

30. HOBBIES: A WAY TO BEAT UNCERTAINTY

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INTRODUCTION

The world is on the verge of a breakdown. Governments and NGOs across the world are coming up with schemes and programs to help save the economies and health of the nations. But in this time of global crisis, what would be most effective are small initiatives taken on a personal level. In the words of Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, "The issue facing each and every one of us is how we manage and react to the stressful situation unfolding so rapidly in our lives and communities. Here we can draw on the remarkable powers of strength and cooperation that we also, fortunately, possess as humans. And that is what we must try to focus on to respond most effectively to this crisis as individuals, family and community members, friends and colleagues".

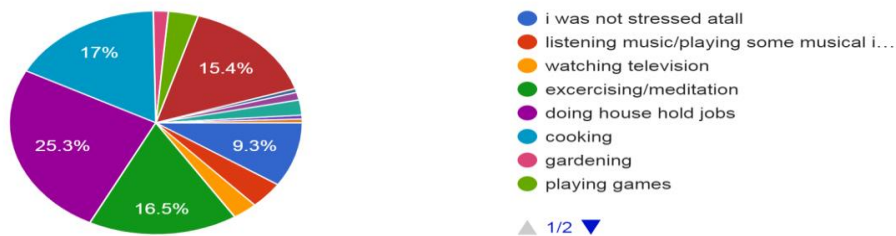
Hobby, developed from late Middle English word *hobyn* or *hoby*, from pet forms of the given name *Robin*. It later came to denote a toy horse or hobby horse, hence 'an activity done for pleasure'. Hobbies can include collecting themed items and objects, engaging in creative and artistic pursuits, playing sports, or pursuing other amusements. Hence, any activity which you find interesting and gives you a sense of contentment and satisfaction could be called a hobby.

Why Hobbies,

I conducted a survey for my students regarding destressing activities during lockdown due to COVID-19. The link for the survey was circulated through personal WhatsApp. Out of 182 respondents, the majority were college students. 92.3 percent of respondents (Chart-1) were in the age group of 21-30 years.

Chart-1-Chart-2

How did you destress yourself in lockdown period due to covid-19
182 responses



I observed that only 9.3 percent of all respondents said that they were not stressed at all during the lockdown period. For remaining respondents, choices, and the activities that can help to relax and manage their stress was recorded. The data vary hugely from person to person (Chart- 2).

From this survey, I concluded two things. First, keeping their morale up is difficult for people especially young adults during this lockdown period. Secondly, to overcome this stress people have taken the path of following their hobbies as an escape. Thus, hobbies have proven themselves to be worth pursuing to fight back problems like loneliness, frustration, anger, and depression.

MAJOR BENEFITS OF HAVING HOBBIES,

- Helps in learning new skills that may help in career building

Hobbies are usually ventures taken up by a person as an individual to make her feel better. In today's world, there are a lot more career options other than the stereotypically superior and only professions of doctors and engineers. Hobbies improve a person's skills at his co-curricular activities polishing it to a level where one can turn his hobby into a passion and opt for it as a career option.

- **Makes you more innovative**

As a child grows into a teenager, his natural curiosity is generally suppressed due to the modern internet era. She refuses to do the job which she could have easily done without the internet. Pursuing one's hobbies rejuvenates the dying curiosity in a child and makes sharper and creative than before.

- Helps in overcoming tough days

Teenagers usually face a dark phase during their adolescent years. These are also some of their crucial and future deciding years. If a teenager has a side hobby to distract herself from the negativity of her difficult days, she would have more time to spend on making her career. Also, people of old age constantly hear about their vulnerability to this pandemic. The elders who have a medical history are comparatively more prone to lead to depression due to constant fear and loneliness. Some recreating activities even in your old days can make your will stronger and you would be able to fight longer in this difficult time. Exploring new skills can also stave off dementia and other related mental illnesses.

- Helps to manage stress
- Gives you a sense of self-confidence

It has been seen that people with some sort of extrovert hobby are ought to have more self-esteem and self-belief as compared to their fellow mates. These children usually have a stronger personality too.

- Helps in improving efficiency

Only when the mind is calm and content is when you yield effective output. Distracting yourself from time to time with the pleasure-giving activities can help improve your time management and work productivity.

When detached from the mainstream narrative of hustling hard, a hobby can serve as the baton for self-improvement. According to Dr. S. Ausim Azizi, chairman of the department of neurology at Temple University's School of Medicine in Philadelphia who studies brain activity and cell signaling, "activities you enjoy also stimulate the brain's septal zone — it's "feel good" area — and that makes you feel happy"

When we do the things that fascinate us, we achieve a heightened state of concentration and level of neurotransmitters in our brain. These chemicals keep us focused and interested in activities that energize us. It helps us strive and focus. Hobbies like listening to music, meditating, exercising are some of the natural ways to stimulate dopamine release in the brain. Several brain imaging studies have found that listening to music increases activity in the reward and pleasure areas of the brain, which are rich with dopamine receptors.

When we do tasks of our interests, they not only make us feel better, but they also improve our physiology. Researchers examined the impact of pleasurable activities on wellbeing. It was concluded that enjoyable leisure activities are associated with lower blood pressure, smaller waist, and a lower body mass index. People also feel better and are less likely to be depressed. Having a hobby can have a positive effect on the heart via hormones and also it increases the blood circulation in our systems oxidizing vital organs, especially the brain. Hence, hobbies can be helpful for both the head and heart. These activities also deserve appreciation because pastimes are an important way for people to connect with their passions and identity. The fun thing is that not only children but every age group could have interesting hobbies. Since hobbies inherently require learning new skills, they're an important way to keep minds sharp as one gets older. Right now, when anxiety is high, throwing oneself into favorite activities could be a good way to manage stress.

EXPERIENCES AND SURVEYS

During the lockdown, many people around the globe indulged in various kinds of activities. Juliana Ferrarini, who works in retail, wanted to use her time constructively while self-isolating in her Eastbourne flat. "Having suffered from depression in the past, I was worried about how the dark days of this pandemic would impact my mental health, so I needed to find something positive to keep my mind occupied," she explains.

Ferrarini decided to use the lockdown as an opportunity to study. She enrolled herself on a course run by the School of Natural Skincare. "Since starting to use natural skin care products, I've always wanted to learn how to make them safely myself. But while working full-time, I'd never had the chance to do this, until lockdown began." She completed the course within one week. "I've fallen in love with making my skincare products," she says. "Plus, it

gives me purpose and keeps me busy. I would be in a much darker place right now if I hadn't started doing this."

According to another survey by The Healthy Work Company, a workplace mental health consultancy, 22 percent of respondents had taken up a new pastime in lockdown, while 35 percent had rediscovered an old one. The findings also suggested that trying out new things seemed to have a more beneficial effect – 41 percent of those taking up a new activity reported a positive impact on their mental health, compared to 30 percent for those focusing on old hobbies.

"Learning new skill shifts the focus away from any anxiety you might have," explains Olivia James, a confidence coach, and trauma therapist. "When you're enjoying taking part in a hobby, it's easier to be curious, investigative, and playful, and you're less likely to feel stressed or snappy."

Crosswords and crochet which might appear lame to most can also be new hobbies for some people during the coronavirus pandemic. For instance, they have kept Grace Greenwood mentally agile for some time. Her daily exercise regime helped explain the 104-year-old lady's recent recovery from the coronavirus.

Stimulating hobbies may inspire ideas that will help at work. For example-leading to a new approach to making presentations, solving problems, or meeting a client's needs. "Any time you take a break from routine, you develop new ways of thinking," are the words of Gail McMeekin, a psychotherapist and owner of Creative Success, a career coaching company in Boston and author of "The Power of Positive Choices."

"By tapping into our creativity through hobbies, we make connections that lead to a flurry of insights and new ideas", he adds.

CONCLUSION

Pandemic coronavirus infection had a significant impact on how people perceive a huge number of familiar things. Russian psychologist George Solodovnikov even selects several skills that people have learned to practice in the conditions of the threat of the spread of COVID-19. According to , the citizens that survived the quarantine will now have a much greater appreciation for personal space and their work. The world is changing. The world is always changing. But this time, the change came unexpectedly, rapidly, and uninvited. Never before have our spirit, our stamina, and our resilience been tested to their limits to this extent. The knowledge of the rapidly increasing number of cases every hour, the concern of the safety of our loved ones far away, and our frustration and loneliness has started to empower out heads. It might soon break us apart and be a huge threat to humanity. But then we ask ourselves, will we let it happen to ourselves and our future generations?

In the words of Winston Churchill, "it is no use saying to the tired mental muscles, 'I will give you a good rest. I will go for a long walk or I will lie down and think of nothing.' The mind keeps busy just the same... If it has been worrying, it goes on worrying." Hence, the best

way to remove something from your brain is to replace it with another until "the old undue grip relaxes and the process of repercussion and repair begins." So for those who haven't yet started spending the productive me time, find a new hobby that suits your interests and kick it off because we are going to come out of this outbreak swaying in style and shimmering with the new polish we applied to ourselves.

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