

CENTERPOINT

Last month I wrote about the popular phrase, “it is what it is.” Clients often seem to use the saying to express a feeling of passive hopelessness. The result is a mind trap of negativity.

I suggest adding three words, “it is what it is, *while it is.*” Those three words could have beneficial effects for a range of difficulties from everyday stress to anxiety and depression. Here’s how. . . Negative thoughts induce negative feelings that become a mind trap. The thoughts are not facts, but the feelings are real. Telling yourself “it is what it is, while it is” pushes you back into the present moment and reminds you that the feelings are not forever.

Saying, “it is what it is, while it is” gives you enough distance that you can choose a different response. As your mind gets triggered into the “what if” game in which you look at upcoming scenarios as catastrophes, saying “it is what it is, while it is” helps you realize your mind is playing the negativity game. You can begin to recognize that the anxiety has a life of its own, and that, like everything else, it comes and goes.

Saying “it is what it is, while it is,” is not a magical cure-all. You will need to integrate it into other helpful actions such as developing satisfying, nourishing activities, and finding supportive friends. Counseling is a way to reach deeper self-understanding and acceptance.

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