

# THE CORONA EFFECT

*Fighting The Crisis  
In Your Mind – A Practical Guide*

**GOBRAN®**

***The unthinkable has happened – and suddenly fear and powerlessness are trying to dominate us.***

That's the Corona Effect: An effect that each of us experiences throughout our lives as our reality gets altered from one second to the next. We suddenly find ourselves in a crisis which tries to control our feelings and thoughts, and makes it seem impossible to get through it. We need to withdraw ourselves from the negative power and chaotic thinking that this crisis places on us. We may not be in control of the crisis, but we do have control over how we think, how we approach our challenges, and how we deal with the effects of a crisis.

*This book is a practical guide to re-focusing our thinking. Our mindset changes the way we deal with any challenging situation we find ourselves in, and helps us to win the real battle which takes place in our minds.*

## ***Acknowledgement***

This book was written during an extraordinary time, under extraordinary conditions, and with extraordinary people. It is the result of a team effort that was intense, challenging, sometimes exhausting, but at the same time exemplary. The common goal was the constant, supreme point of focus. It was a complimentary effort – which proved what can be possible if we keep one thing in mind: The importance of community.

This book was created in 16 days (to ensure that it brings timely support during the COVID-19 crisis). However, all of its content is based on 16 years of intensive collaboration with my wife Miriam. Her critical content-related eye, her endurance in drilling down to the core of any topic, and her ability to always ask the right questions and then to jointly find answers, have been a crucial catalyst in our collective work for this book.

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Mick Sakkal contributed important ideas to the content and structure of the book; while Stefan König, Daniel Pfeiffer und Kim Sakkal took charge of the graphical design. Efficiency and meticulousity in the research and the copyediting was ensured through Kathrin Beyer and Frauke Markmann. And Christina Süllau and Joshua Duvauchelle translated the German script within less than one week into English. Last but not least, the ideas and capabilities of Bastian Kunkel and Christian Waske enhanced the electronic availability of the book.

## The Corona Effect

My deep appreciation goes to each and every one of them, as well as to the team as a whole. Each crisis brings a lot of hidden things to the surface – but certainly one thing more than anything else: We are highly dependent on other people! Trust, support and appreciation are goods of highest value. I was allowed to experience all of these during the creation of this book – not once, but time and time again. And I am extremely grateful for this wonderful experience.

Michael Gobran

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## ***Fighting The Crisis In Your Mind – A Practical Guide***

*“We are all in a crisis, the size of which I never imagined.”*

These were the words of Lothar Wieler, head of the Robert Koch Institute, on March 20, 2020. Just a few days later, the World Health Organization officially declared that COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus, was a global pandemic. Today, we're in a worldwide crisis. The inconceivable has happened and denial is impossible. What does this mean for each and every one of us? What is going to happen now? What will happen next? How long will it last? We all have questions with no direct answers. The effect? A sense of uncertainty and insecurity for all of us, and a level of fear and powerlessness spreading across society on an emotional level.

This is The Corona Effect. To be honest, it's nothing new for the human journey. We all experience fear, uncertainty and worry whenever our reality gets altered unexpectedly. Suddenly, we find ourselves in a crisis that controls our every thought and our every emotion. But it doesn't have to be this way. You don't have to be at the mercy of your perceptions. You don't need to give your mindset over to your emotions of fear and powerlessness. There's a way to shift our approach, change our mindset, and take away the power a crisis has over us. But how?

In a crisis such as the one we're facing today or any other crisis, we unfortunately can't simply choose or control exactly what is happening and how it will turn out in the end. And while we can't control the situation, we CAN control our thinking about the situation. You and I have the power to choose how we deal with a crisis, and the effects we allow it to have on us. Because the real struggle comes down to how we allow the crisis to dominate our thoughts and feelings. It's less about pandemics and crises, and more

about our mind, our mindset, and how we choose to react to the situation. This book has only one purpose: It is your guide, your companion and your support in your battle against The Corona Effect. Think of it as a personal toolkit filled with tools (mental strategies, tips and ideas) to counter the fear and powerlessness we all face in a crisis, no matter how big or small it may be.

In this book, we'll deal primarily with your mindset, your attitude and your composure. We are going to challenge you to rethink your thinking and ask questions like, "Is this thought beneficial?" or "Is this mindset blocking my progress and growth?" We call the latter "thinking traps": Thoughts, mindsets and ideas that trap us in a specific way of thinking about, and approaching, a crisis or problem.

Throughout the next few chapters, we'll explore the ten major thinking traps, and how to improve your mindset to better handle a crisis or problem. Each thinking trap will be examined through self-assessment, exercises and expert guidance. More importantly, the heart of each chapter is what we call your "principle of action." This acts as a guidepost, so to speak, to help you avoid common thinking traps. Ten thinking traps. Ten principles of action. Ten practical applications.

The coronavirus crisis is hardly the first, nor will it be the last crisis we experience. We hope that the next crisis in our lives will not be as globally relevant, but regardless of its scope, we will be better prepared to challenge and stand up against the sensation of fear and powerlessness. This requires focus, practice, and above all, a willingness to deal with ourselves and our thinking. This book will assist in helping you to do exactly that.

*March 2020*

*Chapter 1*

**The Feeling of  
Powerlessness**

*What is Still in My Control  
in Times of Crisis?*



***Start With This Quick Self-Evaluation ...  
Please check the appropriate answer.***

*I believe that my thinking is an important key to good crisis management.*

- 0 = not true at all
- 1 = rarely true
- 2 = moderately true
- 3 = fully true

*In a crisis, I can readily accept that I'm not in control of everything and that external circumstances control me.*

- 0 = not true at all
- 1 = rarely true
- 2 = moderately true
- 3 = fully true

*In times of crisis I am more preoccupied with the future than with the current situation.*

- 0 = not true at all
- 1 = rarely true
- 2 = moderately true
- 3 = fully true

*I believe that struggling with the current situation only makes the crisis more difficult.*

- 0 = not true at all
- 1 = rarely true
- 2 = moderately true
- 3 = fully true

***If you answered the four self-assessment questions mainly with a 0 or 1:***

You quickly feel like circumstances are dominating you during a crisis or challenge. This indicates a negative mindset, which is an additional burden on you when trying to overcome a difficult situation.

***7 Negative Effects:***

1. My perspective of the future is dominated by fears and worries.
2. Crisis situations give me a sense of helplessness and powerlessness.
3. My responses are overly emotional and often out of place.
4. My lack of confidence triggers a great deal of stress.
5. Every crisis weakens me.
6. The fear and worry of the next crisis determines my everyday life.
7. I try to add more control to my life.

***If you answered the four self-assessment questions mainly with a 2 or 3:***

You manage to retain a sense of self-determination even in a crisis. You will be able to get through crises in an easier, healthier manner.

***7 Positive Effects:***

1. I grant myself healthy confidence even in a crisis situation.
2. I keep a level head even in a crisis situation.
3. I am able to act proactively instead of just react.
4. I don't let myself be easily overwhelmed by stressful situations.
5. Crises don't weaken me in the long run.
6. I see the future with peace and serenity.
7. I accept that I can never fully control my life.

## ***Creator of My Thinking, Not Victim of My Circumstances.***

Crises are more than just challenges. They're dramatic disruptions and bring about abrupt changes in what we're used to expecting in everyday life. This not only creates new situations to which we have to adapt, but it also puts emotional pressure on us and can trigger anxieties about the future. Learning how to deal with a crisis isn't easy, but it's always important. Ultimately, crises are simply the acute climax of a sudden change, and the true effects aren't often felt until afterwards. Dealing with these in a future-oriented manner is a task we have to face early on, and it's a process we have to actively embrace. That's why, whether we're talking about a personal crisis (e.g. a job loss or relationship breakdown) or an international pandemic, it's crucial that we focus not just on the present pressing needs, but also on the bigger picture and overcoming the crisis. After all, the crisis affects our present moment, but our future is determined by how we respond to it. We need to design our "tomorrow" so that this bigger, holistic mindset can provide us with a balanced perspective and give us something to strive towards.

Of course, unlike Pippi Longstocking, we can't change the world to be exactly the way we wish it to be. We're humans, after all, and not magical superheroes. While we like to think we're self-determining and independent, no amount of wishful thinking will change the reality around us. Instead, in a crisis, we experience how heteronomous (i.e. how we're influenced by the world and circumstance around us) we actually are. The more severe the crisis, the more we can feel overwhelmed by our sense of losing control and being at the mercy of our circumstances. There are many examples that you might have already experienced in your life: A serious illness which leaves us unable to work, the sudden loss of a job due to changes in our industry, a severe economic recession or a global disease pandemic like COVID-19.

But no matter what the cause and the exact extent of our personal crisis, in the end all crises have one thing in common: They give us a clear indication of our transience and our limitations as human beings. If we're willing to keep the right perspective, this experience can also provide clarity and a humble awareness of our TRUE power and abilities: What we can create ourselves, what we can control or influence on our own, and also what lies outside of our influence and control. Such an honest look at our limitations can be frustrating, but it's also very liberating. Instead of being preoccupied with things beyond our control, we can focus all our energy on what we are actually able to create, change and influence. And in every crisis - no matter how large it may be - we always have one factor entirely in our control: Our mindset and our way of thinking. We can't change the crisis. But we can change our inner attitude about it. Your mindset is the central key to successful crisis management. If we have a fatalistic perspective that there's no hope, this negative mindset is going to determine our approach to the crisis and affect every choice and decision we make. The opposite is also true. If we keep a positive, hopeful perspective, we're better empowered to think outside the box, come up with creative solutions, and see new ways of approaching a dilemma. In both scenarios, our inner attitude has enormous power to push or pull us in a different direction. How we approach a crisis determines our success or failure in overcoming it. As Henry Ford said, *"Whether you believe you can do it or whether you believe you can't, in either case you will be right."* How you think changes how you act. If your attitude is, *"This makes no sense and is hopeless,"* you'll carry out different behavior than if you have the personal conviction that says, *"Something good can come out of everything."* We're not talking about what's right or wrong, or ignoring the very real problems in a crisis, but rather about understanding fact versus perception, and the power perception has in how we face the facts. In your battle against feeling powerless, this simple reminder will help: You can be the **creator of your thinking, not the victim of your circumstances.**