



Suzanne Zoglio

You can lift yourself up

Economic environment making you feel nervous or depressed? When life throws us one curve ball after another, it's tough to keep getting up. A deal gone sour, a loan turned down, a job lost, a medical crisis, a college fund depleted...the list goes on. In what seems like the blink of an eye, life as we know it can morph into a whole new reality. What used to work no longer does, and what might have seemed certain now seems like a pipe dream.

This landscape is really slick and running old plays just won't cut it. We need a new playbook –one that helps us to bounce back, and think “up” ...even when things are looking down. We've got to try a few new tools, or at least sharpen those we haven't needed in a while.

While there are situations that we can't control, there are several things we *can* do that have been proven to help us bounce back ...even in the middle of a mess. See if any resonant with you.

Take a deep breath. When we're anxious or stressed, we breathe shallowly, and that deprives us of much-needed oxygen. Our bodies react with rapid respiration, and accelerated heartbeat, further increasing the stress response. To break the vicious cycle, schedule regular centering breaks. Several times a day go to a quiet place for just three to five minutes and practice deep breathing. Put your hand just above your waist, close your eyes and inhale slowly to the count of six. Feel the “balloon” under your hand inflate. Hold for a few seconds, and then slowly exhale to the count of six, feeling the

“balloon” deflate. Repeat several times, relaxing the shoulders and neck.

Gain perspective. When the hits come at us in rapid succession – it's easy to catastrophize. From one lost account, your mind makes the leap to “I'm going out of business.” From a job layoff to “I'll never work again.” From a reduction in your 401K to “I'll never be able to retire.” To gain perspective, try rating the crummy situation you face on a scale of 1 to 10. How bad is it compared with other life challenges you have survived? Is it the worst you've ever faced? As bad as, say, the divorce you went through, the health scare you weathered, or losing a good friend? Studies show that if we actually rate the stressful situation we face, it reduces our stress by providing a better perspective on the gravity of this situation and on our own history of resiliency.

Seek inspiration. When you are bombarded by negative neighbors, panicky partners, whining coworkers, and media “complainia,” move out of range. Take a different path. Turn off the television and read inspiring words. Spend a few minutes a day in prayer or meditation. Take a daily walk with Mother Nature. Talk to a counselor or trusted friend. And remember to acknowledge -before you go to sleep each night- all that is *right* with your life!

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