

## Control vs Letting Go in Uncertain Times

Most (if not all) of us like to think we are in control of our life, at least much of the time. The COVID-19 pandemic challenges our perception of control in many ways because of the physical threat posed by the virus as well as the restrictions imposed to halt its spread. As we learn of unfolding tragedies and listen to harrowing news bulletins, our feeling of control can be undermined, leading to a sense of helplessness which, if not addressed, can significantly compromise our psychological resilience. It is therefore important to learn how to appropriately **direct our focus and attention** to maintain our wellbeing.

**Question – In these stressful and unprecedented times in which we are living, where should our focus be to maintain our resilience and mental health?**

**Answer – We need to control the things we can and let go the things we can't. We need to channel energy into that which is effective, beneficial or productive.**

Start by **distinguishing between what you can and can't control**. Some suggestions are given below. Consider them and add your own. Keep your primary focus on the things you can do.

What can I control?	What can't I control?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My compliance to Government rules and health advice e.g. self-isolation, social distancing etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is going to happen next</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How I spend my time at home/ in my garden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long the pandemic will last</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My contact with others through telephone/ digital technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether people I know will become ill</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which sources of information I trust and the frequency and duration of my exposure to COVID-19 news coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The motives, behaviours or reactions of others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My attitude e.g. whether I make the most of opportunities to feel grateful, joyful, happy etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether restrictions on daily life will be lifted or intensified</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being kind and encouraging in my interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether I will find toilet paper when I next shop!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

While you may be aware of things you can't control, **make the decision not to allow them to dominate your thinking** and sap your energy.