

# VETFLASH!

Dear Member,

During challenging times, it is natural to react in a way that ensures our safety and the safety of those we care about. It is important to tend to our most immediate needs and address our most immediate challenges. Challenging times, however, also present us with opportunities to grow, support others, and become valuable in new and different ways. Sometimes, if our mindset is right, we can also learn a great deal about ourselves, who we are, and who we can become. Attached is a graphic you might find helpful in thinking through who you want to be during this difficult time for all of us.

A brief note about the zones (from an arm chair psychologist):

## **Fear Zone**

Fear initiates a primal response in humans – fight or flight, or freeze. In the particular situation that we are faced with, and will likely face in the near future, flight is not an option. Flight is only useful when the pursuant gives up after a short chase. It is reasonable to expect that the pursuant in this instance, is unlikely to give up soon. Fight, similarly, is useful when we are sufficiently equipped to protect ourselves and defeat the “enemy”. With the Covid-19 pandemic, we cannot see the enemy, nor do we have anything to fight with (no proven vaccines, uncertainty as to treatment regimes). We can only defend by doing a few practical things to keep the pandemic away from our doorstep. Freeze is, in short, flight-or-flight placed on hold. It is being overwhelmed about circumstances before deciding on the flight-or-flight response. From a rational perspective, fight, flight or freeze (and therefore fear) are responses that would have any sustainable benefit to us or anyone around us. If anything, a fearful response by a person that is seen as a leader (in their families, communities, businesses, friendship circles) would only cultivate more fear.

## **Learning Zone**

Taking a rather significant leap from the fear zone into the learning zone takes courage – similar to stepping into a small boat. The boat will feel very unstable for a bit, requiring you to balance to avoid capsizing. Soon, the boat will settle and any movement of the boat will require minor re-balancing. This is an inwardly focused step, where you create a different perspective about your environment. It has you regaining control over areas where you can regain control, and makes you accepting of the things you cannot control. It instils a particular level of rationality.

## **Growth Zone**

Internally, you have now built up sufficient stability to reach beyond yourself. You can now use your position of strength to assist others in transferring from the fear zone, to the learning zone and finally, the growth zone.

Be aware that it is entirely normal to fluctuate a bit between two zones – this should not be a cause for anxiety. As with any climate change, you need to adapt and adaptation takes time. If you feel that you are regressing, focus on controlling the things you can. This will create a sense of stability from which you can restart progress.

Please take some time and read the article at this link:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/14-ways-to-protect-your-mental-health-in-the-pandemic-according-to-public-health-england?fbclid=IwAR06gzLihmnyGCcCUhHnMYdbtxJI4cEestTNzpdMtpoOCwimcvLwyyOWAKI>

**If you feel that you need to talk to someone, please see the attached advertisement for SAVA’s Stress Management Hotline.**

Look after yourselves.

Best regards,  
Gert Steyn  
Managing Director

