

Avoiding pre-empting

Hint series – Adult Survivors of Child Abuse - Cowra Support Group – (Created: 2 December 2011). Last updated: 12 May 2015

Background

Have you ever found yourself pre-empting what will happen in a future meeting, writing the script for what is sensed to be a potential source of conflict or a general ill-ease that you want to be prepared for. Not being able to read into the future you would start pre-empting what people's behaviours/reactions would be and how you would react to them.

As it is sheer impossible to pre-empt – to the comma, in the script (the movie script) – what such reactions could be, you would come over(!) prepared, focused on a narrow script – in fact, really not open to other forms of reaction - , and over tense – muscular tension.

Maybe this high level of preparedness is only natural when you have been repeatedly abused and you need to be prepared for an attack and need to know how to escape ie defend – you are always on the defensive.

What needs to be learnt is a more relaxed approach to such meetings.

Suggested steps

- Be clear about what the meeting is about.

What do I want to achieve from that meeting?

If it is attendance to a course, what is it that I want to get out of the course?

If it is a meeting, what outcome is sought – whether professional, personal, both, or none.

If it is a conflict to be resolved, what do I think is a reasonable outcome?

- Be clear on the facts

What are the facts, the hard facts which I can cling to without a doubt and build my case on, if needed.

If I am likely to forget then, if I get emotional, write them down, and have them handy.

Prepared with the facts and the purpose to achieve, now try and release as much prior anxiety as possible.

- Prepare your body and your mind.

Sleep well, hydrate well, eat well. Ensure you are rested and feeling as good as you could be. Relax. You know what you want to get out of it and it is reasonable. You hold the facts. You nurtured your body.

- Be open about what will happen because you have very little control upon other people's behaviours and reactions. No movie script will ever match whatever the future will hold.

Disclaimer: Hints provided to you courtesy of the Adult Survivor of Child Abuse - Cowra support group. They may or may not help you. Consider carefully. In doubt consult your therapist.