

Home Life... Everyone's alarms goes off at different times

Situation:

I have three roommates and most of the time in the morning they get up before I have to. Thursday morning the first alarm went off at 5:30 and it woke me up too. I managed to get back to sleep and the second one went off at 6:00 and I heard it. The third one rang out at 7:00 and you guessed it, that one woke me up again. I'd say that's when I began to work myself up. But the truth is I worked myself up the first time and the second time, and the third time. I think you could say this was a series of IFD's, Irritations, Frustrations and Disappointments.

Symptoms:

First I smacked my pillow, then turned over in a huff and put the pillow over my head to block out the noise – even though the alarm had already gone off and was shut off and it was really pretty quiet at that point. My thoughts: “ I wanted to sleep in! All this noise is driving me crazy. They're going to have to do something about it. I was up very late last night and now I haven't had enough undisturbed sleep. I'm going to be tired today. I won't be able to go to that meeting I was planning on going to at 7:00 tonight. This stinks. All I want to do is sleep and I can't. This is not going to be a good day.” I tossed and turned a little more trying to find a comfortable spot and was listening for more noise.

Solution:

That was the key – when I realized that I was listening for more noise so that I would be even more justified in being angry. That's when I decided to do something for me. I really didn't want to have a bad day. It may have started out not so great, but I could make things better inside of me. I don't like feeling cranky and crabby.

It still takes me a little time to figure out that I'm angry. The first time someone else's alarm woke me up, I was, let's say annoyed. By the second time I was aggravated. By the third time I was close to furious.

I'm learning that all those are different degrees of being angry, but they all come down to the same thing: I'm judging them wrong, and me right. It's been like that with me. If I'm uncomfortable, somebody must be wrong. Either them or me. It's not easy to give up sometimes, but I know that maintaining good mental health is my first and most important goal.

So I while I was still in my bed I said to myself: “ They're not wrong, they're average for setting their alarm clocks and getting up earlier than me. And, I'm not wrong I'm average for not liking to hear their alarms go off. Saying they're not wrong and I'm not wrong doesn't mean that we're right, it just means that it's not wrong.



Having more than one person in one living area means that people are going to get up at different times. And if those people have to get up at certain times, they don't have much choice but to set their alarm clocks.

I changed the insecure thought, "I didn't get enough sleep," to the secure thought and fact, "I did have enough sleep. Maybe not all I wanted, but certainly enough to get me through today."

Since I knew that this type of thing would probably happen again I took the time to figure out what I could do the next time the first alarm went off, and I wrote it down.

1. This situation is upsetting, it's not dangerous. Nothing bad is going to happen to me.
2. The people and the alarm clocks are my outer environment. I can influence them, I can't control them.
3. A response has four parts, feelings, sensations, thoughts and impulses. Out of those four I have direct control over only two, I & T – Impulses and Thoughts. If I change my thoughts and excuse the people, my angry feelings will run their course.
4. If I control the impulse to heave my body around my bed and show my anger (even if I'm the only one who sees my behavior) I'll get more calm. If I don't take care of this now, other upsetting things that might happen during the day are just going to pile on top of this and I will have a miserable day.

In the past:

In the past I would have either told everybody about my "bad" morning and my inconsiderate roommates, or I would have replayed what happened in my mind, keeping it alive and keeping my symptoms up at a high pitch. Now I know that to talk it up is to work it up whether I'm talking to other people or talking it up in my own mind.

