



**PENNY HOLBURN COACHING**

*It's about You and Results*

## Your Psychosocial Environment

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What I mean by this is the situations with other people (social situations) you find yourself in – which can include situations with family, friends, at work, and any other place you go to – and how these environments affect you psychologically.

This is sometimes a neglected area. Actually let me rephrase that. This is often a neglected area. I have seen people extremely diligent in their therapy, their coaching, their counselling, taking their medication, and seeking any other professional advice they deem will help them in their attempts to be well and have well-being. But when they have finished consulting the professionals they go back home or to work in the most appalling and unhealthy psychological situations.

Now I am not only talking about the obvious environments where they are belittled, broken down, humiliated or abused. These are obvious, although despite that people still go back to them and wonder why the process of getting well or finding well-being is not happening the way it should be. I am also talking about the more subtle aspects: Are you surrounded by negative people who find problems all day or are you in the company of people who focus on finding solutions to problems? Are you surrounded by people who procrastinate and moan and whine all day or are you in the company of people who are action-oriented and get on with what needs to happen? Are you supported where you are, or do people constantly find fault with you? Are you encouraged to be your best, or do people talk you out of believing you can do something significant? Are you surrounded by people who criticise you constantly, or do you have folks around you who suggest ways in which you can do better?

If you have never thought about this then I suggest you do. It doesn't take very long in working with people to realise the impact this aspect has. Everything that has been achieved in a session, can quite literally, be almost completely undone if someone goes back to an extremely unhealthy psychosocial environment. Progress in managing stress, anxiety, depression, goal achievement, self-esteem and anything else they may be working on is curtailed. And that just demotivates people from continuing with trying to work on themselves and their problems. Part of what makes people continue with the hard work and the heart work of working on themselves, is feeling and experiencing progress.



So ask yourself some questions:

- Am I in an environment where I am abused, belittled, humiliated, bullied or used?
- Are the people in my environment generally positive? Now this doesn't mean that they go around rejoicing because the rand has fallen – that would be silly. Positive means that I don't dwell on the negative, but I focus on what is going right and think about what I can do to fix the stuff that is going wrong.
- Do the people around you motivate you to be your best, or do they keep reminding you that you will never amount to much anyway?
- Is your environment full of cliques, and despite numerous attempts on your part to make friends, no one is interested?
- Is your environment an encouraging one? Do people tell you that you should give it a try or do they tell you that you will fail anyway no matter what so don't bother?
- Do you feel supported? Do you feel listened to? Do you feel heard?
- Does your environment punish failure? We are all human and everyone fails. If you are too scared of failing you will not try anything.
- Do the people around you keep you in a state of dependency or do they encourage you to be self-sufficient? For an adult to be dependent is not a good thing. People who don't work (studying, raising children, doing charity work is working), who are very isolated, and who are surrounded by mentally unhealthy people all the time can deteriorate in many aspects of their mental functioning over time. What you don't use, you lose. Rescuing, mothering and over-protecting adults is not a good thing unless they are completely unable to live any sort of independent life.
- Are there action-oriented people in your life? Are there people who set goals and objectives and then persevere to achieve them, or are most people in your life sitting on their backsides and whining? We become like those around us. Something about them rubs off on us. So if you are surrounded by go-getters then you are more likely to be someone who will get out there and take action.
- Do the people in your environment role model good problem solving and decision making? If they do then you are in good company. You can and are mostly likely going to pick up skills from them.

And if you can see that you need to do something, then remember the second-last point and get taking some action. The sooner the better.