

Ideally and Sometimes

Category: Coping

written by J.M. Monica van de Ridder | August 11, 2022

Ideally, coping is sitting down and having dialogues with myself, friends, or good colleagues about what bothers me. It is asking for advice and sharing my thoughts. It is writing down what I can do to solve problems and then creating an action plan.

Sometimes, however, coping is ...

- Crying when I don't have any energy, listening to my own sobs, feeling the rhythm of my diaphragm tighten and relax. Then noticing tears leaving dark stains on my clothes and saying, *This is okay for now ... but I need to move on.*
- Sitting in the grass, caressing the blades with my hands, feeling the sprigs between my toes. Then lifting my face up to the sunlight and enjoying its warmth and observing the shadows of the trees dancing on my legs while realizing how much I have compared to others.
- Searching through my closet and wondering *Which pair of shoes will give me the right pace for today? or Which perfume will give me the feeling of being protected? or Which blouse will hide the mess inside me? or Which accessory will make me smile?*
- Standing in front of pictures of loved ones and saying out loud why I wished they were with me, what I wished they would say now. Then telling them about the void I am experiencing and what I appreciate that they gave me.
- Picking up the phone and calling friends who are in distress. Then moving the attention away from my troubles to theirs—and really listening to what they say, trying to put myself in their shoes, discovering that doing so places my hardship into perspective.
- Being angry at the newspaper because it is lying in front of my feet when I almost trip. Then kicking it, picking it up, and tearing it apart. And afterward laughing at my behavior and figuring out why I did what I did.
- Grabbing a pen and paper and starting to write, even if I don't know what to write. Pushing myself to peer inside, exploring what I am looking for, and taking the time to uncover what I can't find.
- Pondering what it is that makes me uncomfortable. Then realizing that feeling uncomfortable means I am out of my comfort zone and that, because I am uncomfortable, I am probably learning.

And through writing this piece, I wonder if stepping back and reflecting on coping processes is coping in of itself.

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