**EMOTIONAID®:**

**RELEASE STRESS ON-THE-SPOT, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE**

 **Written by Gina Ross**

During times of high anxiety and uncertainty, like the threat of the coronavirus, or other stressful events, we feel helpless. When our fears take over, we panic. Our brain interprets the panic as danger and our nervous system automatically releases adrenaline and cortisol. These are the stress hormones that prepare us to defend ourselves. They provide our body with a tremendous energy for a fight and flight response.

But since we can’t fight or flee from the Coronavirus or other situations of stress, the energy from these hormones *remains stuck in our body and turns into traumatic symptoms.* We lose our ability to think clearly, to take good care of ourselves, and to communicate effectively or help others.

*With each passing day of quarantine, news of more people infected or dying from the virus, we accumulate stress and anxiety. And this may weaken our immune system.*

Luckily, there is a solution.

I am Gina Ross, psychotherapist, President and Founder of the Trauma-Healing Institute, and international trainer of Somatic Experiencing® (SE®). Somatic Experiencing® is a powerful science-based method to heal trauma.  My institute and I are offering you a quick method, largely based on SE®, to release stress and strengthen your immune system. It is our contribution in these times of pandemic, to help you cope with this crisis. Our method also works to cope with any type of stress or trauma.

The method is called **EmotionAid®.** With EmotionAid®, you can quickly release your anxious feelings ON THE SPOT, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.  After using it, you will sleep better, feel better and function better. It can even boost your immune system.

First, I present you the method in 5 steps. Then I summarize it at the end, for your convenience.

**STEP 1: GROUNDING**

Here are 3 exercises to help you center and ground yourself right away. They work like emotional emergency breaks that you can use when you are too overwhelmed. Try them and choose the one you like best.

1. *TAPPING, or THE BUTTERFLY HUG*

Cross your arms over your chest like you’re hugging yourself.  With your hands open, tap alternatively 25 times. Then take a deep breath and see how you feel. You can repeat the tapping one more time if needed.

1. *THE COUNTING GROUNDING*

Stand or sit with your feet pressed into the ground. Imagine sending roots from the bottom of your feet deep into the earth.

Now look around and count 10 different objects that are the same color

Or you can also count 10 objects with different textures, like glass, plastic, wood, or stone, etc.

1. *THE BREATH GROUNDING*

Place one hand over your chest and one hand over your stomach. With your eyes

closed or open, just follow the rhythm of your breath for one minute and notice how you feel less overwhelmed.

**STEP 2- DISCHARGE**

We have calmed ourselves a bit with a grounding exercise. Now we need to release the energy still locked in our body from the stress hormones. We call this release *discharge****.***

To discharge, you think of what’s upsetting you right then, and notice the constricted inner sensations that come up in your body as you think of it. I can be the coronavirus threat, a traumatic event, or any other stressful situation. The sensations that come up may be tightness in your chest, throat, neck or jaws; it may be a fast heartbeat; a shallow or fast breath, or tension in your stomach.

*Focus with neutral awareness, on ONE sensation at a time, and see what happens.* Just notice, do not judge or analyze. Allow time for the discharge to take place, usually from a few to 30 seconds. It doesn’t matter which sensation you start with.

The signs of discharge happen autonomically, *without your conscious control* and without your having to do anything about them.

They can be:

***A Deep, Spontaneous Breath that comes up on its own***

***Or a Yawn***

***It can be Shaking and trembling, vibrations, a feeling like an electric current***

***A Heat Wave or Warm Sweat***

***Gurgling in the stomach and***

***Goose Bumps***

After discharging all your stress, you will notice that the constricted sensations disappear, and your agitation is replaced by a sense of calmness and wellbeing.

***It is like magic!***

***Our body knows exactly how to release stress and trauma!***

**STEP 3: GOING OVER THE EVENT AGAIN**

The next step is to go over the upsetting event again, and check if you still feel activated. If you still are, repeat the Step 2 discharge until there is no activation left.

Once you think of the event and feel neutral about it, you know you have released all the stress around it.

**STEP 4: PROCESSING UNPLEASANT THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS**

If we have negative, obsessive thoughts, or overwhelming feelings, or if we remember unpleasant smells, sounds or images, how do we release them?

In EmotionAid, we *take them into the body in order to discharge them*. This means we focus on the unpleasant thought, feeling, or sound, smell or image and notice the constricted sensations that come up in our body. Then we repeat the STEP 2 discharge, and release the sensations that came up, one-at-a-time, until there is no activation left.

After you finish processing, you may notice that your negative thoughts are replaced by positive ones; that you feel more in control of your emotions; or that the memories of unpleasant sounds, smells and images do not come up anymore.

**STEP 5: RESOURCING**

Now that we got rid of all the stress held in our body, we want to replace it with good stuff, with resources.

A resource is anything in our life that, when we think of it, makes us feel calmer or stronger. Resources can be *internal, like a sense of humor, intelligence or capacity to love.* Or they can be *external, like family members, friends, nature, activities and special places we enjoy, or simply a good memory.*

Thinking of our resources shifts our attention to the positive; to what works well in us and around us and it strengthens our resiliency. We increase our ability to heal when we think of our resources and *ground them in the body*.  *Meaning, we think of a resource and notice the relaxing, pleasant sensations that come up.* Those pleasant sensations can be:

***A feeling of expansion in the chest***

***An Opening of the heart***

***A deep breath***

***A sense of overall calmness or wellbeing***

***Or A softening in the eyes***

Make a list of 15 of your favorite resources. You can add to the list every day. Now, choose one of the resources on your list, think of it and notice the pleasant inner sensations that come up in your body.

And just ENJOY!

Congratulations!

You now have an essential tool to self-regulate on the spot, during times of crisis and high anxiety!

Practice EmotionAid® every day for two weeks until you have the tool at the ready, and you can release your stress ON THE SPOT, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

With this tool to help you reset your nervous system and focus on the positive, you will be more available to help people around you and be the change you want to see in the world.

Please feel free to contact us at info@traumainstitute.org if you have any question or if you would like more information.

You can find my series of books on trauma on my website [www.traumainstitute.org](http://www.traumainstitute.org), or at [www.BeyondtheTraumaVortex.com](http://www.BeyondtheTraumaVortex.com).

Please use the tool and share it with your family, friends and community.

Thank you!

And Take care

**EmotionAid® to release Stress and Trauma**

**Use directly this summary of the 5 steps, whenever you need it**

You are feeling anxious, panicky, upset or angry.

If you are feeling too overwhelmed, ground yourself right now with one of the 3 grounding exercises from STEP 1. Cross your arms like you are hugging yourself and tap alternatively 25 times. Then take a deep breath. Or press your feet on the ground and count 10 objects of the same color around you, or 10 different textures, like glass, wood, plastic, etc. Or put one hand over your chest and one over your stomach and follow the rhythm of your breath.

Now, to discharge, think of what’s upsetting you and notice the inner sensations of constriction that come up. Now chose only one sensation; focus on it with neutral awareness, no judgment, and see what happens: notice the discharge that comes up, such as a deep breath, a yawn, or trembling and shaking, and give that discharge all the time it needs. Make sure to discharge the other sensations, one by one.

Again, go over what is upsetting you, like in STEP 3, and discharge if there is still activation. Repeat this process until all activation is gone.

Do STEP 4 if you have a negative thought or a difficult emotion that come up. Think of the thought, or feel the feeling, and notice the sensations that come up. Discharge each sensation one at a time.

STEP 5:  Now that your anxiety, panic, or anger are gone, you can choose a resource and ground it in your body. That means, notice the pleasant sensations that come up, and just enjoy them.

Gina Ross, MFCT, is Founder/President of the International Trauma-Healing Institute in the US (ITI-US) and its Israeli branch (ITI-Israel) and an international trainer of Somatic Experiencing®. Born in Aleppo, Syria, Gina has lived in eight different countries on four continents. A specialist in individual and collective trauma, she is the author of a series of books “Beyond the Trauma Vortex into the Healing Vortex,” in support of her Ross Model, which targets 10 social sectors implicated in amplifying or healing trauma or both, to heal collective trauma and diminish violence at national levels. She also created the *Free from Conflict Protocol: Successful Conflict Resolution and Communication*. Her latest book “Breaking News! The Media and the Trauma Vortex: Understanding News Reporting, Journalists and Audiences” was launched at the Jerusalem Press Club. Gina focuses her analytical and advocacy work on the collective trauma behind politics and is a frequent contributor to Times of Israel, Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem Report, and LA Jewish Journal.