The Kate Ashley-Norman Wellbeing Column

On The Topic Of Toxic – Avoid Negativity At All Costs

Don't waste time on people who don't want to change. Leave them to stew in their own pot of negativity as you can do without their toxicity playing with your own wellbeing, writes Kate Ashley-Norman.

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It's best to use common decency to get things done, writes Kate Ashley-Norman.

Whether it is arguing the toss with a jobsworth from the council or being served by a young kid in a restaurant, I believe that you get the best out of people by treating them with respect and dignity. And if they reciprocate with rudeness, then you simply turn up the politeness dial.

Gratitude, politeness, dignity and respect can go a long way to making sure you reap what you sow. This kindness helps to dispel toxicity.

Avoid the toxic

Toxicity is an energy that you want to avoid at all costs. Its insidious nature can seep into every corner and take root before you realise it is even in the room. And the impact on your emotional wellbeing is significant.

Toxicity can place you into a state of high alert, increasing stress levels and putting pressure on you mentally and physically. You start to feel anxious and fearful, without realising why. In this heightened state your perception of reality becomes distorted. Paranoia can set in and you become hypersensitive to events in your environment.

You become emotionally exhausted, which drains you of confidence and self-esteem. You feel as though you're running on an empty tank, with no hope of refuelling.

Music to your ears

While it is not always possible to eliminate certain people from your space, there are things that you can do to reduce the toxicity that surrounds you, giving you enhanced resilience and a more robust strength to overcome it:

Start your day as you mean to go on. Many of us start our days by doomscrolling on our phones and listening to negativity on TV and radio. That negative energy can sour the rest of your day. Keep the radio off and don't look at your phone until you get to work – replace them instead with some funky music that brings a smile to your face.

Don't allow the negativity and toxicity of those that surround you to affect your own mood. You'll find that among them are radiators and drains – those who radiate positivity and those who drain you of energy. Be a radiator and turn the drains into radiators (rather than the other way around). Focus on the 'cans', rather than the 'cannots'. There's no point fretting about the stuff that you have absolutely no control over. Instead, look at working on those things that you can change or influence.

Don't waste time on people who don't want to change. Leave them to stew in their own pot of negativity. Ultimately, the only people they're hurting is themselves.

Be polite

But for me the biggest weapon I wield against toxicity is that politeness. If I ever come across someone who feels that rudeness and belligerence will get them their way, I respond by being absolutely charming. 99 per cent of the time it takes the wind out of their sails as it gives them nothing to play with. It also helps you to maintain your own sense of cool, collected calm and is an effective barrier against increasing toxicity.