

If You Aren't Actually On Fire...You are probably okay!

Can you imagine how much more enjoyable and effective your work would be if you were focusing your energy on success and satisfaction...rather than on personality conflicts and anxious expectations?



That is just the shift my client Donna reported making in a recent phone call that I have to admit, startled me. She began, "I just knew something terrible was about to happen. I was going into a meeting with my boss. My heart was pounding and my palms were wet. Honestly, I thought I was on fire!" she shrieked.

Clutching the receiver, I prepared to go into full problem-solving mode to help Donna get through another anxiety attack. But something weird was happening. It took a few seconds to register that she was actually giggling! I shook my head hard, and listened more deeply. Without a beat she gleefully went on,

"But, I heard you reminding me, "If you aren't actually in flames, you are probably okay in any given moment."

I realized that there wasn't anything real to be upset about...at least, yet! And just as quickly as the fear came up, a sense of calm came into my heart. I just took a deep breath and remembered to choose my outcome.

When I got still, and stayed in the present, I could see that my boss was just as afraid as I was, and that he wasn't really out to get me at all. He just wanted to avoid trouble. Same as me! The whole situation was easier to deal with than I expected and, believe it or not, me being calm helped my boss work better too."

Donna really scored a win by remembering the truth about her situation. Now, you can have win too.

Try visualizing the last time you were as anxious as Donna was. Draw that scene into your mind. Replay it and get a sense what it feels like to be overwhelmed. Then, replay the scene using your fire extinguishing tools:

1. Notice how anxiety feels in your body. (For Donna, it's a tense 'seasick' feeling)
2. Stop. Breathe. Accept. "Okay, I can see feeling this way given past experience."
3. Replace. "I'm not on fire and I choose to feel ____ instead. I'm ready/able to be calm."
4. Choose. Find the best outcome for you and dedicate yourself to getting it.
5. Practice. Ask a clarifying question. Remember that everyone is doing their best.

Why do these tools work so well? Because they put the control of your feelings squarely where it belongs...with YOU!

You might be tempted to argue, "I can't be calm when other people are going crazy!"

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Dr. Albert Ellis, the famed psychologist, has proven otherwise: He used the term catastrophizing to describe the kind of anxiety Donna had. He went on to make the bold statement that **you can refuse to make yourself miserable about anything**. I'm taking that idea one step further and inviting you to learn how to put out your own catastro-fires.

Read my article **Who Is Driving You Crazy?** for more on this. And if you need more help, call for an appointment.

You can put out 'catastro-fire' just like Donna did.

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