the *Eisenhower Matrix*; not all emails and tasks are urgent AND important.

- **Collaborate & Delegation** – Seek out opportunities to leverage on one another’s’ strengths. Practice effective delegation and avoid micromanaging.

- **Workload** - Be honest and open about your workload and ability to take on more.

- **Meetings** - Ensure a proper agenda has been set for each meeting, set a time limit for these meetings and have a maximum number of meetings you will attend a day.

- **Radio** – Rest your eyes and consider the radio as another source of entertainment.

- **Home Improvement** - Clean up/improve your home.

- **Grocery Shopping** - Plan your grocery shopping so you can maximize your trips and avoid having to make multiple trips to get things you forget. Consider options in case your favourite brand/items are out of stock.

- **Commitments** - Review and trim your external commitments.

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INTERPERSONAL BONDS
5. PRISM – INTERPERSONAL BONDS

Please pick **ONE** to work on at any one point in time.

- **Bond** - Take the opportunity to grow your relationship with your family e.g. engage in “analogue” (non-digital) activities together e.g. cooking, board games, old-school games, jigsaw puzzles, organizing photos. Refer to our Family Bonding Ideas bank for some inspiration.

- **Video & Audio Bites** - Keep communication open with your extended family e.g. video calls and sending of audio, video bites and/photos of each other’s daily life.

- **Affirmations** - Be generous and genuine in affirming your loved ones; amplify the positives and say thank you.

- **Love Languages** - Get to know your family members’ love language (see Love Languages) and speak their love languages.

- **Express** – Learn to express how you feel using the “I-statements”; I feel... (Insert feeling word) when... (reason for feeling that way)... I would like... (tell what you would like to happen instead and/or your needs)... How can we work this out together?

- **Family Devotions & Prayer** - Start family devotions and pray for each other.

- **Don’t second-guess** - Check yourself when you get upset with someone. Don’t second-guess others’ intentions (e.g. non-replies to messages etc.) because chances are that it might not be true, it may cause unnecessary frustration and it may destroy your relationships.

- **Reconcile** - if we have a part to play in relationship breakdowns, use AED© to revive the relationship – Acknowledge the wrongdoing (“I’m sorry for the tone I used when I sent that message”) – Explain the intention and consequences (“I did not mean to sound harsh and was going through a bad day. I know it affected you”) – Demonstrate remorse (“will you forgive me for that?”)
5. PRISM – INTERPERSONAL BONDS

Please pick ONE to work on at any one point in time.

- **Forgive** – Forgive those who hurt you, just as God forgave you (see Mark 11:25, 1 John 4:20). Unforgiveness will only fill you with bitterness and hurt you in the long-run. Remember that your enemy is most likely having his/her own baggage to deal with and that God knows everything that happened and all that is in everyone’s heart.

- **Appreciate** - Thank our frontliners. Join in Operation Transmit Thanks to thank them.

- **Care** - “Drop in” a message or call to see how your friends are doing, do virtual “kopi” meetups with video calls.

- **Surprise** - Surprise your friends by buying them a meal with food delivery.

- **Letters** - Write letters to your family and friends.

- **Learn** - Learn a new skill from/with our family. “Divide and conquer” learning a wide range of topics with others e.g. organize a virtual sharing session where everyone will come and share their learnings with one another.

- **Virtual Hangouts** - Have virtual catch-up sessions online.

- **Webcams** - Make online meetings more personal by encouraging participants to turn on their webcams so people can see each other face-to-face and connect visually.
Please pick ONE to work on at any one point in time.

- **Be Supported** - Allow yourself to be supported during this challenging time; talk to family members and/or close friends or join support groups. Widen your networks during this time.

- **Reach Out** - Tap into resources e.g. financial assistance schemes, seek help from a pastoral staff from your church or from community resources such as the National CARE hotline Tel: 6202-6868. Refer to this list of helplines.

- **Ask** - Ask for help e.g. in caregiving, financial support when it is necessary. Tag team them for caregiving.

- **Empathize** - Be sensitive of others (e.g. our family members, colleagues, friends and children and neighbours), knowing they are going through a challenging period too.

- **Help Others Work From Home (WFH) Well** - Support others to juggle their roles at work and home effectively e.g. respecting their time when corresponding about work, make their work easier if it is within your means, review and moderate workload and timelines.

- **Check-In** – Set aside time to authentically check-in with people. Take part in the #ICareOne Challenge. Be authentic and real about how you are coping too, this vulnerability also helps the other person to open up. But be ready that the other person may not open up. Be patient, hear them out and don’t “come at them” or ask them to “simply snap out of it”, even though you are eager to be of help.

- **Encourage** - Encourage our loved ones, friends and colleagues to seek help when necessary.
b. PRISM – SUPPORT

Please pick **ONE** to work on at any one point in time.

- **Volunteer** - Look out for others who might be vulnerable and needy. Volunteer from home to support others who may be isolated or in need in our community

- **Pray** - Pray for others and check in with them

- **Acts of Kindness** - Help a friend (e.g. those who are self-employed or who have been badly hit by COVID-19) financially. Do a little act of kindness to our neighbours

- **Advocate** - Help advocate for social causes that resonate with you; connect those who can help with non-profits and social enterprises during this challenging time

- **Patronize** - Support small businesses, social enterprises and freelancers to help them stay sustainable during this difficult period
MEANING
7. PRISM – MEANING

Please pick ONE to work on at any one point in time.

- **Positives** - While accepting that the pandemic is bad, reflect on the positives that also arose from it

- **Thanksgiving** - Keep a thanksgiving journal; schedule a “praise break” alarm every day e.g. 3:16 (based on John 3:16) or end the day with thanksgiving

- **Faithful God** - Review your past thanksgiving entries to see how God has been faithful and always with you

- **Financial Commitments** - Review your current financial situation, make the necessary adjustments and not be a servant to money. Distinguish between essentials and “good-to-haves” and clear any outstanding debts and bills as much and as soon as possible

- **Purpose** - Think about your passion, how uniquely God made you and seek to see what God is doing in and through you. If you have a personal mission statement, now is the best time to review it

- **Giftings and Skills** – Identify what makes you unique; your skills, your passions, giftings, experience and personality. Leverage on your strengths

- **Connect with God** - Grow your relationship with God; consider how He has been present in your life, write a letter to Him and be honest about what you are going through and/or have a heart-felt prayer conversation with Him

- **Busyness Audit** - Examine and reflect on your busyness. Embark on a Life Activities Audit. Reflect on your priorities and review your external commitments which are making demands on your time and energy
Let’s play a game. How many of the components of the PRISM model can you find?

• PERSONAL
• MASTERY
• RHYTHM
• INTERPERSONAL
• BONDS
• SUPPORT
• MEANING
9. **NEXT STEPS**

(a) **Keep Growing**

We suggest you seek out an accountability partner to go through this kit together. Let him/her know which areas you would like to work on and have him/her keep you accountable.

(b) **Share with us**

We want to hear how this thriving kit has helped you. Do share with us about it at hello@emmaus.sg and share how we can pray alongside you. We look forward to hearing from you.

(c) **Access More Resources**

Visit our COVID-19 Mental Well-Being Resource page at [http://tiny.cc/thrive-over-c19](http://tiny.cc/thrive-over-c19)

(d) **Help Us Fuel Good**

**Emmaus Strategies** is about helping people, families, organizations and communities to thrive. As such, we believe in “fueling good”; growing more good as we help them thrive.

Should there be an opportunity to fuel more good together, I would be more than glad to continue the conversation with you.

In the meantime, you may wish to:

1. have us bring our **Services** (including free mental resilience talks) to you and/or your organization
2. **give** to fuel more good; your donation is highly appreciated to tide us through the COVID-19 situation and help us continue helping others
3. join our **Mailing List** to be kept updated of new edition of this thriving kit and other resources for you

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“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty... For he will deliver you from... the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler... “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.” ~ Extracted from Psalm 91 (ESV)