

When things go wrong, our emotional instincts kick in. These emotions can often be unhelpful in how we deal with situations overall and can have a knock on effect to our health and wellbeing. Therefore, how we respond to situations is a big deal. After all, we all want to be happy, we don't want to be led or dominated by our emotions. Many people are naturally resilient and find it easy to control their emotions, for those of us that are not, don't despair, we can all learn the valuable life skills required to become emotionally Resilient. We hope the following tips will help you cope when things get tough.

## Tip – 1

**Listen to others** – Often we forget to really listen because we are too concerned about defending ourselves or coming up with a good reply. When no one is really listening to one another communication becomes fraught and circular.

## Tip – 2

**Remain calm** – Remember no one makes us angry, we choose to be angry especially when people blame or accuse us of something. If this happens take a time out, walk away and calm down don't respond in the heat of the moment.

## Tip 3

**Consider what's going on** – Think about what you really need to happen to improve the situation and don't make it personal or get stuck on what you feel the neighbour should do.

## Tip 4

**Let go** - In the great scheme of things, how important is the concern you have? Feelings change. What you or someone else is angry or stressed about may not seem so important the next day.

## Tip - 5

**Communicate** – 'I' statements are a way of communicating assertively and enable you to say how you feel whilst avoiding blame and criticism. This means the other person does not go on the defensive and is more likely to listen to your concerns. (\*)

## Tip - 6

**Approach in person** – Having a calm constructive conversation with your neighbour is often a good starting point to help resolve things. Choose a good time to talk, don't go round when something has just happened and you are feeling angry or upset. (\*)

## Tip 7

**Write** – if you feel uncomfortable in approaching your neighbour in person a note or letter may help. This should be written in a polite and conciliatory tone. Read through what you have written and think about how you would feel if you had received it. (\*)

## Tip 8

**Compromise** - We can choose whether or not we respond to others' needs, once we know what they are. This does not mean caving in or giving someone everything they ask for, but generosity and making the first move often leads others to respond in like manner.

If your neighbour won't engage with you for any reason and you are struggling with the situation the following may help you to cope:

## Things to be aware of...

- **Know the difference between the things we can and can't change.** Much stress arises from situations we find uncomfortable but are outside our power to change. However, changing our attitude to them is within our control.
- **Avoid all or nothing thinking.** Reducing choices to 'yes' or 'no' or black and white issues reduces options and backs people into a corner. Many solutions can be found to stressful situations if we take time to reflect on what we need rather than what we want.
- **Beware impossible goals.** Sometimes it turns out what we want or think we need is not possible – for something not to have happened, or someone to have a different personality. We are where we are, and whilst the past is important, we can't undo it.
- **The mind is powerful.** Thoughts drive feelings. It's worth stopping to ask yourself what thought is behind the feeling you are having.
- **Assumptions.** The problem with making assumptions, is that more often than not, we're wrong. We assume a person has a specific motivation for their actions. Then we start to see these incorrect assumptions as the truth.
- **Listen to others. Give up being right.** Proving you were right is rarely helpful in moving forwards. If you have constructive conversations, you may get new information that helps you see things in a different light. This can open up new options where everyone's needs are considered and balanced solutions found. If others don't cooperate, you still have choice over your own responses. Always choose a positive route.

## Things to consider...

- Remember the behaviour of your neighbours is just what they do and probably not directly aimed at you.
- Think about the importance of the activities you are involved in and get on with them.
- If you see your neighbour out and about, be civil, say hello and pass the time of day but not in a grovelling way. Sometimes a charm offensive can build a better relationship. Actually a positive relationship would benefit both of you.
- Don't retaliate to any behaviour you don't like. If it is useful keep a diary and write down what happened and then close the diary.
- Remember your neighbour like you would also like to be on good terms with their neighbour. That makes anyone's life better.
- Remember that your neighbours are only one aspect of your life and work on the others which are as or more important, then you have balance and perspective.
- Avoid gossiping and criticising the neighbour as this builds your negative thoughts.
- Talk to friends or professionals about your situation who you know are positive and will support you with understanding and good ideas.