

A PEER'S PERSPECTIVE: BLOCKING OUT THE SUN

by Jill Davis

Have you ever considered the really amazing illusion of whether or not a dime can completely block out the sun? I can picture it onstage in Las Vegas with a world-famous magician trying to dazzle an audience with such a feat! Well, to see how this might look you won't even need a wand! If you don't have a dime available at this moment, try this little experiment when you do.

Take a look at the dime. Chances are, with its size, it is in no way able to block something as large as the sun. Can you, then, change the size of that wonderful star that rises and sets each day? Of course, that isn't even a remote possibility. Yet, take the dime, close one eye and bring the dime slowly up to your open eye and voila, it will eventually and entirely block the sun! While a magician never reveals the secret, this is no trick. Rather, it's a demonstration of perspective. While the sun and dime can't be changed, your perspective of how you see them can be, as your hand moves the dime closer to your eye.

So how does this relate to how we see situations that we have little-to-no influence over, and how do we navigate through these challenging times? Here's a recent experience that fits quite nicely into this illustration. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I needed to change the plans I was anxiously looking forward to. I can admit that I was greatly disappointed as these plans were long anticipated, and would have been a fun departure from my day-to-day routine. Try as I may, I was left with the very real fact that I was going to miss out on this opportunity. I felt disappointment, anger and frustration, and at that juncture I had a decision to make – I could either give in to the very apparent feelings, knowing that they would not change things, or I could change the way that I looked at the situation. Then, the realization that I could have an effect on something was empowering! It's hard when change comes and the feeling of being out of control takes over.

What I chose to do in this circumstance was to reframe the way things had played out by saying things like “Well, this is really disappointing and I was looking forward to going. I'll make sure that I am ready for the next time and would love to be included.” My beliefs added to this refocus by allowing me to see that there could be the possibility that this was a diversion that could be happening for a better outcome in the long run. By addressing and validating my feelings, realizing that I couldn't change the outcome and acknowledging that I have come through changes before, I successfully moved the “dime”, which was a relatively small issue, away from my eye so that it wasn't blocking out the solution, the “sun”.

Life happens while we are living it and not everything that happens is expected or wanted. Change is hard for many of us. I tend to get very comfortable in the routine of what I know and what I like. The beautiful part in this is that we do have the potential to choose how we are affected by the change. This is where we can grow and learn more about the strengths that we have! Maya Angelou said it very well, “If you don’t like something change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”

I’d like to challenge you to make some magic of your own and see what you can gain by changing the way you view the changes that life will bring!



Jill Davis is Peer Services Coordinator for Mind Springs Health. She or any one of our peers are happy to converse about self-care and how to be mentally healthy anytime. Drop her a line at Peers@MindSpringsHealth.org