

## **Worry Basket Meditation: To manage COVID / Coronavirus-related anxiety better**

Hello and welcome to *Worry Basket* Meditation, a meditation based on Harvard University handout on managing fears and anxiety around the coronavirus (COVID-19). It is important that we remind ourselves that in the current crisis, excessive worrying is normal. Everybody worries a lot, not just us. Next, let's remind ourselves that persistent worry is not an effective way to respond to the current stress. We can then step up our coping strategies by engaging in this meditation to more effectively manage our worries.

In this meditation, I will lead you through a visualization exercise. As you are doing this, your mind is likely to wander. No need to be upset. That is what our minds do. When you become aware that you have lost track, gently bring your awareness back to my voice and join the visualization exercise again.

Get into a comfortable position. Gently close your eyes. Keeping eyes open is fine.

Let's begin the meditation:

Let's imagine a basket. I will imagine a medium sized basket that I can easily lift. Feel free to imagine a smaller or bigger basket. Let's give it a color. I will give it a sky-blue color. Feel free to give any color you wish. Let's imagine that the basket is covered with a lid. Let's give the lid a cover also. I will give it a white color. Feel free to give any color you wish. Let's now imagine that all sides of the basket have the following words written on them: Worry Basket. Excellent. Now that we have our Worry Basket in our mind, we can start putting our worries inside the basket. Find the thing in your mind that you are stuck worrying about. I worry about getting Coronavirus, worry about my family and friends getting Coronavirus. Now that we have identified our worries, let's imagine moving these worries from our mind and placing them firmly in our Worry Basket. This Basket will hold whatever we place in it. Now, let's close the basket with the lid and firmly move the basket to one side, perhaps placing it on a shelf. We can go back anytime we want and take the worry out, or we can leave it there, giving us space to focus on other things.

Now, if you are ready, gently open your eyes and smile. Cheers. We just completed a Worry Basket Meditation. Let's take some slow deep breaths and pat ourselves on our shoulder and say – Good job. That's an excellent and very effective way to manage our worries.

Please do this meditation at least once a day. On particularly difficult days, do it every few hours. Do it with your family, friends, pets, colleagues and support team. Feel free to do it by creating a physical Worry Basket and writing down your worries and then putting them firmly in the basket and covering the basket. You can go back anytime if you want and take the worries out, or you can leave it there, giving yourself time to focus on other things.

Namaste

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