

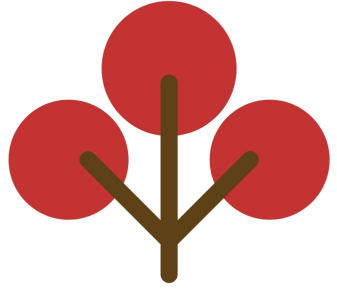


MELISSA VINE

SPEAKER & COURAGE INFUSER

515.402.1463 | melissa@melissavine.com

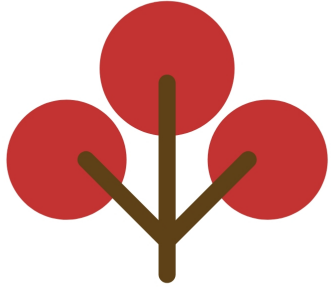
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Mental Health in a Pandemic:

REPLACING THREATS WITH SECURITY

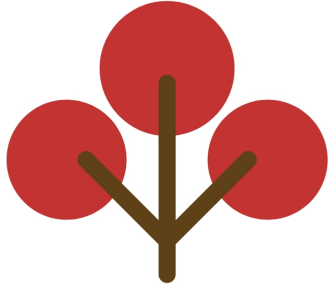


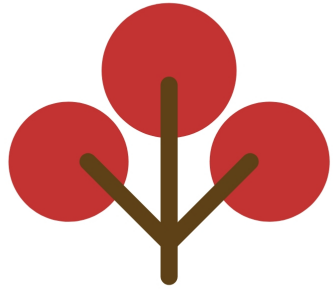


Why This Pandemic is Different

- Crisis leads to an adrenaline rush.
- This produces stress hormones.
- Stress hormones motivate us to action.
- There is no “action” to take for most of us.
- Our bodies are marinating in stress hormones.
- Not a one-time event, complicated by the ongoing nature of a pandemic.

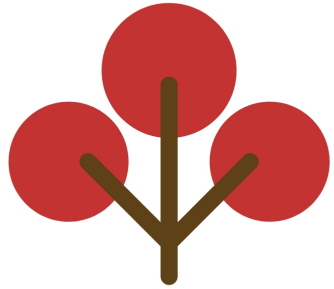
How would you define a threat?





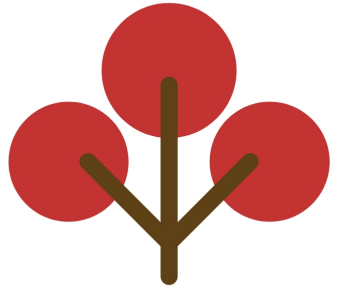
Threat Reaction: Physical Symptoms

- Heart racing/pounding heart
- Shallow breathing
- Sweating
- Stomachache
- Headache/dizzy/lightheaded
- Tense muscles
- Trembling/shaking
- Difficulty sleeping



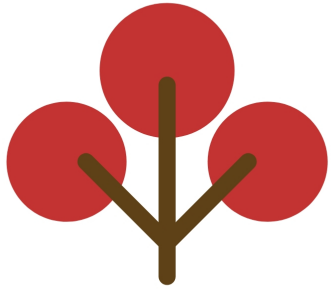
Threat Reaction: Psychological Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Anger (Annoyance, Frustration, Jealousy)
- Sadness (Hurt, Pain, Disappointment)
- Embarrassment/Humiliation
- Guilt (False or Real)
- Shame
- Fear



When is a reaction helpful?

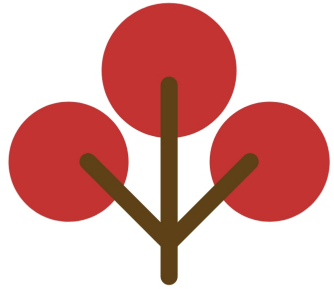
When is it not?



Fear is the desire to control something that I cannot control.

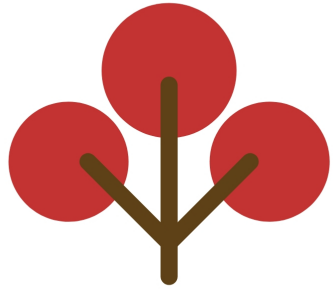
therefore...

I will interpret events as threats when I am afraid, because I want to be able to control the outcome of the event but cannot.



The Big Question:

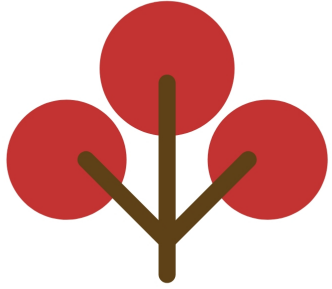
What Am I Afraid Of?



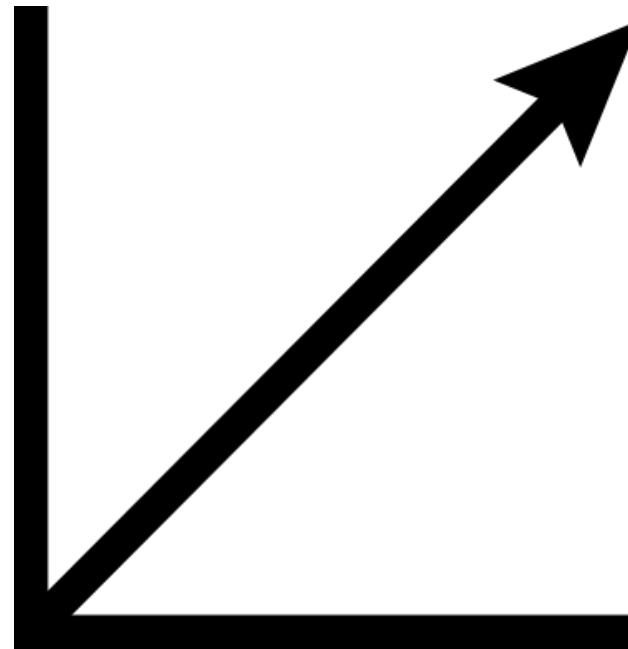
Four Fears

- **Death**
- **Discomfort**
- **Worthlessness**
- **Isolation**

Fear of Worthlessness

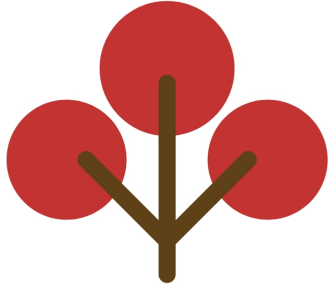


success

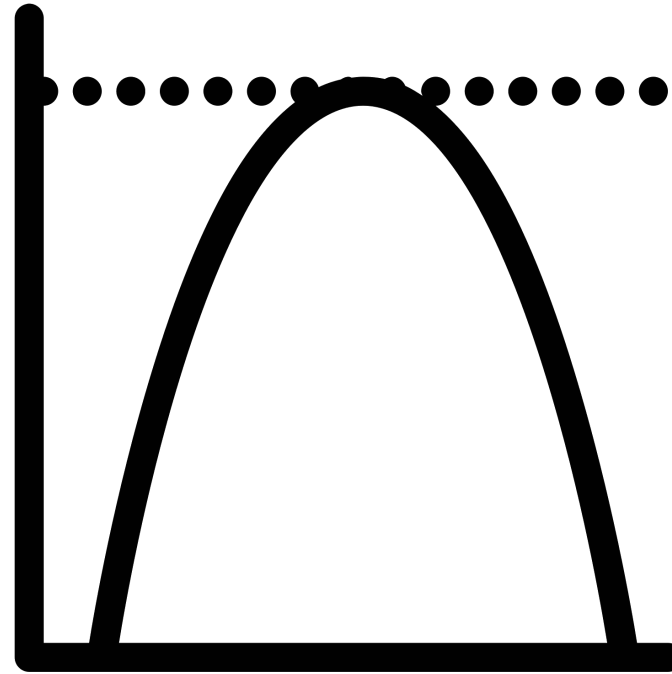


time and energy

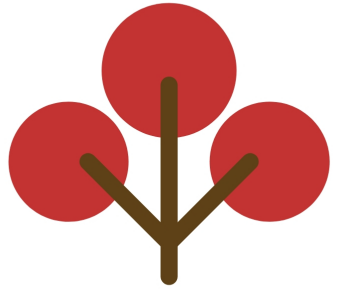
Fear of Worthlessness



success

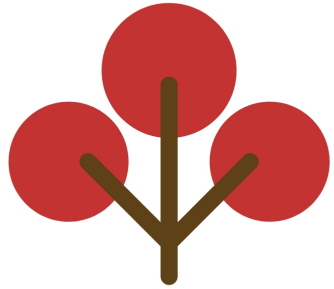


time and energy



How do I treat myself and others when I'm reacting?

- **FIGHT: Attack**
- **FLIGHT: Withdraw**
- **FREEZE: Numbness**



Reacting

Amygdala

Fight, flight, or freeze mode

Impulsive

Tries to control others

Reflects assumptions, stereotypes, prejudices

Often puts self and others on edge

Responding

Pre-frontal cortex

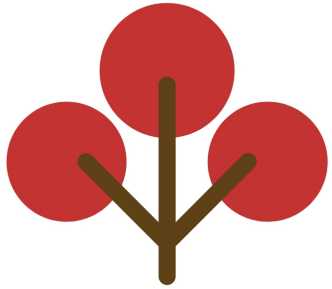
Rational mind

Considers long-term consequences

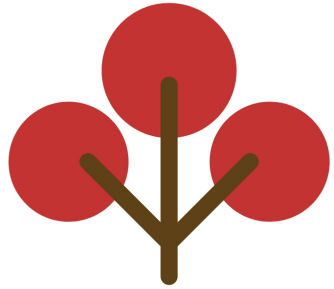
Maintains control of self

Decision-making based on values and goals

Often puts self and others at ease

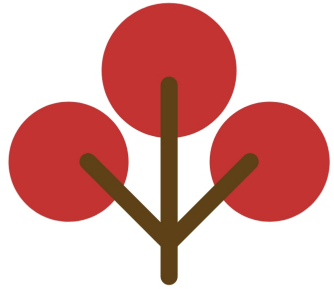


1. STOP when you experience physical or psychological symptoms of a threat reaction.
- 2. *What am I afraid of?* Name it. Imagine the worst outcome and accept it.**
3. Then, you can respond, rather than react, from your rational mind.
4. If the fear sticks around, sit in it with someone you trust.



Four Securities

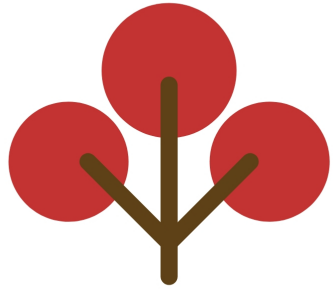
- **Life**
- **Comfort**
- **Value**
- **Community**



LIFE

I have life in this moment, and so do those who are living all around me.

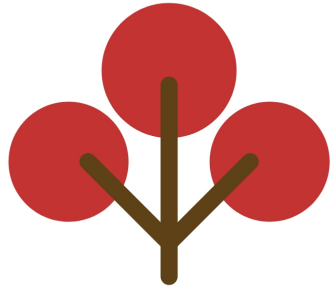
Express gratitude for life.



COMFORT

What do I have right now that brings me comfort? What things, people, circumstances, and experiences do I enjoy?

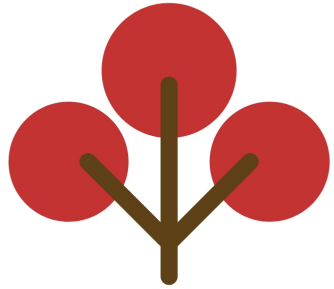
Find ways to experience comfort.



VALUE

Where does my value come from?

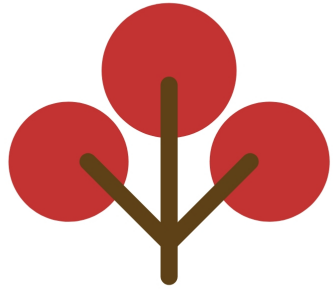
Embrace your intrinsic, unchanging value.



COMMUNITY

Do I have people in my life who actively listen, and do I actively listen to others?

Rather than getting people to like you, be impressed by you, or avoiding people altogether, seek authentic connection.



CONCLUSION

There is no shortage of advice on eating, sleeping, and exercising; I'm not going to add to that noise.

If I am trapped in fear, I don't have the mental energy to make healthy decisions; I'm using up all of my energy on reacting. While responding requires the extra step of PAUSING for a moment, it can save a lot of energy, which can be freed up for things that fill us with security: life, comfort, value, and community.



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