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Handling Life's Hiccups

Expect the unexpected and life's hiccups won't be so burdensome.

By Libby Gill

I've got the sure-fire cure for hiccups. It's such a long-standing family practice that when my kids were little and one of them got hit with a hiccups fit, he'd dash off to get a glass of water as I launched into my "this is the only way to cure hiccups" speech.

Forget holding your breath or waiting for someone to scare you – strictly for amateurs – and try this the next time you feel those gaspy spasms coming on. Get a glass of water, preferably an unbreakable one, stand up and bend over as if you were going to touch your toes. Now drink out of the backside of the glass, that is, the side away from your mouth while you're still turned upside down.

Take a few big sips, stand up and *voilà*. No more hiccups.

But what about life's hiccups? Not the devastating events like the loss of a loved one or a serious illness, but those unexpected snags and setbacks, the little hiccups that hit you out of the blue and leave you longing for a surefire cure. How do you handle those kinds of hiccups?

My friend Haasan Morse experienced one of those life hiccups as an unanticipated professional setback. Haasan runs his own public relations agency, Morse Code PR, and just as his clientele was steadily growing and he was beginning to build his business, a client reneged on a sizable payment. Just plain refused to pay his bill for services already rendered.

Then there's Lynn, a writer for a parenting magazine, who experienced a different type of hiccup recently. Lynn was racing to wrap up a major article so she could beat a tight deadline when her lupus suddenly flared, the severe pain sending her to bed. Lynn made her deadline, barely, but the interruption added extra pressure and left her worrying about what might happen the next time she becomes ill.

So how do Lynn and Haasan – and you – handle life's hiccups, whether they come in

the form of professional setbacks, health concerns, romantic disappointments, financial snags or family problems?

First of all, you need to recognize that setbacks are part of the flow of life, and if you're not experiencing any, you better check your pulse because you may already have checked out.

Next, start expecting the unexpected using the tips below:

- **Look back at hiccups that have wreaked havoc** with your personal or professional life in the past. These might have included losing a key project, getting hit with unexpected expenses, becoming ill, etc.
- **Now consider your options and determine** how you might be better prepared should they occur again.
- **Check in with your Support Squad** to see if they have additional ideas or resources. (If you don't have a Support Squad, go my blog at www.LibbyGill.com and look for Recruiting Your Support Squad.)
- **Handle hiccups with humor.** When all else fails, stop and have a laugh at yourself and your crazy circumstances. Laughter makes everything go down a little more easily.

I had my own vehicular hiccup recently when, just as I'd gotten my car out of the repair shop for the second time in a month, my beleaguered auto was nailed in a hit-and-run. I dropped the car off, yet again, and was standing outside the body shop waiting for my ride and feeling miserable.

Just then, an older gentleman came zipping along the sidewalk in his motorized wheelchair. He stopped short and, with a flirtatious twinkle in his eye asked, "Can I give you a lift somewhere?" We both burst out laughing and suddenly my hiccup was cured as surely as if I'd been drinking upside down from the backside of a water glass.

*Libby Gill is an executive coach, leadership expert, and international speaker. She is the former head of communications and PR for Sony, Universal, and Turner Broadcasting. Author of award-winning **You Unstuck: Mastering the New Rules of Risk-taking in Work and Life**. Her new book, **Hope IS a Strategy: Leading Through Change, Challenge, and Chaos** will be published in Spring 2018. You can learn more about Libby's work at www.LibbyGill.com or take her career assessment at <http://www.YourCareerQuiz.com>.*

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