

9 Keys to Overcoming Difficult Times

Lately I've had to deal with a lot of changes happening in my personal life. At first, describing them to my friends, I kept calling them endings, but afterwards I began to feel as if it was a process of renewal. There is a Chinese saying that goes 'if the old doesn't go, the new cannot come'. Keeping that in mind, I've begun to view these difficult events as a shedding of things for me to grow forward, and so I've come to call them 'changes' instead of 'endings'.

Difficult as it may, I know a friend who is also going through some tough changes of his own. This post is really for him, because I want to share with him some tools I've found to be useful for me in managing my emotional state to navigate through the difficult times. I'm prone to worry and depression myself so I've had to learn how to pull myself through, and the beliefs and techniques from [NLP](#) and [Solutions Focused Brief Therapy](#) have helped tremendously.

1. It is not necessary to understand the cause of the problem to solve it.

Most people believe that it's essential to know the roots of the problem before they can change. 'If only I knew why I'm so...I'd be able to change myself'. Unfortunately, this isn't true. Understanding does not always create change. Solutions are often new elements injected into the existing situation. A belief like this often fosters the 'paralysis of analysis', encouraging too much navel gazing that makes people do the exact opposite of the following belief you need to overcome difficult times...

2. Spend only 20% of your time on what's wrong, and 80% on what's right.

If you spend 80% of your time focusing on the problem and only 20% on the solution what do you think is going to happen? It's easy to complain. It's easy to be a defeatist. You need to make it so it's even easier to answer the question 'so what are you doing about it?'

3. No matter what else is happening, you are at least doing one thing right in your life.

No matter how badly you think your life may be going, or how messed up you think you are, there is at least one thing you are doing right in your life or you wouldn't be alive reading this.

4. Problems aren't always there!

You may think you're always depressed, or sad, or down and out...only because you haven't noticed when you haven't been. You know when you are...how about when you aren't? For example, it's physically impossible to be depressed all the time...notice that next time you really really need to go to the toilet.

If it's not possible to be depressed all the time, then it's also not possible not to be happy all the time.

5. You are more than just your problems.

You are not a depressive. You are not bankrupt. You are not a retrenched worker. You are not a rejected salesman. You are not last place. Let's not lie, you are responsible for the results you create in your life, sure. But you are not your problems. You are a living breathing human being who is infinitely more complex than even all of your problems added up together.

6. If what you are doing isn't working, do something, anything, different from what you've been doing before!

If you find yourself stuck in a rut, you're stuck because you're doing the same things over and over again in that same spot. If you really need a change, just challenge yourself to do one thing differently from before. A little shift already creates a different result, and little shifts build on to create bigger shifts in time.

7. Today is a new day.

The past does not equal the future. The future can be even better than the past, unless you make it worse. You can focus on what's over and unchangeable and miss making it better here and now, or you can do better. Leave what's past where it belongs. Create hope for the future. Do that by...

8. Seeing what you want in the future.

Not what you don't want. What you do want. Since the future's a blank canvas, you're free everyday to paint it as you wish. You can choose to paint a bleak picture...but is that a quality choice? If you can see, hear or feel it, you can go to it. Do this as often and as much as you can.

9. What are you grateful for in your life right now?

And finally, the most spiritual and uplifting quality I know of; living the attitude of gratitude. No matter who, where and when you are, the fact that you're still here, means that you have at least one thing you can be grateful about in your life right now. Not talking about settling for what you have, but acknowledging it, appreciating its' presence, knowing that there are good things in your life, will help you attract even more.

Like attracts like. It can happen out there inwards, it can also start immediately inwards out. Your mind makes a difference, and if millionaires can be depressed, and POWs be cheerful, you have enough power to direct your inner state, irrespective of what you think must make you feel any way.