'I hope you're not going to stuff it up this time?' she announced quite unexpectedly as she walked into the kitchen.
I was just rubbing out my answer to **2d** in the *Speedy* and glanced up, startled.
'Stuff what up?' I replied hurriedly, brushing away the rubbings.

'The side gate of course. What else would I be talking about.'

'Ah, the side gate - yes, well, I'll hang the gate when I finish this crossword - it's a right bast...'

'Make sure you do.' she interrupted. 'And make sure you put it up properly this time!'

I should explain that I'd been constructing (and painting) a new side gate to replace the old one that had started to fall apart with age. I was employing my new-found retirement woodworking skills and was quite pleased with my labour of the past few days. All that remained was to hang the gate to her exacting specifications which required it to be hinged specifically on one side - the side I had *not* chosen the first time I had tried putting it up.
'Yes, yes, I know - make sure it's hinged to the house and not the wall' I sighed. 'I don't really think it matters all that much which way it goes up' I tried to reason, resigning myself to a lost cause.

'Well it matters to me, and that's all that counts' she replied.

'It's a bit like life' I mused, looking out the window at nothing in particular.

'How so?' she asked.

'Just as in life' I explained, 'there are some things, like a gate, that can let you continue on, or stop you in your tracks. And just like a gate, you can swing both ways, but it doesn't really matter which way you swing.'

'Hmm' she grunted as she turned and left the room, shaking her head.

It was then that the answer to **2d** came to me in a flash of inspiration - a rare event for me, if I'm honest.
**2d** indeed!