

Stuff Happens

Dr. Ron Kaiser January 23, 2014 No Comments

Stuff Happens (Transcription)

Hi everybody, this is Dr. Ron Kaiser with your June 2013 podcast from The Mental Health Gym. It's nice to be with you again this month and this month's podcast is kind of a practical one, not overly heavy but hopefully one that's pretty useful. Its entitled "Stuff happens". I guess it could be called things happen or some other related title but I think stuff happens probably pretty much sums it up.

In other words what we're gonna be talking about is the fact that there are tragedies that occur, some really lousy occurrences that happen to us, there are a lot more occurrences that go under the category of being something unfortunate, it's t bad, it's not tragic, but is not fun in other words stuff happens. I can give you few examples to get started for example how many of us have had an important appointment schedule whether it be with a doctor, whether it be with the new accountant, whether it be with somebody for a job interview, we get all set, get there on time and find out that the person is unavailable, we didn't do anything to cause it but we weren't advised and the other person was no show.

Here is another example how many have got into our airplane flights on time, waited a dutiful amount of time to check in, go through security and everything and then wound up sitting on the runway for a period of time and if the flight went easily how many of us on occasion not had our luggage come, arriving at the same time as the plane. What about the idea of getting hit from behind, you know, you're driving or perhaps stopped or in some cases maybe not even being in the car and have somebody else hit you, you know, clearly it's their fault and let's assume that they're honest about it, they report it, they let you know about it, they don't run away, they give you the appropriate insurance information but still we're the ones left

with the notion of having to deal with, in some cases some medical issues, but almost always in terms of being inconvenience to with respect to the car having to take it to some place, to get it fixed, and again not something that's our fault.

I've had the experience of having both with a car and with a furnace, having major repair occur shortly after the warranty period has run out, and how many of us have left in enough time to get some place and then gotten stuck in traffic. So that we're either late or we're really worried about it till we get there.

These are daily hassles that come under the category of stuff happens. So we kind of have to assume that that's going to be part of our lives. There are certain things that we have to acknowledge, happen to us and in some cases there may be nobody to blame for it but certainly in many cases we're not the ones who are to blame but we're the ones who are inconvenience, annoyed or affected by it.

The question is how're we going to react to it. When something happens that inconveniences us and creates, you know, just a certain amount of distress. Now one way of reacting is certainly to curse. If we're stuck in traffic you can maybe bang on the steering wheel or bang on the horn or yell at the other driver, you can complain to, if somebody was a no show for an appointment, you can complain to your spouse or friends or coworkers, you can kind of do the same thing if somebody inconvenienced you or made you late or so on but upset, anger, those kinds of things are really pretty draining and so what I'd like to propose today is a strategy for dealing with stuff that does not drain us.

So here's the strategy as I said it's not a real profound presentation but I think that if we can keep some of these things in mind maybe

we can tone down our reaction to stuff that happens so that it's treated as an annoyance more so than a tragedy. And the first step is really to understand that this kind of stuff can happen. You know there's the odds of you never getting stuck in traffic are pretty slim, the odds of every airplane flight that you're taking going smoothly in terms of taking off and landing on time, not very great.

There are people who will disappoint us, people who schedule appointments with us and whether they find something more important or more meaningful to themselves or whether there is a degree of thoughtlessness or in some cases a very valid excuse, sometimes those appointments don't take place, so we have to number one, accept any time, that we make plans, they may not always work out the way that we want. A second step though is to prepare as much as you can foresee. Once you have gotten caught in traffic going to a very important appointment like a job interview or something like that, you can kind of build in a strategy that says, you know, if I get some place, if it goes smoothly and I get someplace a half hour early, you know that's not terrible, I mean I'm great at timing things so that I don't usually get places too early but I usually don't get there late either, but I've had a few times and I've got burned and disappointed other people by not being there on time because again stuff happens to interfere with it.

So we can try and prepare as much as possible and when things happen then let's take a lesson from it. Let's see what we can do preventively next time. Can we leave a little bit early, can we call ahead of time to confirm the appointment if nobody has called to confirm it with us? Next I think that it's important to always evaluate when we have this tendency to wanna bang on steering wheel, or curse or yell or whatever it may be to kind of assess whether what's happening really matters that much in the grand scheme of your life.

A lot of stuff that happens really doesn't and if we keep things in perspective then that can help us in moving forward. A major concept that I think can be helpful in this regard is to learn to tell ourselves the difference between something being too bad and something being tragic. Another way of looking at it is to say there is a difference between a C and a Fail, you know, some youngsters in school if they don't get an A it doesn't matter whether it's a B or C or D or fail, it's all fail. But in reality, that's not true and sometimes getting some place ten minutes late is a whole lot better than not getting there at all.

Sometimes being inconvenienced by not having our luggage for twelve hours until the next flight comes in, is you know, it's a real inconvenience, but it's not tragic, it's not usually the difference between getting a job or not getting a job or being able to do make a presentation, you know, there are things that we can also do and that's to make sure that when we travel there are certain things that may be necessary in the short term are available to us in our carry on.

So another thing is to keep in mind the fact that a lot can be alleviated by having a good attitude and a lot can be elevated by being willing to explain ourselves if something goes wrong. A lot can be alleviated by the fact that if we have a decent attitude, if we are positive about it and if we are able to explain to the person who were inconveniencing then hey, I got into an accident or hey, you know, there's never traffic at this hour but they decided to do road construction.

Sometimes it may be important to be able to say geez! I just didn't plan for it. Some people won't accept that but you'd be surprised that honesty is a pretty good policy in this regard. And finally sometimes we just have to accept the fact that we lose out on something just because stuff happens. I've always told people that

there are certain things that you kind of have to accept in life. I think none of us who are males can expect to go through adulthood without sometimes getting embarrassed by the fact that you forgot to zip your fly, you know, that happens and I think the same applies to lot of other daily hassles, stuff happens. Let's acknowledge it, let's move on from it and hopefully some of the things that I mentioned can be useful strategies in helping to cope with things when stuff happens.

Thanks for listening in; this has been Dr. Ron Kaiser with the Mental Health Gym podcast for June 2013. any thoughts or questions, please feel free to contact me at the website at ron.kaiser@thementalhealthgym.com and I'll look forward to communicating with you through the website, our newsletter and our blogs and we'll be talking again next month.