(Not) Being Productive During Quarantine

As we all started to work from home and online schooling we started to question ourselves like "Am I productive enough? "Do I make enough effort?" due to the endless articles and posts about "how to use your free time efficiently", "turn social isolation into self-development project" that we encounter in social media. Since you started to get your education through online resources at home, you eat each meal at home and you are not going out with your friends anymore, you may feel like you have too much free time on your hands now.

With coronavirus outbreak you spend more time at home, so you listed everything that you want to do for a long time but you could not find time to do, you listed the books you want to read, series you want to watch and finish. In other words, the increased time spent at home due to the coronavirus outbreak reinforced your feelings about questioning and increasing your productivity.

We are living in a culture where we feel guilty when we take a rest and were programmed to believe that productivity defines your worth. That is why it is so normal that you are feeling guilty if you were not able to finish what you have aimed to finish and if you do not have energy to complete a task. This is not your fault, we are conditioned to feel this way.

While you are home you might feel pressured and think "I could have worked more / I could have read more / I could have keep up with stuff that I have fall back behind / I could have clean and tidy up my room/ home". This kind of thinking does not show that you are weak, or that you are unable to cope with the situation, it shows that you are a human being and you are reacting properly towards what is happening around the world. What is happening around the world right now is hard and painful. Accept this and accept that you are giving a normal reaction. It is normal not to feel positive and productive all times.

It is important to know and recognize that; doing best you can do is right now and doing your best when there is no pandemic around the world are two different things. Everyone might be feeling and coping with this course of time differently from each other. For example, we might not be functional as we are normally, we might not be parenting or partnering as we normally do or taking care of ourselves and other people. All of your normal dynamics might be changing because we are experiencing something that is new, unknown, and hard. Eventhough we do not recognize it this experience is consuming our energy.

During this time, often we can realize that we are comparing ourselves with others. We can feel like we have to feel the same things, experience the same way, cope the same way, and be productive in the same level with others. Remember that everybody has their own way of life, own coping strategies, own personal experiences. We all have different conditions and resources. Therefore, instead of comparing ourselves with others; turning inside and asking questions like **"how am I feeling right now?"**, **"what do I need?"**, **"What does all of these experiences mean**

to me now?" will enable us to have a better communication with ourselves and will be a more functional approach.

Apart from that, we may tend to try to do everything at once; do all the exercise, all the self-care, cooking, read this , watch that, do all of it, do everything! This can put pressure on you. You'd better set yourself a starting point and a baseline. For example, you need to do minimum jobs and choose 1 or 2 additional things every day; whatever nourishes your soul and is good for you. This way, you don't set yourself more than you can do and then feel like you have failed.

In this new reality that we are trying to adapt, it is perhaps what we essentially need is to approach ourselves without judging ourselves and labeling our behaviors as "weak", "insufficient", "inadequate", instead with as much affection as possible, to connect with ourselves and our loved ones, to stop and to remember that we are human beings