



Liz Holland life coach & professional supervisor

The 5 Minute Read

Topics brought to your attention to improve your personal and professional lives

June 2008

Hello everyone

Thank you for the positive comments I received on my first newsletter - I am glad some people found 5 minutes to read it! If you know someone who may like to subscribe to this newsletter please ask them to contact me or use the subscribe section on my website.

It is winter in Dunedin, New Zealand – a special time of year for meeting up with friends around a fire; having warm soup and wrapping up well when taking the dogs for a walk.

In my January newsletter I offered 8 practical ideas to assist in making 2008 the “year of being happier”. The 7th idea was “develop some strategies for the tougher times in life” and this issue of “**The 5 Minute Read**” introduces strategies that I use, and that I share with my clients when they are going through a tough time.

Read through the ideas – and click through to my website for more information if the technique sounds interesting to you. Try these suggestions for yourself, adapt them as required and put them into practice. Having some practical tools to deal with difficult times will increase your resiliency and sense of well being.

Please let me know which ones work best for you – or other techniques that you find effective so that these can be shared with other readers.

Warm wishes for a great winter season (or summer for our northern hemisphere friends).

Liz Holland
Life Coach & Professional Supervisor
June 2008

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Strategies for the tougher times in life

“Tougher times” come in many forms – so whatever your definition is of having a tough time it will most likely include feelings that you would rather not experience. Having a range of emotions to events in our lives is normal. It is normal to feel sad over losing your job, someone close to you dying or to feel nervous over a future event that you may have little control over such a major change in your workplace. However, how we respond to the range of emotions we have can either support us through the difficult time or make it an even more challenging time.

As your strategy, you can use all the following ideas to deal with a specific issue you are facing or select the ones that are most appropriate for you.

1. Breathe

As soon as you are aware of feelings that are not supporting you – pay attention to your breathing.

- When you take in a breath – how far down into your lungs is the air going?
- How do your shoulders feel?
- What about the rest of your body? Where can you feel that negative tension?

Take in a deep breath and breathe it out s-l-o-w-l-y.....

Focus on your heart area and image you are breathing in and out through your heart

My preferred breathing techniques are the “HeartMath Techniques” that are based on The Institute of HeartMath® research conducted for more than 15 years on the physiology of and relationship between the heart, stress, and emotions. Learn more....

http://www.heartmath.com/free_services.html

2. Exercise

Take some exercise. Sitting and focusing on your uncomfortable feelings for long periods of time will not support you.

Go for a walk, bike ride or if I find my time is very limited, I put on some fast music and dance, dance, dance (much to the amusement of my 2 cats and 2 dogs!)

3. Talk

Talk about your feelings to someone you trust and who really listens to you without interruption until you have said what you need to say. If they keep taking the conversation to their “similar experience” they are not really listening to you and your reactions. Find someone - maybe a professional – who will listen to you and assist you in living with your emotional responses to what is happening for you.

4. Listen....

....to your body.

Stop and drop your thoughts from your head to your heart.



Take in a deep breath and breathe out s-l-o-w-l-y
Be very quiet and still.
Ask yourself what you need right now to support yourself.

5. Read

Reading books and articles written about the event(s) that are troubling you can be useful. What suggestions do others have for handling similar situations? What do the experts say based on research? What are common themes in people's personal stories on the same topic?

6. Write

Recording how you are feeling is helpful for many people.

My preference is not to record my feelings in a journal (as re-reading them takes me back to that uncomfortable emotional space) – but to sit down in a quiet place and write and write and write about my reactions to an event and the feelings I'm left with.

Write without censorship – just let the words come from your heart and brain and allow them to flow down your arm onto the paper.

Write until you can write no more words.....

Then DESTROY what you have written – shred it, burn it, make a ritual of getting rid of the words on the paper and imagine the intensity of your feelings flowing away with the destruction of the document.

7. Reflect

Which of the techniques you used were most useful to you?

What self-care strategies can you put in place on a daily basis to support yourself through this challenging period?

What needs have you identified that will help you?

How can you get those needs met?

Who else needs to know about the feelings you are having?

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When we are aware that we want to make some changes in our lives, whether at work or in our private lives, it is easy to proceed with great enthusiasm and then for our progress to gradually slow down as day-to-day activities take over our lives, or we run across obstacles which seem insurmountable, or we just run out of steam. This is similar to having good intentions when making New Year resolutions. We resolve to do something or cease to do something on January 1st and by February 1st our good intentions have not been acted on. Having a coach or a professional supervisor can assist you in maintaining your momentum. I encourage you to email me today to see how I can assist you in achieving your personal and professional goals."

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