



**PENNY HOLBURN COACHING**

*It's about You and Results*

## An Open Letter to those Struggling in Life

1 November 2017

Dear One,

Life is hard. Somehow we have this expectation that it shouldn't be so hard. Yet it is. So many people are overwhelmed by how things have just become so difficult for them. There you were, happily getting on with your life, doing what everyone does - go through school, get a further educational qualification, get a job, have relationships - and then the next thing you know you are battling through an ended relationship, the feeling you are in the wrong job and hate the company you work for, and to top it all someone in the family has been hit with a serious illness and you are now worried about finances and having to take care of ill family members. Whatever the combination of challenges you are facing it has just become too much. In addition to feeling overwhelmed, tired, confused, and that this will never end, you feel alone (being overwhelmed does that to you), isolated, and that everyone else out there in the world is having a good time except you.

Somehow no one ever prepares us for this. Being overwhelmed at a time in your life is something that everyone experiences at some stage in their lives, and often more than once. You feel like everything as you knew it is falling apart. It is a horrible time. It is a time of feeling overstressed, out of control, alone, helpless, and sometimes even hopeless. "When will it end"? "When will my life get back to normal"? "I thought this year would be good because last year was so bad, but this year sucked even more". These are some of the thoughts you may have.

If this is such a universal experience that we all go through, sometimes even more than once in our lifetimes, how do we get through it all. When you are going through hell, Winston Churchill said you just keep on going; putting one foot in front of the other. You need to do this, however there are some other things you can do as well to help you.



1. Practice self-compassion. Be nice to yourself. Speak nicely to yourself. This is not the time to be mean to yourself.
2. Carve some time out for yourself. Even a few minutes a day helps. This is your time to not have to think about or do anything for anybody else. It helps you regroup.
3. Don't make big important decisions now. Most things can wait. Not right now is often okay.
4. Spend some time in nature and/or with animals. It has a grounding effect, getting rid of some of that stressed up and anxious charge.
5. Live life positively. Even if things are not going well, you can still be positive. Watch your thoughts to ensure you are not engaging in conjuring up in your mind the most negative scenarios. That is catastrophizing and will start you on a downward spiral. Be realistic and be positive.
6. Don't try and go it alone. Supportive relationships are often the most worthwhile part of life. So let others support you and be there for you. At the same time avoid toxic relationships. You really don't need them at this time.
7. If you have had previous challenging times in life and you made it through, remind yourself of these times and that you can make it through. You did it before and you will do it again.
8. Try and accept living with uncertainty. To help you, look at where you can create certainty and structure and routine in your life. The more you can have constancy and predictability with some things, the easier it will be to handle uncertainty
9. Know that it will end. Just like the seasons, and day and night, our life experiences are cyclical. If you are going through horrible times, they will come to an end. Unfortunately the same holds if you are going through great times. They end to. Everything ends, and new comes along.
10. If you need help then get it. And carry on searching for help until you find the right help you need.

Perhaps as people we have got this all wrong. We hate suffering. We want everything to always be all right. We want to always be happy. We want to always be well. The universe seems to have other plans though. No matter who you are, you are going to get knocked down at some stage. Perhaps we need to embrace the thought that when we think everything in our lives is falling apart, it is often the trigger we need to go within and start doing some serious personal work, so that everything eventually falls together again in a much, much, better way.

*"As you will learn in time, the pain more often than not turns into gifts wrapped with bows of wisdom."*

~ From the book "For the sender: Love letters from Vietnam".  
by Alex Woodard