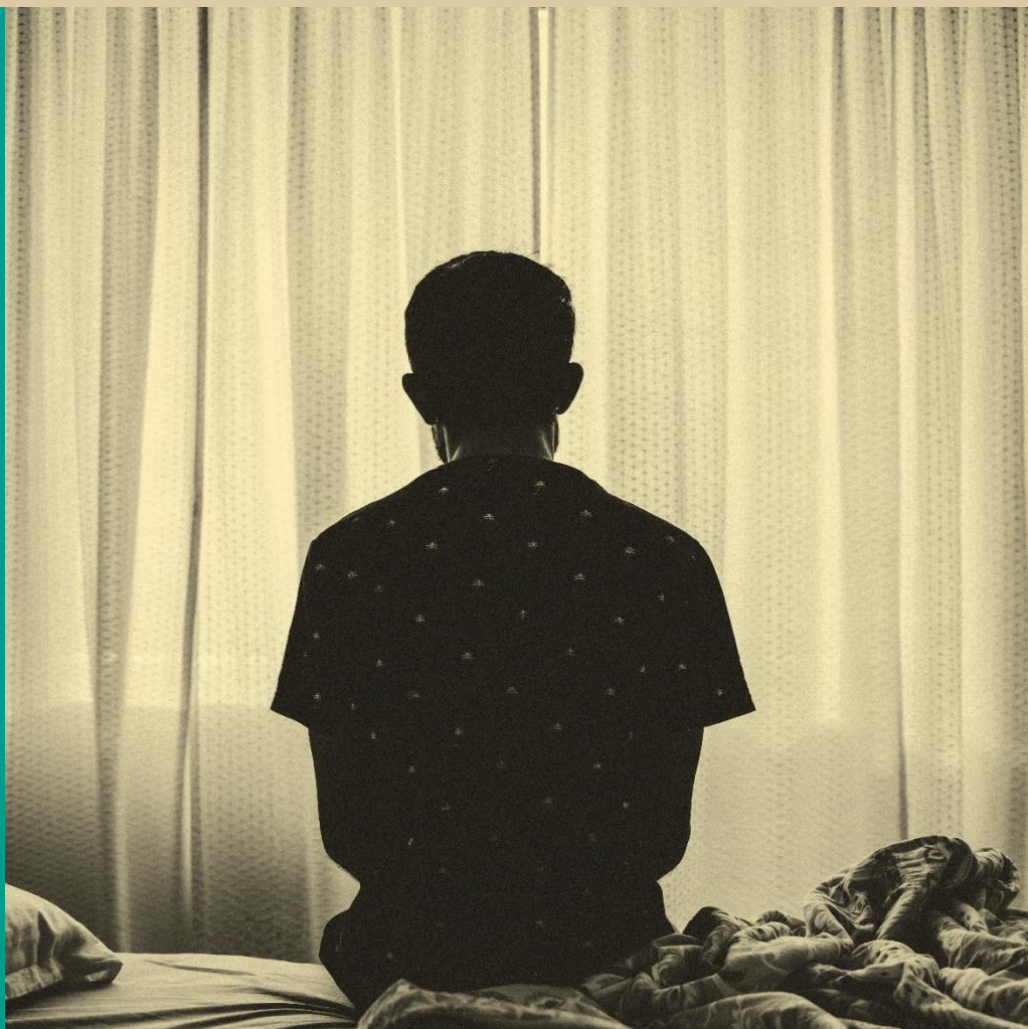


Lockdown Tips

A letter from Ahmad Adisa



How to Connect to God
And Improve Yourself



Top 10 Things to Do To Make the Best of Being Isolated

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many cities are requesting that residents self-quarantine and isolate themselves and their families to discourage the spread of the virus. There are many efforts, now, to grab the attention of all of these stationary people through television, internet, mobile phones, and social media. Is that the best way to spend this time? Here are a few suggestions on how to deal with being suddenly incarcerated in your own home.

1. ***Breathe and Don't Panic!*** Isolation is a shock for a person who has a routine that they execute on a day-to-day basis. A lot of us don't realize what an abrupt change in our routine can do to us physically, emotionally and spiritually. The initial panic stems from our entering a realization that we truly lack control in what happens to us. This realization can cause stress, physical discomfort, and doubt about our own personal beliefs and relationships. Nevertheless, this panic is something that none of

us should embrace. **At the onset of this panic, it is very important to look for the constant part of your life that you can turn to in order for you to mentally reset and start the thought process needed to pull you through.**

For me it was reciting the Arabic Qur'an. In the darkest night of my life, it was reciting God's Book that centered me mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It got me through that night and has gotten me through over nineteen years of trials in my life. If I could not have identified and practiced that constant part of my life and exercise it, I don't know how that first night or the subsequent years would have turned out. So, before you panic, breathe and ask yourself **what is a constant aspect of your life that you know calms you and keeps your life in perspective?** Is it prayer? Writing? Meditating? Find your means to center yourself.

2. **Reconnect with Yourself.** Simply put, after you have found that 'constant aspect' of your life, there are more questions that you can begin to ask yourself. **When you find yourself with**

'down time' you will begin to find out more and more about yourself: your reading habits, eating habits, television habits, what types of relationships you have, etc. You will begin to evaluate your life in ways that you've never had before, and this is because you've likely never had such an opportunity to do so. This process can be trying and revealing.

Ask yourself questions about yourself, such as your likes and dislikes. Find a book of questions, sit down and ask yourself the questions. The answers will (without a doubt) shock you, however, you will come out a better you for knowing yourself better. If you have a spouse and/or a family, make it into a game. This is a chance to get to know not only you but also those immediately around you and affected by you.

3. **Reconnect with God.** Isolation, especially under the present conditions, can bring a lot to mind regarding our connection with God. Some years ago, I was isolated from every part of society. I was fed a tray of food through a slot in a door for close to sixty days. Having been isolated before, I did not have that

initial shock, however, I had never been isolated so individually before. I, again, went to my Qur'an and began reading. After that, I took note of everything that I had. With mainly the Qur'an to read and letters to write, I quickly got a grasp of what my true constants were in my life and above all stood one: God. In this specific isolation, with everything removed from my immediate grasp, I was relieved of things that I could only describe as veils or crutches that I had used to 'past time', such as television, playing sports, playing board games, etc. I found that without those things which were not constants I was able to see my relationship with God for what it was: the only true and constant thing. No matter where you exist in the universe, God is the Reality. **Isolation can be something to aid you in seeing that, in seeing God for who God is.** Take this time to do that. Pray more, read more of the Qur'an, and take this extra 'time' to remind yourself that when everything is taken away from you, nothing can take away your faith in God. Reestablish your prayer. Read your Qur'an more and build the innate connection with God that is a part of us all.

4. **Unplug.** This could have easily been the first or second tip, but I felt the first three are more important and lend themselves to this idea. However, if you've read up to this point and haven't picked up on this necessity, then do know that this should be exercised as best as possible. To unplug doesn't mean just to literally unplug your televisions, phones and other devices. That is virtually impossible these days since our lives are so connected to these things. To assure that you make the best of being isolated, do your best to stay away from these items other than to reach out to someone that will assist you in benefitting from your isolation. There is no need to pick up the phone, search the internet or watch television except for things and people that can benefit this opportunity.

There are people, places, and things that grant us no positivity in our lives, and we constantly allow their influence to affect us. With the hustle and bustle of daily life, we never find the time nor the wherewithal to deal with these things head-on. **Now, given this opportunity, we can choose to unplug from these**

influences and make choices that allow us to focus on aspects of our life that we have disconnected from as well as find and stay focused on those relationships that keep our life moving in a positive direction.

5. *Read.* Reading is something that opens a person's mind. Be it the Qur'an and its wonderful stories, a book written by a great scholar, or a book of *fiqh* or *aqeedah* reading allows your mind to imagine and think. It allows you to expand your language skills which allows you to better express what you learn. I personally recommend reading a physical book, not a screen (if it can be avoided). Physically touching a book and turning its pages have a much more vivid effect on our senses. Find a good book, or that book you have put off reading for so long, pick it up and read.

6. *Workout.* Physically, you are now stationary, but your body still needs to experience movement. Sitting around the house, no matter what you are engaged in, will only lead to an

unhealthy physical end. Physical health is very important, and it is part of keeping ourselves alive and able to function.

Depending on your age and your physical capability, exercise can start from walking to running and weight-lifting. **The key to physical exercise is consistency to the point that it becomes a part of your lifestyle.** The basic workout for a confined space consists of the following: push-ups, jumping jacks, squats and lunges. There are also a plethora of workouts online that you could indulge in. If you don't normally work out, don't jump into an intense routine. Start with the basics and go from there, slowly. Likewise, be mindful of what you eat and not to overeat while you're isolated. This is also a chance to be mindful of that. Take your time and read a little about healthy eating as you learn more about exercising. This will always equal to time well spent.

7. Listen to the Silence. When was the last time you were able to just sit back and think? Finding the time to enjoy a silent room or place is lost on a lot of us. Likewise, its pleasure has

become foreign. **Silence is a chance to listen and meditate.** It is a time for prayer and the opportunity to speak to and listen for God's instruction. Silence, as well, is the opportunity to listen to ourselves. Read the Qur'an with a purpose. Find a *surah* or a verse that you've enjoyed reading and look into the commentary. Make time to ponder on your new findings while growing in your relationship with God. Whatever silence you are blessed with in isolation, take full advantage of it and never take it for granted.

8. Find Useful and Positive Ways to Spend Your Time. Other than reading, prayer and exercise, there are other positive activities than can be done such as calligraphy, writing, and painting. **Use your time wisely and productively.**

9. Get in the Routine. With this information, there is only one thing to do: start a new routine. Go over the information above and set yourself a routine for each day and stick to it. **The irony is that a routine helps you to break the monotony of being**

stuck in one place. It allows you to respond to your life as best you can, however, now with the understanding that it can all change in due time. Life is all about how you respond to situations and not about how you control them. That is God's business, not yours. When your routine changes, we will have learned the understanding that whatever comes after can change as well.

10. **Rest.** This one is simple: sleep. **Our bodies have rights over us and it's important to be sure that we do get our sleep.** For many of us, we have not had the opportunity to get a full night's rest for some time. This is not to say that we should sleep all day to 'make up' for lost time because you can't. You can, however, add some extra rest to your new daily routine.