



Staying Positive When Life Seems Out of Your Control

Most people have thoughts and dreams about how their lives ought to be. When things don't work out the way they had pictured, they tend to blame other people or situations.

They don't realize that the bad feelings come from their own thinking.

"When things are bad, people say to themselves, 'Things aren't the way I like them,' and then say, 'That's terrible, that's awful' - meaning they think things are so bad that they shouldn't or mustn't be that way," says Albert Ellis, Ph.D., the creator of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and author of *Feeling Better, Getting Better, Staying Better*.

It's normal, however, to have to deal with difficult situations and difficult people as you go through life.

Here's how to change your thinking, so you can feel good when your life isn't perfect.

Unconditionally accept yourself.

Most people want to do well in order to feel good about themselves and be loved by the significant people in their lives. But this way of thinking can make you feel crazy.

"It's important to accept yourself whether or not you do well and whether people who are important to you love you," says Dr. Ellis. "Don't think, 'I have to do well,' because then, if you don't, you'll worry. Instead, just prefer to do well. Even when people are doing well and being loved by significant people, they worry about tomorrow."

Don't over-generalize.

You can evaluate what you think, feel and do, but don't give yourself a generalized rating. You're like a diamond in the making and have many facets. Some shine brilliantly, and others still need to be polished.

"People generalize and say, 'I failed a few times, and I might fail again.' That's true enough, but then they stupidly over-generalize and say, 'I failed a few times, and I'm a failure.' You can't be a failure or a success," says Dr. Ellis. "But you can fail at things and be successful at things."

Even evaluating yourself as a good person creates stress, because you'll always have to live up to your image and do good things. The truth is that you do thousands of things - some good, some bad.

Unconditionally accept others.

You may get angry with relatives, friends, co-workers or other people because of things they've done. You'll feel far less miserable if you feel disappointed, instead.

"You can think, 'I don't like their behavior, but they're fallible humans who sometimes do good and sometimes behave badly. I can accept them and not make myself incensed or furious at them.'" says Dr. Ellis. "You can judge their behavior as bad or wicked, but never judge them, as people, as bad, evil or rotten."

This doesn't mean you should tolerate bad behavior. You can still try to get them to change how they behave, but you can do it without anger.

Unconditionally accept life.

Many bad things may happen to you in your life, but you don't have to view them as terrible, because you can handle them and even be happy in spite of them. Therefore, it's not the bad things that upset you - it's your view of them.

Feeling bad comes from demanding that something turn out a certain way.

"A demand says, 'I have to have something, or to have something turn out a certain way, and it's terrible and I'm no good if I don't have it,'" says Dr. Ellis. "You don't need life to be good. It's preferable, of course - highly preferable - but it's not a necessity."

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Making Diabetes Management a Family Affair

Meal planning and blood sugar monitoring. Medicines and multiple injections. The day-in and day-out requirements of diabetes management can overwhelm those with this chronic disease.

“That’s where loving family members can help,” says Eve Gehling, R.D., a certified diabetes educator and author of “The Family and Friends Guide to Diabetes.” “The best way to help someone with diabetes is to first learn what diabetes is and how it’s treated.”

Doing so will help you support their efforts to manage their blood-glucose levels, giving TLC when they’re ill and preparing healthful meals they’ll enjoy.

Steps to take:

- Offer to go to doctor appointments together or attend a diabetes education program.
- “Check with your local health care providers to find out what diabetes conferences or workshops might be in town,” says Ms. Gehling. “Offer to attend with them, provide a ride or baby-sitting so your loved one can attend.”
- Be active together. Go walking, go dancing or rake the lawn together. Not only does being physically active help diabetes management, it reduces stress and increases energy levels.
- Help with food shopping and meal planning. Avoid foods high in refined sugar; instead, opt for whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The diabetes diet is one of the most healthful, promoting heart health and weight control. The entire family can benefit from it.
- Be aware of how you think about and use food.
- Encourage your loved one to use a meter to check blood glucose levels. Blood sugar monitoring often is the most stressful aspect of diabetic management.

“Every blood glucose test gives useful information,” says Ms. Gehling. “It provides the person with a better understanding of the fluctuations that can be caused by hormones, illness, exercise, stress or diet.”

Frequent blood testing also helps people with diabetes learn how to fine-tune their diabetes control.

Ms. Gehling suggests family members not focus solely on the numbers; instead, she says they should congratulate their loved ones for checking their glucose levels regularly and encouraging them to continue doing so.

Family members should learn the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia. They should learn how to help the loved one manage diabetes if he or she contracts the flu or other illness.

Ms. Gehling also recommends family members provide support by giving positive reinforcement rather than pointing out negatives or nagging.

“The amount of support available from family and friends is an important predictor of successful diabetic management,” she says. “The type of support needed will differ from person to person, so rather than assuming what’s best for your loved one, simply ask how you can help. And after you ask, the most important thing to do is listen to the answer.”

