



Beyond our Control

Recently the authorities banned flying for a few days due to the volcanic ash cloud lying over Europe. Many thousands of people all over the world felt anxious, sad, angry or frustrated about their situation at not being able to fly.

In that situation, what is within our control? As frustrating as it is, as anxious as we feel about (the consequences of) not getting to our destination, as sad as we feel about missing important events, there is little we can do. The air safety organisations have to put safety first, and order no-flying. A volcanic ash cloud from Iceland is totally beyond our control.

If it's out of our control, then what can we do about it? In this situation, there are things we can do – contacting others and making arrangements for accommodation or alternative travel.



We could fight and struggle; we can get mad and upset, and perhaps blame others. But in struggling, we're just adding to an already difficult situation. Many times, even though we'd like to change the situation we're in, or change other people, all we can change is ourselves – what we think, our attitude towards it, what we do.



If some situations are beyond our control - we can struggle and fight, or we can accept that's just the way it is. "It is as it is". Acceptance is not about judging it to be good or agreeing with it, not giving it permission to go on forever and not giving up on our options.

We are faced with many similar situations all the time. Situations that we find ourselves in, that we can have little control over – bereavements, losing a job, illness, being bullied by others, debt, relationship break-ups or difficulties. Perhaps some can be situations that we have been partly responsible for bringing about, but have little control over now. There are situations where we have a little control over, some we have a lot. We can only influence those areas where we have some control.

- How much control do I have? What is outside my control?
- "It is as it is". I'm not agreeing with or giving up on it, but I can let it go for now.
- If I can't change the situation, can I change the way I think or do about it?
- What can I do that is within my control?

- ✓ **S**TOPP
- ✓ **T**ake a breath
- ✓ **O**bserve – What am I reacting to? What am I thinking and feeling?
- ✓ **P**ull back & Put in some Perspective – What's the bigger picture? What would someone else make of this situation? What advice would I give a friend?
- ✓ **P**ractise what works – What can I do about this? What's within my control? What would help? What's the best thing to do – for the situation, for others, for me?

