

The Key to Pop Quizzes: Master the “Pop” to Ace the Quiz!

WHEN LIFE THROWS YOU A CURVE in the form of a “Pop Quiz” (an unexpected frustrating, upsetting or painful experience), use the step-by-step process below to engage your brain quickly, to turn your reaction into a powerful “Aha!” moment that puts you back in charge.

The moment a pop quiz “pops,” it often causes us to shut down, at least initially. Our capacity to think creatively, about possible solutions to help us manage the challenge, becomes blocked. **Until we get back conscious control of our thoughts**, we become stuck, metaphorically “stalled out on the side of the road.” We can’t achieve the clear self-awareness required to *set an intention for our desired outcome, and visualize having been successful in attaining it*. **Learn to master these moments, by using the following process to “stop the pop” and get conscious control over your response!**

1. Approach Life with the Assumption that:

- **The needs of someone you love and care for can change in an instant** (whether there is an actual emergency or not)...
- **Some of these moments will feel unpleasant** – anywhere from slightly annoying to very hurtful or even outrageous (that’s how you know you’re in a pop quiz)...and...
- **In each moment, you are doing the best that you can**. Recognize that you are NOT hopeless!! All the progress you’ve made isn’t wiped out in these moments. Quite the opposite – it’s time to **acknowledge yourself, because you are gaining awareness**.

2. Practice the Following Steps When a Pop Quiz Occurs:

- **Identify the triggering event, and name the details of your reaction** - whether frustration, irritation, stress, annoyance, sadness, anger and/or any other “stuck” feelings. If you’re still thinking (or stewing!) about a recent or recurring pop quiz, do the same step to identify and name the particulars of that past pop quiz. Then **BREATHE!**
- **Be aware of judgmental, critical and negative thoughts, feelings and/or beliefs** you had or are still having about yourself in that situation, and its aftermath. Do NOT judge yourself for these thoughts, feelings and beliefs - **simply be aware**.
- **Use your Step By Step Guide to help you consider Your Desired Outcome** and other **Options** you had when the pop quiz hit. Begin to brainstorm using the Guide, keeping in mind that the rule in brainstorming is you don’t reject ANY ideas upfront. Let your mind **envision yourself achieving your desired outcome, and enjoying that outcome**.

- ### 3. Know that whatever you come up with is the right answer for you right now.
- If you happened to come up with solid, usable ideas, bravo! But that is not necessary for you to get something powerful from doing this exercise. **The most important benefit from doing it is to get you “unstuck”** and moving forward again. Even if you believe that you had **no** other options in that given moment, **honor and respect the choice you made**.

and we breathe