



Wellbeing

Fatigue

Of course we're tired!

Fatigue is something that many, if not most, of us have been experiencing through the Coronavirus pandemic. We've been busy assimilating, processing, adjusting, amending, coming to terms with and trying to make sense of the impact the pandemic has had on us - without a break! Just imagine the amount of mental and physical energy we have been using up whilst all this has been going on!

Many of the ways we might normally have renewed our energy – whether it be in the company of others, going to particular places or being able to take part in activities like swimming or yoga classes, or whatever it is we do to renew – have not been available to us. Instead, we've probably been caught up in a never-ending loop of 'online' communication. Even the boss of Zoom has admitted he's tired of Zoom! Of course, we're tired.

It could also be said that the last 18 months have had this constant nagging 'what if' element. What if I get ill; what if somebody I love gets ill; what if there isn't any food or loo roll in the shops; what if I lose my job; what if I can't pay the bills; what if the impact on my children is bad; what if....? Under the weight of all of this, we feel tired. Why wouldn't we be?

When we feel tired the best 'first' thing we can do is stop, just for moment and acknowledge that is the case. Pausing like this raises our awareness to how we really are, lessening our tendency to ignore or numb what is true – which can include a relentless 'just keep going' attitude, which will ultimately take us to burnout. Normalising what we are feeling is always much better than denial. Once we have acknowledged what is true then we can take small steps to lessen our fatigue. Here's three suggestions as to how we might do that:

Cherish your body: Your body, your physicality, is a gift and something to cherish. When we're tired, we leap to sugar and 'carb' quick fixes, but these fixes are short lived and don't really work. What we need to do is to show real kindness to our bodies - eating well and exercising regularly. When we do this stuff, 'feel good' chemicals are released in our bodies and we can't help but feel better, as well as the obvious - that a healthier diet means a healthier us. Don't be down on yourself when you don't get this 'cherishing' quite right. There's always the chance to try again.

Shift your gaze: Seeking out the things that highlight what is good and hopeful and joyful can lessen our fatigue too by shifting our perspective away from what is or has been exhausting us. We might need to limit our intake of news or social media feeds to help us make this shift but switching off for 24 hours or even longer will definitely help us to feel reinvigorated and experience renewal. Choosing to look away from what has become toxic and shift our gaze in a different direction can bring us the refreshment we need.

Get some rest: If we imagine rest to be like a reservoir it reminds us that it is something that we use up and something that we can refill. We will each know how full our personal rest reservoir is at the moment. It is also true to say that others will be experiencing whether we are running on empty by the mood we are in and even our snappiness! Whether it is making sure we get the 7 or 8 hours of sleep we need each night or putting breaks into our schedule, creating the right conditions for rest matters and something we must take responsibility for.

Of course we're tired, so let's do what we can – cherishing, shifting and resting.