

Police Your State

and become the kind of person
who deals with life more easily

By Eve Menezes Cunningham

For some people, not getting a letter, email or phone call they'd hoped for can mean a "bad day". Others could come out of a burning/flooded building feeling upbeat and grateful to have survived. We can't control the things that happen to us but we can always decide how we're going to react to things.

It's easier said than done, but one of the first things you learned how to do in NLP was getting yourself into a "resourceful state."

Obviously, it's a choice. On occasion, it may be completely appropriate to think 'you know what? I don't want to feel better! I want to wallow'. Just make sure you remember it's up to you.

For those times when you do want to feel better, these tips will help you make the best of a potentially bad situation:

A bad day at work – Take some time out. Stop it spiralling out of control by giving yourself some kind of break. You may be able to leave the office completely (go for a walk or treat yourself to something and lift your spirits, go for lunch with a colleague and talk about something other than work). Even if you can't, take yourself to the kitchen and take some deep breaths (releasing any stress and tension on each exhalation) when you wait for the kettle to boil. If you can't even do that, lock yourself in the restroom and do some deep breathing or have a stretch.

Delayed journey home – Prepare for unexpected hiccups by keeping an enjoyable book or magazine with you always. You may even find yourself valuing the extra time to yourself. If you're driving, turn off the traffic report and listen to a great CD or an audio book. Make your vehicle a bubble you like spending time in.

News of a partner's affair – Spend some time with people who love and appreciate you. Remind yourself that, much as this hurts right now, you'll be much happier alone or with a future partner who 100% wants to be with you.

Think about the kind of situations that

regularly "ruin" your good mood. Prepare in advance. What would help you feel better about each of these scenarios? How can you make it easier for yourself to react more resourcefully

next time something like this happens?

You'll improve your self image as you begin to see yourself as someone who deals with life's setbacks more easily. ●

Few people have to police their state as much as actors. Whether it's facing rejection with a smile and sincere "Thanks for the opportunity" or playing a variety of roles far removed from their experience, we can learn a lot from them. Actress, Sandra De Sousa says, "I find it quite easy to get psyched up for auditions. I let go of the day: breathing, connecting with my body and stopping any craziness in my head. I find a quiet space, stop and focus. You can do this even on the Tube: Switch off and let yourself absorb. Reconnect with your breathing (in through nose and out through your mouth). If I have space I lie down 'semi supine'. On my back, knees up with feet planted on the floor with my head and neck supported (by a book or pillow) to keep my neck as long as possible with my chin down towards my chest."

When preparing for a performance, it's more a matter of increasing her energy. Sandra says, "After I've relaxed and focus on what I want to achieve, I start to get my energy up. I throw out energy, throwing out my arms, kicking out my legs, making circles with my feet, knees and hips and shaking my head. I do vocal exercises as well."

To feel better after rejection, Sandra says, "I focus on the important things in my life and the things I'm really grateful for. I list them in my head like 'OK, I've still got full use of my limbs, my parents are still alive, I can run around and dance and sing if I want to' to get perspective around it. I also use Bach Rescue Remedy, hot baths and candles and find people I can hug. If my flatmates, who I love, aren't home I think, 'Who can I see now who I can hug?'"

Sandra says she used to wallow and get very depressed but life's too short. Her acting coach, Bernard Hiller, helps actors become more positive. One of his exercises involves putting a percentage on the likelihood of you dying next week. Sandra says, "The people with the lowest percent are investing less in their lives. People like Steven Spielberg are saying '80/90%'. You might die next week so focus on the things you want."

