

## **Coping with Disappointment : 7 tips to get through it**

Disappointment happens to everybody, at one time or another, throughout life. Anything we are involved with has the potential to disappoint us, therefore we need to find ways to cope with the let down feelings and thoughts associated with it

Each person experiences disappointments, the feeling of being let down and dissatisfaction we have when something doesn't happen or turn out the way we expected it to, throughout their life. Being let down is a lousy experience and can arise from:

- outside us e.g. someone not doing what they said they would do, arriving at a concert to find that it had been cancelled
- our own actions e.g. being on a diet and going really well but eating a block of chocolate because you were bored, not completing a report on time because something good was on TV that you wanted to watch

Some disappointments are easier to deal with than others, for example, missing a good deal on a flight is somewhat easier to deal with than the disappointment of having your long-awaited holidays being cancelled at the last minute.

Being let down creates negative feelings within us and is also associated with negative and self-limiting thoughts e.g. "I'm not good enough", "nothing goes right for me", "I knew it wouldn't work out"... these negative thoughts and emotions have an impact on our behaviour which in turn can lead to more disappointing experiences.

Disappointment can hit us hard... and sometimes the feelings and thoughts associated with it can last for a long time. If they persist, they can have such a negative impact on our quality of life, on our ability to achieve goals and to live the kind of life we want.

Because disappointment is a human experience that everyone has at some stage, we all have to work out ways of dealing with it.

Here are some are suggestions:

- Take a few minutes before you respond. Often when we are disappointed we have a "knee-jerk reaction", we may say or do things we later regret. But if you give yourself time, you are more likely to respond in a more appropriate way
- Ask yourself: "Am I disappointed because I didn't get my own way??" in other words, is my reaction childlike?
- Ask yourself if there was something you could have done that would have resulted in a different outcome e.g. when you were bored if you had gone for a walk rather than eat the block of chocolate, perhaps you wouldn't have felt disappointed
- Become aware of what you are thinking. Negative thoughts need to be stopped and changed to something more positive or neutral e.g. "this always happens to me", "I knew it wouldn't work out" can be changed to "I arrived on time" "I got here when I said I would"
- Shift your focus: instead of focusing on the negative of what's happened, focus on opportunities or what you are able to do e.g. when your friends cancel at the last minute, disappointment is a natural reaction but it can also give you a chance to read that book you've wanted to read but haven't had time
- Write out the experience that created the disappointment, and write out your thoughts and reactions to it: often writing things out helps us clarify the situation, clarify our thoughts and feelings, help us work through things which in turn helps us let go
- If the disappointment you are experiencing is deep-seated you may need to talk to someone about it e.g. someone you trust or a counsellor to help you work through your reactions and let them go so that you can move on with your life

Disappointment is part of life... and it can shake our confidence and ability to deal with life if we don't develop effective and healthy strategies to deal with it.

Jeanne May

June, 2008

<http://www.aspirationsplus.com>

information, inspiration, guidance and support to achieve your goals and dreams