

Well-Living is The New Luxury

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Photo by Jihoo Clouseau

# SELF ISOLATING?

## WORLD SOLO SAILING YACHTSWOMAN DEE CAFFARI SHARES HER TIPS FOR STAYING IN MENTAL SHAPE

**WELL-BEING.** I have self-isolated on two occasions, writes yachtswoman Dee Caffari in her regular blog for Sweden's international water brand Bluewater. When I took part in the Vendee Globe, I spent three months at sea alone and on the Aviva Challenge I was alone at sea for six months. My home for that time was a 72ft boat with very few creature comforts and nothing in the way of entertainment, apart from my karaoke skills.

Of course, I am well aware that my isolation was one of choice and for very different reasons than the situation we find ourselves in now due to Coronavirus. However, in sharing the strategies and learnings from being alone for these long periods of

time, I hope that they will resonate with people that find themselves in a situation that is unfamiliar and scary.

As mindful humans, we know we need to be physically isolated right now but that doesn't mean we have to be mentally isolated. Human contact and support are important at all times but particularly in times of crisis or stress. Now, more than ever, we need to look out for each other.

My tips for dealing with isolation are: Keep communicating – this is reassuring for everyone. If you are the one self-isolating, it is a moral boosting to know people care but it is

equally important for your friends and family to know that you are okay. Stay in touch and ask for help if you need it. A five-minute chat once a day could really lift someone's spirits and be something they look forward to.

Spending 24 / 7 alone is alien to many of us and will be a challenge for people that thrive on the company of others. Extroverts get their energy from others so a lack of stimulation may lead to a drop in mood. For most of us, going to work, school or the gym is part of our daily routine and now we have to fill that time. Having and sticking to a routine of some sort will help as it provides a focus and a reason to get going for the day. Having something to do will also make the time pass more quickly.

Make technology work for you. There are so many ways we can communicate these days, this is the time to make use of them. Skype, Facetime, email, text, phone calls, social media platforms are all great ways to stay in touch.

Focus only on what you can control and don't waste energy worrying about things that are outside your control. We are bombarded with information via the media and we do need to take onboard the news that is being distributed. However, if you find that listening or reading the news is increasing your anxiety or stress levels then limit your exposure to it. Many of us will be seriously impacted financially through job losses or lack of work. You are not alone, millions of us will be in the same position. Make a manageable plan and seek help if you are feeling overwhelmed.

Be grateful for the things in your life that you have or can do. Focussing on the good will have a positive effect on your mental health. When you are having a tough day and finding it hard to cope, focus on getting through the next day or even the next few hours rather than weeks or months. The sun will continue to rise and set. This situation will pass.

Look for the opportunities and be creative. In a world of instant contact, demanding work lives and intrusive technology the current situation will allow

many of us to step back from that for some time. Is there a project that you have wanted to take on but never had the time? Is there a bestseller in your head just waiting to be written? Is there work that you could do temporarily? Necessity is the mother of invention, so perhaps now is the time to embark on something new.

Accept that we must adapt to the new environment we are living in. As around the world sailor, I am used to my environment changing very quickly and having to adapt to forces that are outside of my control. In the coming weeks and months, restrictions on our lives and the effects of this virus will no doubt make us feel angry, upset, worried, and scared. These are natural emotions but will use mental energy. Accepting a situation allows you to think more clearly and calmly.

The future will be different. That is the reality and we may as well embrace it. Mother nature has flicked the reset button. We have an opportunity to re-evaluate and change our behavior for the better. We are all too aware in today's world that the only thing we can be certain of is change. Our ability to adapt to this change is what will define us. The current global pandemic is revealing that the majority of us fear the unknown and our reaction is to panic. Let's come together in this time of adversity and support each other."

Dee Caffari is a Bluewater global brand ambassador as she shares the company's vision of ending the need for single use plastics that are polluting the world's oceans. Bluewater innovates, manufactures and commercializes compact water purifiers for people at home, for professional kitchens, and for public dispensers for people on the go at major sporting and other events. Bluewater's stainless steel bottles are designed to last a lifetime of use.

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