Dealing with unsolvable problems

Take 20 minutes of your time and make sure you are in a place where you can remain undisturbed. Take a few deep breaths in and out, be aware of the chair or sofa against your back or feel the support you get if you're lying on the floor.

Now imagine there is a large cinema screen quite a way away from where you are with a film playing on it. In the film, you see a person who looks just like you who is also wearing the same clothes you are wearing. The person is in a problematic situation like ones you have experienced yourself. The person cannot change the problem. Either the problem is caused by other people (boss, partner, parent/s, child/ren), or it has to do with a situation like a lack of money, an unfulfilled need of some kind, having to do unpleasant activities, etc.

Pay attention to yourself. If looking at this person becomes too intense or unpleasant, increase the distance between you and the screen, take a deep breath again, and feel the seat or the floor surface on your back. What you're looking at is only a film.
Once you have put enough distance between you and the person in the film, and you are watching the film at normal speed, or perhaps fast forwarding or rewinding it, or watching with the volume turned down – what would you advise the person in the film to do, so that they feel better about things? What could they change? Their attitude, their breathing, their gestures or facial expressions, their words, their mindset, their speed, their expectations, the order they do things in, what they do before or after the situation?

Take time and think through a few ideas that occur to you and have the character in the film act in a way that might be more positive. Test whether the person's situation improves, despite the fact that the problem doesn't go away. If yes, in what ways do you notice this?

Once you are sure that you've found more positive versions of the story, carry out the last test by imagining yourself taking on the role of this person in the film.
If you feel okay with that, you can be certain that you have found possible ways to deal more positively with an unsolvable problem.

The next time you find yourself in a similar situation, try out your film partner's strategies. If it doesn't work, don't lose heart. Unsolvable problems have the advantage that you can practice how to deal with them again and again.

Have fun!

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