

STRATEGIC SURVIVAL

Change can feel like the world is coming to an end. Sometimes many familiar landmarks really are disappearing. Here are some tactical hints for getting through in one piece.

- 1. PLAN.** Planning reduces stress by keeping us in touch with our sense of control. Planning gives us a location in time and space, and a direction to head in. Planning says, “there is a future”, and “there is something we can do”.
- 2. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL.** Keep asking yourself, “Is this something I can really control, or something that is beyond my ability to control?” Work as much as you can at accepting what you can’t control. Give your energy to what you can.
- 3. FINANCES.** Take some time to plan for getting through the change financially. Look at what you really need and what you can live without. Ask what would lower your risk financially.
- 4. PRIORITIES.** As long as everything is changing anyway, use this as a chance to re-examine your values and life priorities: career, family, financial security, job satisfaction, spiritual, etc. Take another look at what really matters to you and to your family.
- 5. ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE.** Consciously practice seeing change as a time of opportunity, so it can work for you rather than against you. Even if it’s hard, put some effort into keeping your mind open to what is possible and to positive outcomes.
- 6. TALK.** Find a good listener and let it flow. More than a century of solid research evidence tells us that talking helps us move through stressful and traumatic events smoother and healthier.

7. **AVOID NEGATIVE PEOPLE.** When you are feeling stressed and vulnerable, other people's attitudes are infectious.
8. **REFUSE TO REMAIN A VICTIM.** Even if you had little or no choice about what happened, you can still choose how you will respond to it.
9. **USE YOUR NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS FUEL.** It's your decision whether to turn them into heat, or into light. You can pour them over yourself and light a match, or put them in your engine and go somewhere. **Without fear, there is no courage.**
10. **KEEP ADVISERS YOU TRUST CLOSE.** Even if they cannot walk your path for you, they can guide your way and ease the burden.
11. **SHORT-CIRCUIT GOSSIP.** When you are scared about the future, any information can look better than not knowing. Take rumors to the Union or to your boss...not the next waiting ear!
12. **TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF.** When the road is rough, maintenance is even more important. A good diet, enough sleep, regular exercise, relaxation techniques, small kindnesses, contact with people, places, and things that give you peace and pleasure: take time for the things that will nourish your body and your spirit.
13. **NURTURE YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM.** You don't have to be alone. Now, more than ever, be good to those who are good to you.
14. **ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.** This small habit can make a big difference in your state of mind. Set aside a few minutes each day to identify at least one concrete, specific positive thing for which you can be truly grateful. Consider writing them down somewhere so you will have ammunition on dark days against despair.