

# TIP SHEET: DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY

It has been said that change is the only constant in life; everything else is up in the air. Uncertainty is a natural part of life and something that almost everybody feels from time to time. Being uncertain or unsure does not mean that you are lost; it simply means that you are living. At times, uncertainty can be almost overwhelming; you can feel as if everything that you cannot control is consuming you. The trick is to not become lost in the uncertainty. Deal with life's curveballs on a day today basis; handle what you can when you can, and trust that the rest will work itself out in time.

## WAYS OF COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty is a part of life and the only certainty is that it is not going anywhere. Dealing with it may be easier said than done, but there are a few ways to help yourself cope when things get tough.

### **Stop Expecting and Start Planning**

When you set expectations for yourself, you are only setting yourself up for disappointment. Of course you know what you want to happen, but since you have relatively no control over what tomorrow brings, it makes no sense to set yourself up only to be knocked down. That's not to say that you shouldn't plan and set goals; only that you need to plan for every possible outcome. Rather than envisioning the perfect outcome and expecting something specific, just focus on what you are going to do to make all of that happen. What might or might not happen is not within your hands to decide; hope for the best and prepare for the worst. Do everything that you possibly can to achieve your desired outcome, but realize that things change, and most often change is for the best.

### **Focus on the Things That Are Within Your Control**

While you may not be able to control everything that is happening, there are some things that you do have control over. Like your attitude, for instance; focus on staying positive and keeping a good attitude about the things that are taking place. We usually can't change our circumstances in an instant; it may take a few days or even a few years. The sooner we realize that this is the situation we are going to be in and accept it, the better off we will be. Have you ever heard the phrase, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em?" That is definitely applicable to dealing with things in our lives; if you can't change it, learn to accept it.

Also keep in mind that tomorrow is not something that you have a lot of control over; all you can do is live today in a way that sets tomorrow up in a positive light. Just keep in mind that no matter how positive you are, life takes strange turns and there is nothing you can do about it. Accept that the unexpected can and does happen and focus on telling yourself that you will be okay no matter what. Focusing on what you can control means focusing on you; it means

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doing your part and hoping for the best. Whatever happens, you will at least know that you did your part.

### **Learn Some Stress Management Techniques**

Stress and anxiety take a toll on your mind, your emotions, and your body. Stress can wear you down faster than anything else if you let it; everything from blood pressure to cholesterol levels, to every bodily organ can be disrupted by high levels of stress. Since it's not always possible to push the stress aside, finding stress relief techniques can be the next best thing. Uncertainty can eat away at you; you owe it to yourself to take the time to relax, regroup, and rethink your strategy.

Taking a walk, going for a drive, talking with a friend, reading a book, listening to music, watching a movie, bubble baths, yoga and meditation; these are just a few quick things that tend to offer stress relief for many people. Most of these techniques can even be put to use if you are limited on time.

If all you've got is a couple of minutes, take a moment to just be alone and breathe. When the uncertainty builds up, you tend to start feeling like you are drowning. Stop and breathe, think clearly, regroup, and really look at things from a perspective of clarity. When you slow down and look at the big picture, you will often find that things are not as bad as they seem

### **BASIC DEEP BREATHING FOR BEGINNERS**

Basic deep breathing doesn't take long – and it's a great way to de-stress.

#### **How to Do It**

1. Sit or lie down.
2. Slowly count to four while you breath in through your nose. Hold your breath for a second.
3. Count to four again, this time while breathing out slowly through your mouth.
4. Repeat a few times, or as long as you'd like.