



EXERCISE 1

Talking things through

Are you one of those people who often hold everything inside yourself and doesn't talk to anyone - particularly in times of stress? It probably goes without saying that this is not a particularly useful strategy. It's more likely that you will continue to worry about the issue internally and it certainly doesn't help you achieve resolution or move your thinking forward. Talking something through with another person will help you to articulate and clarify your thoughts.

Identify an issue that you are unsure about or that you could usefully discuss with someone to help you clarify your thinking or make a decision. Talk the issue through with a friend or a colleague, taking your time and writing the relevant points down so that you capture them in the moment of saying them. (You might think that you can remember everything that was said but it's highly unlikely that you will).

Tip:

Talk to more than one person; develop a network of people with whom you can talk through different things. You may initially find it easier to talk about facts than a subject or issue that involves feelings and emotions.

Review

There is a big difference between talking something 'over' and talking something 'through'. The word over suggests an iterative, repetitive and circular discussion, whilst the word through suggests a different process – one that is more linear and reaches a useful conclusion.

Comment

Remember that the purpose of talking something through is to clarify your thoughts and your thinking. You don't have to take on board what your colleagues say or agree with them! But it's important to explain the process to them before you start so that they know what you are doing or they may be offended when you don't agree with them.

EXERCISE 2

Focusing on problems and potential problems:

Identify an important situation you are currently facing at work: it could be an event you are planning, a contract you are negotiating or a new service or product you are developing. If you cannot think of a situation at work, then consider an event at home, such as moving house. You can do this logically or by making connections – make it into a fun activity – how many things could go wrong – brainstorm them. List how and what could potentially go wrong. Once you have identified the potential problems, give them some kind of ranking as to their likely probability and potential impact. This will help you decide if you want to do anything about them.

Review

Review your list and the % probability of the problems occurring with a friend or colleague to get another perspective.

Tip

Assigning a % probability to the likelihood of a problem occurring can help to prevent you from worrying unnecessarily about things that are actually unlikely to happen, whilst also preventing you from being naively positive and not considering potential problems.

Comment

Thinking about something does not make it *more* likely to happen; once you have identified potential problems, make appropriate contingency plans if you think the probability of the problem occurring is high enough, otherwise dismiss it from your mind.