

# 8 Practical Tips for Dealing with the Unexpected

Unpredictable events can wreck havoc in our lives and cause a great deal of stress. The only thing predictable about the unexpected is that it ALWAYS happens.

To give an example, my girlfriend Irina and I were up most of last night battling what has turned out to be a case of bed bugs (for those of you who do not know, the bed bugs DO bite and are quite a nuisance).

Because we are neat freaks, the situation forced me to forego most of my well-scheduled itinerary for the day and 1) go buy a new super powerful vacuum cleaner; 2) do a massive laundry and 3) meet with a few pest control experts.

How we deal with situations like this can be revealing, and the purpose of this article is to discuss 8 practical things we can do when unexpected occurrences throw off our best laid plans:

1) **Breathing** is the first (and perhaps most important) thing to do when the unpredictable takes hold. Taking a few deep breaths allows you to relax, get perspective, and think rationally. This is a great place to start as it gets the mind moving in the direction of solution instead of panic.

2) **Prioritize**—now that you are nice and relaxed from doing some breathing exercises, you can take a few moments and prioritize your actions for the day (or week, month, or whatever timeframe the unexpected event effects). I highly suggest writing down on paper the things you need to do right away, and start deciding on the things that will need to wait.

3) **Realizing that almost nothing needs immediate attention** (I love this saying because it's so true) is the third thing to do when unforeseen events transpire. Stress will start to take hold of you when you begin thinking of the dire consequences of putting certain things off. There is no need for this stress because, again, almost nothing in life needs our immediate attention. Think about it...

4) **Taking action** is the fourth step in the process. Many times, the unexpected connotes a negative experience (like my bed bugs), and it is imperative to fight procrastination and just deal with it. By tackling the most pressing issues first, you take the first step in solving the problem in an efficient manner (so you can get back to your usual routines)!

5) **Being honest** with people and not making excuses is the fifth step. Remember, unpredictable occurrences are universal and everyone you believe to be disappointing have had similar experiences. Being honest will appeal to their humanity, and you will find much greater acceptance when you tell the truth.

6) **Asking for help** is an essential aspect when successfully dealing with the unforeseen. Do not be afraid to ask the assistance of a co-worker, friend or loved one. Bottom line, people are extremely giving by nature and you may be surprised by how much people are willing to help you. Wouldn't you do the same?

7) **Respect your own limits** is the seventh step. The unexpected gives rise to the feeling that we can NOT accomplish it all, and this may be a good lesson for some of us to learn. The point is to prioritize, put your head down, and just do the absolute best possible given the situation. At the end of the day, that is all you can ask yourself.

 **Feeling gratitude** is the final step. There are two effective means for feeling grateful when unexpected events shake up your life: 1) being appreciative that, in the greater scheme of things, you still have it pretty good and 2) feeling grateful for working hard and accomplishing as much as you did!

In the end, it is inevitable that unforeseen events will come into your life. These moments are often wonderful tests of character, and by ingratiating the above 8 steps you will be on your way to making the best of a bad situation.