



4. Let It Out

Airing Your Grievances - Safely

We're so often taught not to complain. "What have you got to complain about?" "You think you've got it hard, what about all those people worse off than you?" Some people even say you should never complain. "Keep a positive mental attitude." Well, yes, a PMA is great as long it isn't forced, or in conflict with reality. "Think positive" can ring very hollow when times get tough.

Yes, there are times when moaning will make things harder for you. There are times and places when it's totally inappropriate to complain. And there's complaining, and there's trolling, and nobody wants to be a troll – or shouldn't want to be one.

But even if you're a generally quite a calm person, trying to be calm when you're het up may just backfire. All the suffering in the world does not invalidate your annoyance or your distress. Emotions need safe outlet if they're to do the job they're designed for, which is to help you; otherwise, they can turn toxic. Unexpressed unhappiness can turn into burning bubbles of resentment or depression instead.

If you have trusted friends or family to talk to, that's wonderful. But what if you suspect they'd be too upset if you told them what's on your mind – especially if they happen to be the cause? What if you need to let some of the steam out, as it were, before you can address the problem even-handedly?

Setting aside time and space to let rip and articulating out loud what's bugging you, if you need to, is a health practice. It's also easy to do solo, so you don't need to worry about burdening anyone else with your woes. It's so simple, really, it's nuts, and rather good fun as well; like thumping a psychological punchbag.

All you have to do is:

1.

Find a safe space and a short amount of time – give it five minutes, but you could be done in two. You might like longer. Experiment to find what works best for you.

2.

Start with an opening word or phrase, like, “Right,” or, “Here we go...”

3.

And then go for it, as deliciously viciously, furiously, weepily, candidly as you possibly can. Let it ALL out in a total tirade. All the words under the sun. You can just swear the air blue for a minute or two (as long as you’re sure you can’t be heard of course). But the point is to get out of your mouth whatever it is that has brought you to this pitch, so it’s ‘out there’ in front of you.

You may notice that you feel less heated pretty quickly. It’s not called letting off steam for nothing. It’s simple magic. Naming a problem is the powerful first step to tackling it.

4.

Keep going for as long as you need; though it may surprise you how soon you feel done.

5.

Take a moment to double-check you’ve finished. You could even ask, “Am I done?”

6.

Draw a final line under the session by saying something like, “Yeah. Done. Good. Onwards.” Or something like that. Acknowledge that you’ve done something good for yourself.

And that’s it - another simple thing you can do anywhere, loudly, quietly, or even silently if that’s your only option. Articulating a grumble clarifies and soothes.

There are times when being careful and polite just won’t move anything forward; so, find that safe space and shoot your mouth off to your heart’s content.