



SELF  
PATHFINDER

Overcoming  
Challenges  
&  
Coping With  
Change



## Table of Contents

About the Author .....	3
Are You Ready to Embrace Challenges and Change?.....	4
You WILL Face Challenges – How You Deal With Them Matters .....	5
Why Change Can Be Scary.....	7
What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger.....	9
Journaling to Help You Cope with Big Life Changes .....	11
Stop Overwhelm By Setting Smaller, Attainable Goals .....	13
Focus On The Positive – Finding The Good In Change .....	15
Break It Down – From Challenge To Baby Steps .....	17
Big Changes Are New Beginnings – Get Excited .....	19
Change Can Be Stressful – Find Time To Relax .....	21
Finding Your Why and Using It as Motivation to Overcome Anything.....	23
Don't Forget To Take Care Of Yourself During Difficult And Stressful Times .....	25
It Will Get Easier – Getting Used To Change.....	27
The Importance Of Taking Time To Grieve.....	29
Embracing Challenges And Creating New Routines .....	31
Sleep On It – How A Good Night Sleep Puts Everything Into Perspective .....	33
You're Stronger Than You Think – A Look Back At What You've Overcome .....	35
The Benefit Of Having A Therapist Or Coach Can Help You .....	37
Overcome Challenges & Cope With Change.....	37
Lean On Your Support Network .....	39
Simple Ways To De-Stress & Take Your Mind Off Things .....	41
Support Groups Can Be Helpful When You're Feeling Alone .....	43
Learn To Accept Help .....	45
Don't Let Your Confidence Suffer – Here Are Some Confidence Boosting Tips.....	47
In A Funk? Take A Shower And Get Dressed.....	49
Look At How Far You've Come Already.....	51
Digging Deep – Getting To The Core Of Your Anxiety About Change.....	53
Finding Inspiration to Change and Overcome Challenges .....	55
Don't Let Temporary Setbacks Get You Down .....	57
Celebrate Your Victories and Successes.....	59
Reflect On How Far You've Come And Where To Go From Here .....	61

## About the Author

Jackie Massey is a small business owner, wife, mother, and foster parent to children and adults with special medical needs.

Her life path has taken her through many twists and turns and ups and downs. These challenges had forced her to completely change the direction of her life, multiple times, taking a leave of absence from her full-time career, starting a home business while finding a new path, and learning how to cope and live with her new circumstances.

She holds certifications in Applied Counselling with an additional specialization in Addictions, Business Management and Entrepreneurship, as well as Information Management and Technology.



Jackie's mission is to help women who are feeling lost and unfulfilled create the life they want to live by providing encouragement, support and resources to find their true self and live their lives authentically.

To read more of Jackie's blogs go to: <https://www.selfpathfinder.com/blog>



## Are You Ready to Embrace Challenges and Change?

Most of us have dealt with hard times, and it's nearly impossible to avoid change in our lives. I'd love to share with you what I've learned about facing adversity and managing transitions, along with some concrete strategies that can help you to navigate the difficulties we're all bound to encounter from time to time.

When it comes to challenges and changes, much of how difficult the journey is has to do with attitude. Of course, simply having a positive attitude isn't going to make life's hardships melt away. I don't mean to take away from the seriousness of such things. However, sometimes when we adjust our thinking and take proactive measures to look at things in a purposeful way, we can move through the rough waters more rapidly than if we allow ourselves to get stuck or swept up in the flow of our problems.

In this ebook, I'll show you ways you can gain back a bit of control when life seems to be throwing you curveballs. You'll discover what makes change so scary and how to deal with life's biggest challenges through techniques such as embracing new things, breaking obstacles down into baby steps, learning relaxation strategies, goal setting and more.

I'll show you why it's important to incorporate self-care into your everyday routine, especially during the turbulent times. We'll look at how developing positive habits such as a sleep routine can impact your ability to cope. Sometimes, it's important to recognize when getting some help from a friend or a professional is necessary. No one expects you to be perfect, and there's no shame in accepting assistance when needed. I'll guide you through the steps to take to help you find the support you may need.

Finally, we'll examine the physical and psychological aspects that can be affected during stressful periods. I'll show you how the simple act of getting dressed each day can do wonders for your outlook and energy levels. We'll also spend some time discovering other ways to help boost your self-esteem when the going gets tough. You'll learn how to brush yourself off and move on after a defeat, as well as the benefits of celebrating each victory.

I'm so excited to offer you all the information I've gained through hard-learned lessons. Change doesn't have to be overwhelming, and challenges can be overcome. By the end of our time together, it is my sincere hope that you'll feel far more confident when faced with hard times.



## You WILL Face Challenges – How You Deal With Them Matters

Challenging times are a part of life. Big or small, you will encounter some difficulties and unexpected negative situations as you go through your day to day. Sometimes it's a blip on the radar. Others times may find you are facing one obstacle after another. Your attitude can affect the outcome of these issues. Let's look at some strategic ways to deal with challenges that I think will help you tremendously. You don't have to sit idly by as life throws your curveballs. These tips can help you to actually catch a few.



### Know the Hard Times Will End

It can be hard to look at the big picture when you're in the middle of a crisis. However, almost every hardship is temporary. This difficult time will end, and you'll move past it. Keeping this point in mind can ease your mind and help you to think more clearly as you work to overcome your current obstacle. You'll be far better able to think critically and productively if you're able to be optimistic about the future.

### Try to Assess Things Rationally

Emotions can run on high during a challenge, and these feelings are usually of the negative kind. You may experience emotions like fear, anger, sadness and resentment as you try to rebuild your life or manage a crisis. While these feelings are perfectly normal, they're also counterproductive to finding solutions. It's easy to get stuck in negative emotions. When this happens, you'll generally find yourself reacting blindly rather than making proactive decisions. Make an effort to remove the emotions from your decision-making, and you'll soon see your progress shift in a more positive direction.



### **Remove Yourself from the Equation**

In addition to trying to suppress negative emotions during tough times, you may wish to remove yourself from the equation as well. What I mean by this is to try not to take it all personally and don't ask why. Bad things happen to good people. Chances are nothing you've done has contributed to this situation. When we ask, "Why me?" Or get caught in a never ending loop of trying to figure out what we've done wrong, moving forward becomes impossible.

### **Look for the Silver Lining**

I don't mean to belittle or detract from the seriousness of anyone's problems. Please know that's not my intent when I say that it can be helpful to search for the value hardships may bring. Perhaps you'll find none, but many times you just might. Challenges often bring opportunity for change with them. Change can be scary but it can also be transformative and exciting. Embrace any potential for positive transformation you might find during the tough times, and you'll feel more motivated to push past them.

These are a few strategies I've found helpful when dealing with life's challenges. Give them a try, and you may find yourself more in control of your situation than you realized you could be.



## Why Change Can Be Scary

Change is one thing that's certain when it comes to this game we call life. Things never stay the same, even for those who try so hard to make it the case. Whether it's a positive change like a new relationship or a difficult one such as job loss, transitions can be frightening. Pushing past the fear is something you can do, though, once you understand the reasons for it, how it can actually benefit you and ways to overcome it. Change doesn't have to be scary.

### Reasons for the Fear

First of all, the biggest universal reason to be afraid of change is fear of the unknown. We feel safer in what we already understand and are familiar with. The unknown causes anxiety for lots of reasons, one of which is that this anxiousness is a protective measure. Our



brains tell us that we can remain safe if we avoid what we can't see, understand, know or process.

Another cause of this specific kind of fear is the false belief that there is only one correct way, when in fact many options lie ahead of you. It won't be disastrous if you make the "wrong choice" because there are actually a number of ways you could go that could be completely right for you. Don't get hung up on perfectionism or absolutes. Self-doubt is another common reason to avoid change. You may think you're not enough to navigate whatever life is currently throwing at you. That's usually not the case. In fact, you've probably made lots of adjustments in your life before now.

### Benefits of Change

There are actually more benefits to change than detriments. For one, the personal growth potential that times of transition offer can be limitless. You'll learn so much about yourself and your capabilities during this time, along with gaining new skills. Change also gives you the chance to examine your life and your core values. It can be enlightening to make self-discoveries that lead to becoming a more authentic person. Change also leads to progress. You can move forward and do better without things getting shaken up a little. You'll gain opportunities through transformation that you never would have had if you'd stayed the same. Finally, you'll develop new personality traits like strength, resiliency and flexibility when you embrace variation.



## Overcoming the Anxiety

Now let's look at ways to overcome the anxiety that comes with fear of change. First, you want to try to reframe the negative stories you're telling yourself. Focus on the positive things that could happen, instead of the bad.

Also, take time to process your feelings about the change you're facing and try to determine the causes. This type of honest assessment provides insights that make it easier to get a handle on your anxiety because you can name its source.

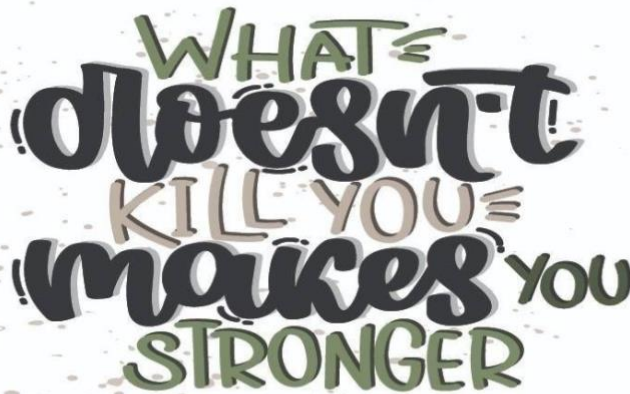
Another great strategy that works is to look back on accomplishments you've made during times of transition or instances in which you've gotten through tough adjustments. Knowing you've done it before can give you the confidence and motivation to do it again.

These suggestions are definitely not a comprehensive list, but they can get you started on the road to overcoming the fear of change. Once you begin to do that, you'll find your world will open up immensely.



## What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger

There are actually a number of benefits that can come from periods of transition. The same can be said for challenging times. Some of the greatest lessons can be learned from the obstacles life throws at you, and you will usually find that you grow as a person when the going gets tough. They say, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Let's examine some of the ways in which this can be true.



WHAT  
doesn't  
KILL YOU  
makes you  
STRONGER

### Self-Reliance

During times of struggle, you learn to rely on yourself and that; ultimately, you're the one who has to change your current circumstances. Sometimes we need help, and that's to be expected. Even on these occasions, it's usually you who needs to determine whom to ask for assistance and to actually reach out to make contact. Challenge can be a catalyst toward learning to take the initiative to do what must be done in order to get back on your feet.

### Gratitude

Challenges often take away something that we once relied on or cherished. A job loss, for example, can lower your income, crush your spirit and strip away your identity. Dealing with such losses can be devastating. It can also teach you what's most important in life. You'll see who your true friends are and come to appreciate the loved ones in your life. Material things you once enjoyed may no longer hold the value they once did, as you begin to focus on rebuilding or restructuring what you've lost.



## **Self-Improvement**

Let's face it, sometimes bad things happen to us through our own doing. Even good people are human. We have flaws and make mistakes. Perhaps your job loss occurred because you missed deadlines or failed to keep up with key skills. Now you understand the importance of these things and will likely work to avoid such an error in the future. It can be an incredibly humbling experience to have to face our own faults, but it's one that usually leads us to be better in some way.

## **Attitude**

It's natural to experience anger, pessimism, resentment or any other host of negative emotions when things go wrong. You're not expected to be happy about tragedy, setbacks or problems. However, getting stuck in despair will never move you toward a solution.

If you want to improve your situation, it's absolutely imperative that you develop a positive attitude. It doesn't matter if that attitude is one of determination, optimism or sheer stubbornness. As long as it's used in a way to move you forward, you can count it as an asset.

Challenges are unavoidable in life. How you deal with them is what's important. By taking on the tough times, you'll gain a lot more than you ever expected and truly will become stronger.



## Journaling to Help You Cope with Big Life Changes

Change in your life isn't always bad, but even the good kinds can cause some upheaval and stress. We've talked about some ways to handle the fallout from our stressors and why it's important to take action to overcome difficult times.

Allowing life to toss us around and remaining at its mercy simply keeps us stagnant, making it harder to remove ourselves from an undesirable situation. It's my goal with this ebook to share with you as many tangible strategies as I can so that you don't feel powerless over the troubles you face.

Journaling is one method that's been incredibly useful for me in a lot of ways, especially during times of strife. Take a look at some of the ways that something as simple as journaling can help you to cope with those big life changes that seem unsurmountable.



## **Journaling to Help You Cope with Big Life Changes**

### What Is Journaling?

A journal is different than a diary. In a diary, you write about the events of your day. It's merely a chronological record of what you experience throughout life. A journal is different. This tool is used to record your feelings on those significant life events. The act of writing down your thoughts and emotions can be highly therapeutic. It's best to journal on a regular basis if you want to get the most benefit from the activity, but even taking the time to jot down your reactions to a particularly stressful one-time event can do you some good.



## Benefits of Journaling

Writing in your journal, whether it be in digital or paper form, can help you get through times of change in a myriad of ways. By getting things out of your mind, you're able to clarify them and to make better sense of your thoughts and feelings. You're taking the time to process events and to break them down into segments, such as cause and effect.

Doing so lets you visualize what happened and gives you a better sense of how to improve your situation. It also clears your mind and frees up the cognitive space needed for implementing practical solutions.

When you're stuck in your own head and dwelling on the negative, it's nearly impossible to make actual progress toward setting things right. In addition, you can begin to prioritize the parts of your life that are most important to you through this form of processing.

Finally, journaling gives you a record of how far you've actually come because you can see what's worked for you thus far and what hasn't. Seeing your progress is a strong motivator to keep going.

## Types of Journaling

There are all kinds of journaling methods you could try. I'd like to highlight some that I believe to be particularly useful when it comes to coping with change.

First, a simple gratitude journal can be a good place to start if you find you need to improve your attitude. Writing down what you're thankful for and fortunate to have is a quick way to begin to feel more empowered.

Free writing is good for an emotional release. Just begin writing on a particular thought you've had going through your mind. As you begin to expand upon it, patterns will emerge that you may never have expected. This is a fantastic strategy for processing emotions and generating solutions.

Even keeping a planning journal or agenda can be useful if you need a little motivation to get things done. Taking even the smallest proactive step can help to overcome the inertia that can set in with the depression and anxiety that often comes with times of uncertainty.

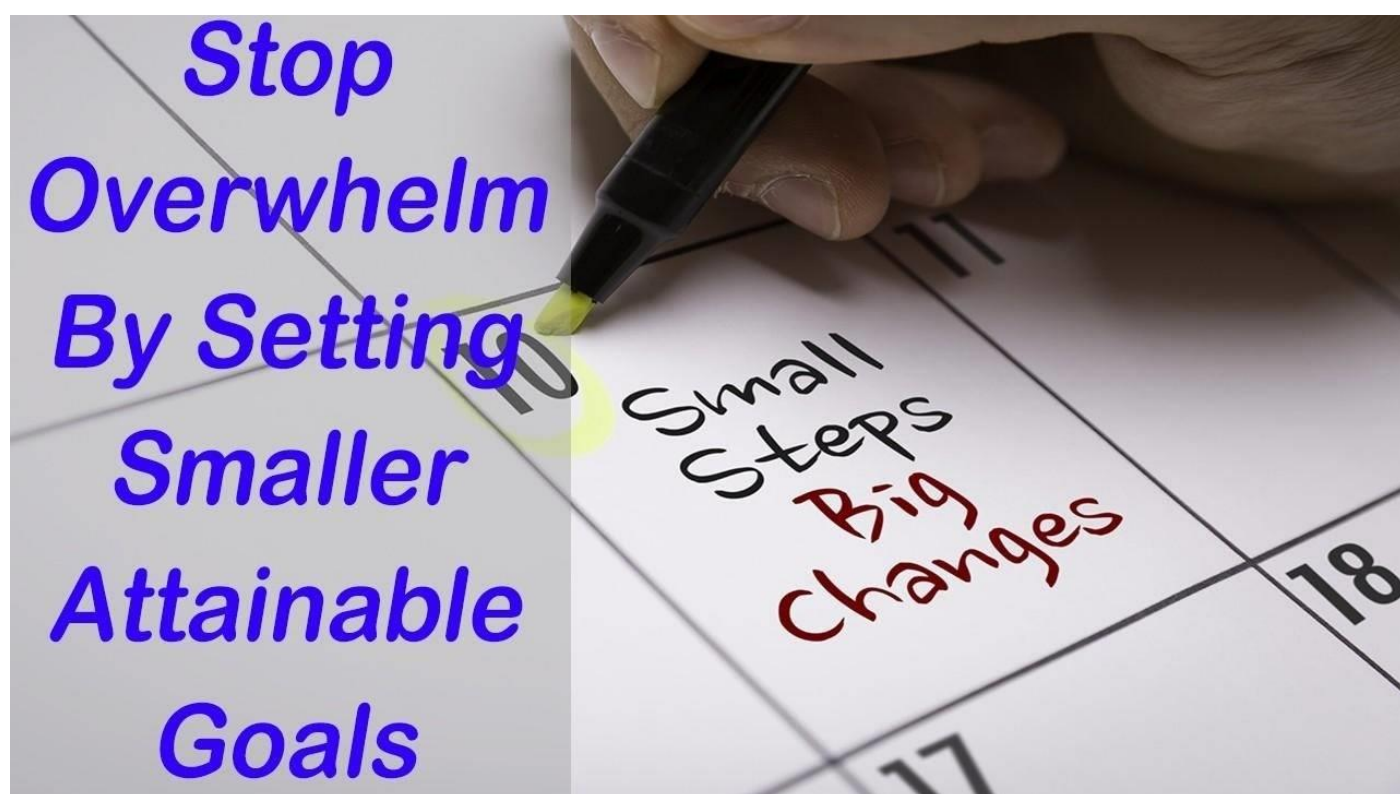
This is just a quick synopsis of how journaling can help you to cope with unexpected changes in your world. Use these suggestions and incorporate your own when you're feeling stuck in your reactions to difficult situations. You'll find yourself moving forward and coming up with solutions in no time.



## Stop Overwhelm By Setting Smaller, Attainable Goals

Sometimes the biggest obstacle we face in moving forward after a crisis or major change has occurred in our life is our own sense of overwhelm. It's scary to wonder where to go from here or how to dig ourselves out of a tough situation. It often seems easier to do nothing or to wallow in self-pity.

I'm not judging you if you've found yourself in this position. I believe we probably all have been there at one time or another. Sometimes it just all seems like too much. That's when you have to implement a plan of action. Even taking one tiny step toward change is a start.



### Break It Down

I shared with you how journaling can help get your worries out of your head so that you can start to face them head-on. Brainstorming works much the same way.

Take some time to write down all of the ideas you have for ways you can move ahead in your current situation. No matter how small or how far-fetched, just get them out.

Then begin to break it all down into tangible, manageable and realistic steps you can actually take to overcome your problem. This act alone may help you to feel less stress and more hopeful, as you can now see the possibilities that may have been blurred before.



### **Set Milestones**

Next, you'll want to set some milestones or checkpoints to help to keep yourself on track. Again, consider taking baby steps to help you overcome the overwhelm by setting your check-ins fairly regularly.

Making your first goal post something readily attainable will help to increase your confidence, as well as your motivation to make it to the next milestone.

Creating these assessment points also forces you to develop some sort of plan for your goal, rather than just hoping things will get better.

### **Review Regularly**

Take time to regularly review your original goal in order to be sure it's still working for you or that you're even still on the right path. Sometimes we find ourselves set on achieving something that's no longer in our best interests simply because we're too stubborn or scared to assess our circumstances.

Reflect honestly on where you're going looking back on the milestones you've passed so far. If it feels right in your gut, keep on keeping on. Should something seem off or if you're not making the progress you'd hoped, go back to the drawing board. Take notes on your situation, jotting down your ultimate desire and brainstorming steps to help you attain it. Then begin anew with your revised game plan.

Doing something is almost always better than doing nothing. This is true when facing times of change, for sure. Follow these suggestions for gaining control over the obstacles in your life and moving ahead one baby step at a time. You'll soon see that what you want can be achieved and your troubles can be overcome.



## Focus On The Positive – Finding The Good In Change

Okay, now it's time to shift gears a little. Often times, when we think about our lives changing, we automatically consider the negatives that come with that. However, even in times of turbulence or stress, some good things can also come from having your world shaken up.

Taking time to focus on the positive and finding the good in change is yet another strategy that can help you to better deal with uncertainty. Let me show you some ways that can happen.



### Discover Your Strengths

With change comes adaptability. We need to adapt in order to roll with the punches. You'll soon discover some of your greatest strengths as you figure out how to handle the twist life has thrown your way.

Perhaps you're more creative than you realized, coming up with some neat ideas to raise quick cash. Maybe you're a good networker and can rally people to your side during those times when you just can't do it all alone. Change can really bring out the best in us.

### Become More Resilient

Another quality you may not have realized you possessed is resiliency. A resilient person gets back up when life knocks them down. Often, we have no choice but to keep going and not give up. Adversity can truly show you your potential to bounce back.



### **Learn Something New**

While it's great to lean on your friends in times of trouble, there are also those cases in which changes requires you to learn something completely new to you. This type of personal development is invaluable. Gaining new skills or discovering unknown personality traits is almost always a blessing. Instead of looking at a particular situation as a problem, it can help to view it as a learning opportunity.

### **Gain Self-Confidence**

All of the above byproducts of change can lead to a tremendous boost in self-confidence for you. When you handle a big change like a boss, you can't help but feel a sense of pride and accomplishment. Discovering just how strong, resilient, smart, innovative and creative you can be brings with it a shot of feel-good chemicals like none other.

### **Reinvent Your Life**

Finally, change sometimes requires us to completely reinvent our lives. Out with the old, in with the new. There are just some life events that are so big that they will never leave you the same. And that can be okay. In fact, it can be absolutely amazing in some cases.

When something happens that causes you to do a complete life turnaround without your consent, it can leave you feeling powerless. Turn that feeling around by considering the ways you can adapt to this bombshell and make it work to your advantage. Maybe a job loss can be the catalyst you needed to learn about that industry you've been obsessed with for years. Perhaps a breakup will force you to reevaluate the types of relationships you've chosen until now. Unexpected change is often the kick in the pants we actually needed to live a more authentic life.

By altering the way you look at your circumstances, you can move forward in a more positive and healthier way.



## Break It Down – From Challenge To Baby Steps

We've talked about breaking things down into attainable goals to help us handle the overwhelm that comes with change. Now I'd like to expand upon that and look at some ways we can use that concept to make challenges seem like a piece of cake.

When you're faced with a big obstacle, you can tackle it much easier when you take on small actions, rather than thinking you have to do it all and make it happen right now. Let me demonstrate just how to break it down, from challenge to baby steps.



### Take Stock

First, you need to take stock of your situation. Look at the problem. Write down exactly what you need most, what the end goal is. For example, if you're going to be evicted if you can't come up with three months' rent, write down the amount of money you need and when you need it. Now that you know exactly what you're up against, it's time to take that major problem and turn it into something manageable.

### Brainstorm

The next step is to brainstorm. You've still got your pen and paper in front of you, so start jotting down any ideas you can think of that can make your problem go away or help you obtain the things you need to do so. In our scenario, you need money for rent. Write down what you can sell, who you can borrow from, legal help you can acquire, what odd jobs or services you can provide for extra cash and other such ideas.

### Assess

After that, assess the solutions you've gathered. Write them down in order of which seem the most realistic and easily attainable. Throw out ones that are simply too outrageous. Stick the tricky ones at the bottom of your list.



## Plan

Now it's time to make a plan. Start with the first solution, and write out small steps you can take to make that idea a reality. The smaller the better. These tiny actions are easier to approach than your overwhelmingly larger goal.

As you complete each one, you'll start to feel more confident and see your goal coming closer to reality. In our quest for rent money, you may want to write down just what steps you'll need to take in order to begin selling off your unneeded possessions. Start by making a list of what's most valuable, and then gather the items. Next decide where to place your ads, such as in Facebook sales groups or Craigslist. Maybe you have a pawn shop near you that will give you quick cash. With each baby step you add to your plan, you'll see that coming up with the money you need just might be doable, after all.

## Act

Finally, you'll add each of these small steps to your date book or calendar. Then take action, marking each off as it's completed. Before long, you'll start to move closer toward getting the job done and seeing the positive results.

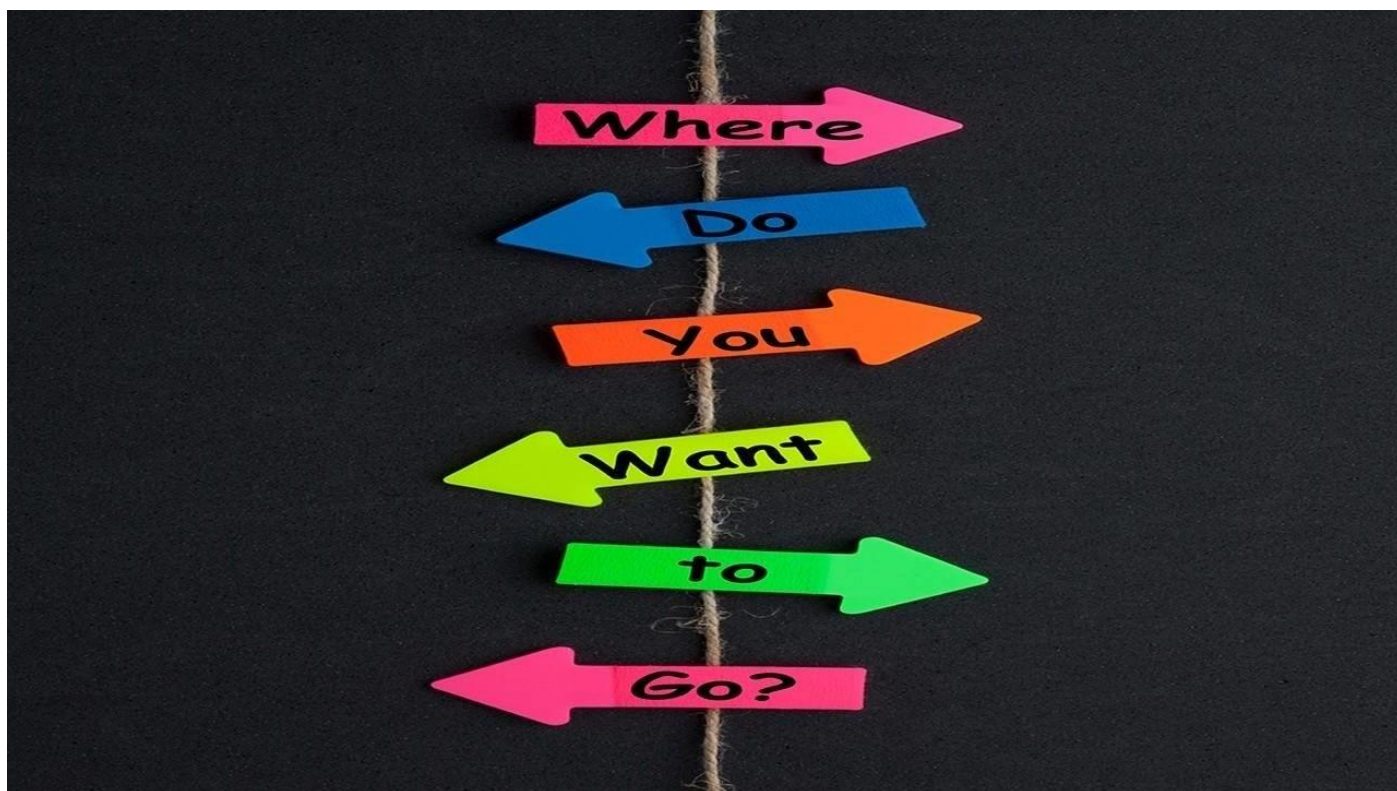
There's no need to get stuck in overwhelm when faced with challenges. Breaking it down into baby steps will help you reach the goals you need to overcome nearly any obstacle.



## Big Changes Are New Beginnings – Get Excited

We've already established what you've probably known your whole life. It's true that change is a fact of life. We can't escape it. Sometimes we're given a choice in whether to make a shift in our lives. Sometimes we're blindsided and forced to do things differently. Either way, the change usually comes with some pretty intense emotions.

Unfortunately, these feelings are frequently negative ones. Fear, anxiety, anger, resentment and loss are commonly associated with life transitions. I'd like to teach you some ways to take those gloomy emotions and channel them into excitement instead.



### Reframe It

One of the best ways to go from bad feelings to more useful ones is to reframe your thoughts surrounding the emotions. The way you think has a heavy influence on the way you feel.

Therefore, if you take some time to find a way to put a more positive spin on a situation, you will likely start to feel better about it. For instance, if you're nervous about going to a job interview, try thinking about the great things that could come from new position, rather than what could go wrong. This strategy is so simple that it may even seem silly or not worth trying. However, it's incredibly effective.



### **Visualize Success**

Visualization is another proven strategy for calming nerves and bringing peace to your thoughts. Take some quiet time to sit with your eyes closed. Then imagine the desired outcome of your current dilemma. Picture the activities you will be doing, the sights and smells around you and the people involved. The more detailed, the more effective your visualization session will be. In addition, this practice is one that should be done regularly for the most impact. Seeing what you want is an effective way to trick your brain into believing it's already occurred.

### **Meditate or Breathe**

If you need a quick tranquil effect in times of high anxiety, meditation or focused breathing can help. You don't have to be an expert on meditating for it to be effective; however, you might want to do a little research if this method appeals to you. The simple act of sitting in silence and focusing on your breath is enough to calm emotions that are running high. A cumulative effect occurs when you make meditation a part of your daily routine.

### **Consider the Alternative**

Finally, consider what will happen if you don't change. Life is boring and stagnant when we avoid growth. Sure, transitions can be scary. Take a look back at the times you've switched things up in your life for the better, and you'll realize that change can also bring a great many wonderful things. If you don't move forward, take risks or overcome obstacles, you'll never know your true potential or reach your fondest dreams.

Essentially, fear and excitement are very closely related emotions. A few tweaks can take you from the negative to a more positive rather quickly. It's really all about your attitude and mindset. I invite you to give these strategies a try to see which ones work best for you.



## Change Can Be Stressful – Find Time To Relax

You know that change can cause stress, even when something good has caused the disruption. I've told you about the benefits of change and how it can make your life better. We've also touched upon ways to use times of transition to your advantage and to better manage upheaval.

Now I'd like to move onto something a little more enjoyable, and that's relaxation. During times of intense emotional overload, your body and mind need self-care more than ever. It's crucial that you find time to relax, and I'm going to help you to do just that.



### Impact of Stress

Stress can affect both your body and your mind. A rush of hormones, including cortisol and norepinephrine, is triggered when you're stressed or scared. This physiological response has long been in place throughout human history. While the causes may have changed, the results remain the same. Blood pressure rises, heart rate increases and digestion stops. This is known as the fight or flight response. I'm sure you've heard of it. While these bodily reactions can be useful during short periods of stress in order to move you forward and get you out of harm's way, they are incredibly detrimental to your physical and mental health when they remain over long periods, such as in times of prolonged stress.



## Signs of Stress

Visibly, you have automatic responses such as clenched jaw, balled fists or headaches. You may experience difficulties with sleep, sore muscles, depression, anxiety and trouble focusing. There are a whole host of symptoms that occur when your body's physiological response to stress kicks into high gear. Your immune system is lowered by constant pressure, and you may find yourself sick more often than you used to be. You may even notice such physical symptoms as hair loss, urinary tract infections and heartburn.

## Cope with Stress

The way you cope with chronic stress is what matters. Shortening your exposure to the worry is your ultimate goal. The strategies we've previously covered will help you in that area.

What I want to offer you now is a more immediate way of helping to ease the symptoms related to your tension. It really is all about self-care. So, first and foremost, take the suggestions that are most appealing to you and start with them first. On that note, give these strategies a try when you're feeling nervous:

- A warm bath
- Meditation
- Focused breathing
- Soothing music
- Time with friends
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Yoga
- Warm beverage
- Read
- Massage
- Journal
- TV show or movie break
- Nature hike
- Workout
- Dance
- Prepare healthy meals
- Take a short trip

Add any activities to this list that are particularly appealing to your soul. Anything that helps you to feel at peace and is enjoyable counts.

What's most important is that you proactively set aside time to engage in your relaxation activity of choice. Even a short break for your favorite television show can rejuvenate you and help to slow down the negative effects of stress. Give some of your favorites a try and see just how much easier it is to deal with difficulties in times of upheaval.



## Finding Your Why and Using It as Motivation to Overcome Anything

Have you ever heard of the concept of "why" when it comes to motivation and success? If you haven't, I'm really excited to share it with you. I truly believe this small, common word has the potential to change your life. If you have heard about this before, but are unsure what it means or how it can work for you, I hope to clarify that.

Your why is your reason for wanting a desired outcome, and it can drive you forward during tough times like nothing else can.



### About Your Why

The idea of your why is one that is common to career and personal development, but it can be used in many circumstances. It's particularly helpful during times of uncertainty, transition or crisis because it helps you to gain focus and clarity with regard to your purpose and your direction.

Your why is the deep, meaningful impetus for your goals. It shouldn't be superficial, and it should always be personal. Let's consider an example. If you should find yourself unemployed, finding a new job can be a time-consuming, disheartening and exhausting task. It's easy to find yourself falling into despair, perhaps even depression. During such a time, your why can be used to push you along even when you feel like you can't keep trying. Your why should go further than, "I need money to live," although this is certainly true. Let's explore ways to find and develop your why.



### How to Find It

Using the above example, you would think that survival and needing a job in order to live, would be sufficient reason to provide motivation to keep trying to find work. Unfortunately, this basic message can get distorted or lost. It's too general and not personal enough. Everyone needs money to meet their basic needs. What is it you, in particular, desire with regard to finding a job?

Ask yourself some more in-depth questions in order to discover a more compelling reason to keep going even in the darkest moments. Take time to brainstorm and jot down some ideas to help guide you to your answer.

One of the simplest ways I've learned to find my ultimate why is to just keep asking myself, "Why?" each time I add a new incentive for my goal. You do need a job in order to make money to live. But why? Because you want to take care of your family, for instance. Okay, why? Because you feel it's your job to be a provider and that you have an obligation. Yes, but why is that? Because you want your loved ones to be proud of you and you want to feel like a productive citizen. Keep going until you feel you've sufficiently reached your unique and underlying catalyst for wanting to find a job.

### Use Your Why to Motivate You

Once you've determined that reason, write it down in a cohesive statement. From our job example, your why might be, "I want to find a new job in order to support my family. It's important to me that my loved ones know they can depend on me to take care of them. I feel like a productive citizen of the world with a meaningful contribution to give to society when I am gainfully employed."

You may wish to create another why statement later that can help you to determine the kind of work you hope to find and why such a position matters to you, along with how it will make you feel to hold that type of job. However, for now, we'll stick to the basics. You can pull out this comprehensive why statement whenever you're feeling low or unmotivated, when you think there's no reason to keep trying. Being reminded of the deeply personal intention behind your goal is often just the kick in the pants you need to try again.

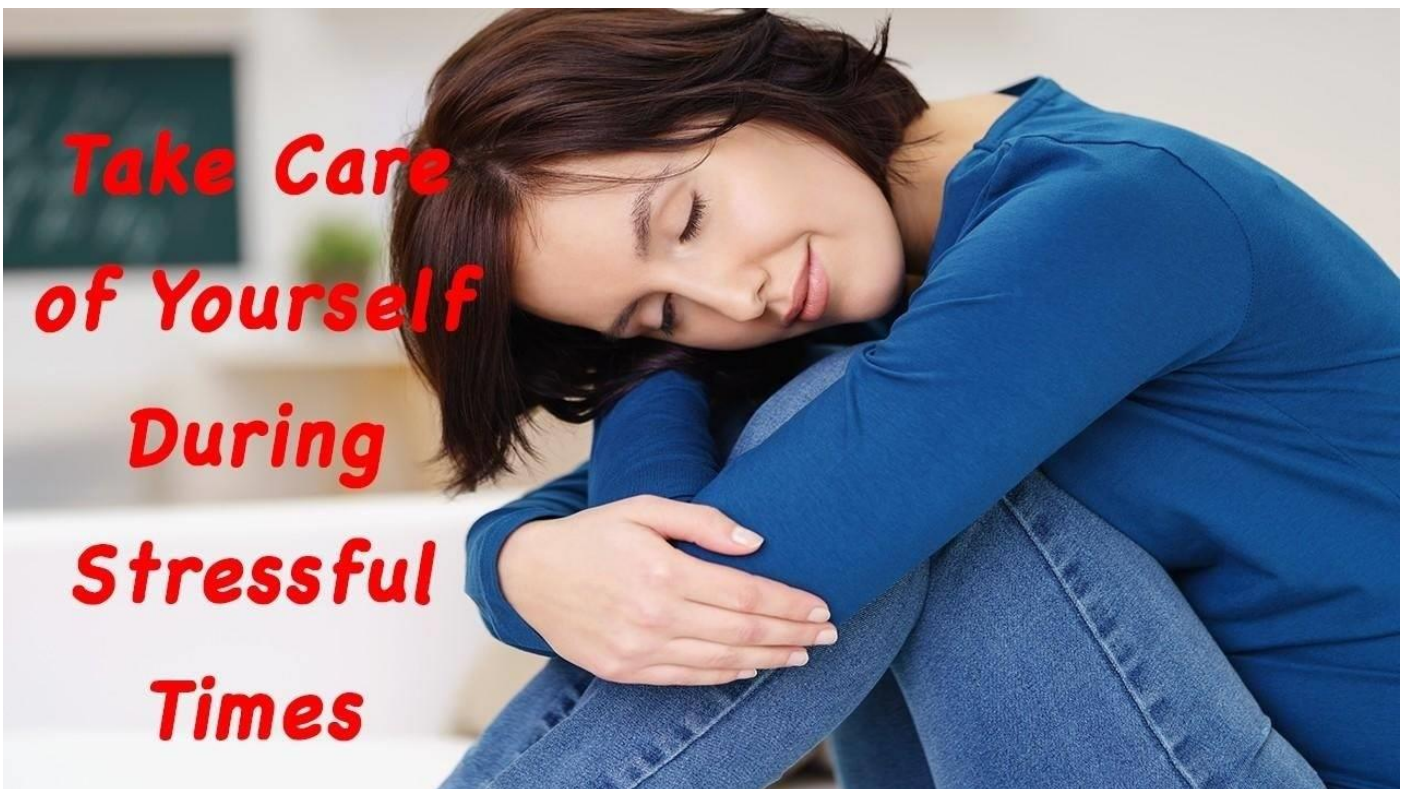
This concept may seem rather simple, but I can tell you from personal experience that it's one of the most powerful motivators I've encountered in my pursuits. Try taking some time to create your own why statement and practice using it when things seem impossible. You may just find this simple idea gets you through some pretty rough stuff, too.



## Don't Forget To Take Care Of Yourself During Difficult And Stressful Times

When life is stressful and you've got a lot on your plate, you probably focus most of your energy on finding ways to solve the problem. That makes sense. Challenging periods bring about intense emotions.

However, breaking out of your panic to take time for self-care can have a tremendously positive impact on your energy level and your outlook. Follow along with me as I talk about why it's natural for self-care to fall by the wayside when you're stressed and why you shouldn't forget to take care of yourself during challenging times.



### Why Self-Care Levels Decrease

It may not even occur to you to remember to eat right or spend time on a hobby you love when you're facing an intense period of difficulties. That's because your mind automatically goes into fight or flight mode, and your brain is focused only on how to fix the trouble you're having. You're stuck living in survival mode, and doing something nice for yourself may seem like too much of a luxury to spare at this time. If you're not used to pampering yourself or allowing yourself some downtime, it certainly won't occur to you to do so when the going gets tough, when you actually need it most. Self-care has to become ingrained in your habits or added to your calendar for it to become a habit.



## **Benefits of Self-Care**

Despite the fact that putting the focus on yourself for a change feels foreign and frivolous, I assure you it's something that is worthwhile and can even help to make things better. Self-care goes beyond just eating well and getting adequate rest, though those are two essentials of taking good care of yourself.

There are several aspects of your core being that need to be nourished in order to be a healthy and whole person. These include your social activities, leisure time, emotional connections, spiritual side, physical needs and mental stimulation. It's true. We, as humans, have a lot of needs to be met. When these aspects of our nourishment are lacking, we feel run down, depressed, tired, unsteady and anxious. Making the time to address these needs will rejuvenate your body, mind and spirit so you can focus more clearly on finding solutions to the problems you face. When you're depleted, you don't have the energy and mind power that's needed.

## **Ways to Take Care of Yourself**

The list of self-care actions is practically endless. Anything that makes you feel better and that you enjoy counts, really. Try to focus on what truly feeds your soul. I know your time and energy are limited. It'll be easier and more effective to do things you love the best. Try to incorporate some of the basics, if you're lacking in these areas, though. Getting enough sleep, eating nutritious food and exercising even a little can go a long way toward improving every other aspect of your life.

Beyond that, the sky's the limit. Choose one hobby you enjoy that's easily accessible to you. Fun and leisure is something we often don't get enough of to begin with. If spending time with friends or family is something that energizes you, incorporate other people in your choices so that you can gain social exposure. Isolation can be draining.

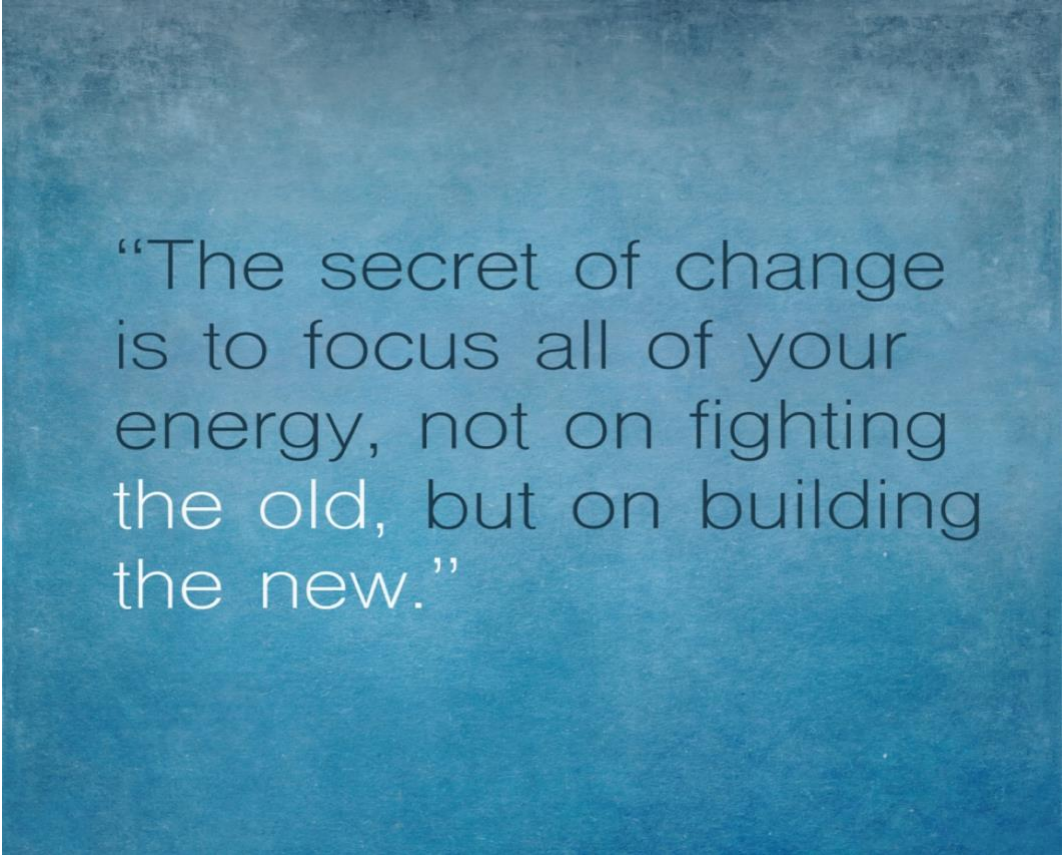
On the other hand, if you truly feel you need alone time, honor that and stick to solitary activities. Consider the categories above and brainstorm some ways you can do things for yourself to fill the holes in those spaces. Try to be sure each part of yourself receives attention.

Taking care of you truly is important. Remember that if you don't put your own oxygen mask on first, you're not much good to anyone else. This time will pass. Ensuring your own needs are met will help to make it pass more seamlessly.



## **It Will Get Easier – Getting Used To Change**

Major life changes, even the good ones, can be scary. The unknown always is. We get into a routine and fall into our comfort zones. Many of us like to remain there; however, transition is an inevitable part of life no matter what steps you take to keep it to a minimum. Therefore, it makes sense to address this inevitability and share with you what I've learned about facing new things.



“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”

### **Change Allows for Growth**

Despite the exhaustion it can cause, change almost always causes us to grow in some way. You gain new coping mechanisms, learn about personal characteristics you never knew you had and discover life lessons that will serve you well in the future. I know the circumstances around this growth can sometimes be difficult, and I don't mean to make light of trying circumstances. Just know that it is possible to learn something and to change for the better during the hard times.

### **It Will Get Better**

Hard times always seem their worst in the moment, while you're living them. It can seem impossible to consider a future when the problem will be gone. What might help is to think about a time when you overcame difficulties and faced change head on.



Recall the feelings you had at the time, how you managed them during the rough moments and how you felt once the change began to fade into routine. That's the thing. A life transition or disruption is only new for a time, and then it becomes a part of your everyday reality. You adapt and accommodate to fit this new thing into your life. You learn different activities, and the new eventually becomes old hat. Learning the ropes at a new job is something that comes to mind. We've all dealt with the unfamiliar policies, activities and routines of a new gig. Eventually, we learn them, and they are familiar. It gets better.

### **How to Cope**

In the meantime, there are ways to cope. The way you look at and think about your situation has a huge impact on how you feel about it. Try to think of this time of transition as something exciting or a chance to grow.

Sometimes looking at it as a challenge to overcome can make it seem more like a game or puzzle. Also, be gentle with yourself. You don't have to learn everything all at once.

Adapting to change takes time. Allow yourself to feel your emotions, and don't berate yourself for them. It's okay to feel frustrated, scared, sad, lonely or even angry.

Finally, be sure to reach out for help if you need it. You don't have to be a super hero. Allow friends or loved ones to step in and take on some of your burden. Even having a listening ear at your disposal can alleviate lots of stress. If professional help is in order, do try to attain that. You'll feel so much better when you do.

Change is definitely scary, but it's not stronger than you. Getting through transitional times can actually transform you, and things almost always do get better. I hope these tips will help you when you're facing a new life phase.



## The Importance Of Taking Time To Grieve

Grief is a complex feeling. Though many people associate it with death and dying or other tragedy, you can grieve due to various types of losses throughout your life.

The emotion and its effects can strike out of nowhere and be completely unexpected. Even during events that seem to be positive, it's possible to feel a loss of something. These emotions are brought on by the various changes you encounter as you go through a transition period.

Let's look at the importance of taking time to grieve these losses and how to bounce back from them while moving onto new adventures and life stages.



### Reasons for Grief

There are lots of reasons you could go through grief, beyond those related to losing a loved one or experiencing a tragedy. Even something as seemingly average as a new job can cause you to feel sad for the loss of your former identity, your past co-workers and the comfort of your previous daily routine.

You can grieve for various reasons connected to relationship changes, as well. A breakup might lead you to grieving what you had with that special person and what might have been.

You might even feel loss related to positive changes in a relationship, like moving in together or getting married. It's normal to grieve for the loss of your independent living status and your previous way of life, as well as the freedom of living without as many compromises.



Even moving through life stages like graduating from college and getting your first job can trigger these loss-related issues. You might feel the loss of the security you felt as a student. It's likely you would mourn the separation from your group of long-time friends.

### **Stages of Grief**

These types of grief are actually experienced in very similar ways as when there is a death or tragedy in your life, just to a different extent. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is known for the development of the stages of grief in her renowned book, "On Death and Dying." You're probably familiar with these stages. They are:

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

These stages provide a framework for understanding all sorts of grief, including the ones listed above.

### **Grief Stages Related to Change**

These stages aren't neatly linear. They don't always go in this exact order, and there's usually no clean delineation from one to the next. You might experience a couple of them at the same time. It's also possible to regress and go back to a phase you thought you'd left behind.

However, they do give us a nice guideline for how to process grief related to changes in our lives. The stages themselves are actually defense mechanisms, and they should be moved through successfully in order to come to a place of resolution regarding change. The ultimate goal is to accept your new way of life so that you can begin to focus on living it, rather than ruminating on the past.

If you think you're having trouble moving through these stages while grieving your past life, it may be a good idea to seek the help of a professional therapist to help you. I hope you understand that the emotions you have during times of stress and change are normal. You will get through them.



## Embracing Challenges And Creating New Routines

I've talked to you about the importance of attitude when it comes to getting past hurdles. Your mindset matters. It affects the way you see the world and influences your decisions, along with your behaviors.

Now, I'd like to challenge you to examine your attitude and the ways in which it affects your day to day habits. During stressful times especially, we tend to fall back on old habits that are comfortable, but that don't necessarily serve us well.

Sometimes these periods of turmoil in our lives are just the right moment to shake up our habits and create new ones that will push us forward onto bigger and better things. Let's talk about embracing challenges and creating new routines so that you can learn to better roll with the punches to make real impact on your circumstances.



### Examine Your Routines

In order to begin a journey of embracing new habits and routines, it's first important to examine your old ones. Set aside some time to take stock of the habits in your life. Make a list of which are healthy and seem to be serving you well, along with a list of the things you'd like to change. Remember, this is about mindset. I know it can seem like a chore to consider forming new habits. Try to remind yourself that this tumultuous time is an opportunity to make things better and that forming new habits will get you there.



### **Keep It Manageable**

Next, you'll need to prioritize which routines you'd most like to change. Sure, there may be a lot of things you'd like to do differently in your life. However, trying to take them all on is likely to set yourself up for frustration and failure. For now, choose one or two prime actions. This will allow you to better concentrate on making these changes a habit.

### **Focus on the Rewards**

Remember when we talked about your why? Now's a good time to revisit this concept. Consider why it is you want to instill these new habits. If you're in the process of adjusting to your new job, one of your desired actions may be to be more outgoing by talking to your new colleagues each day. Remind yourself why it is you want to do this and what rewards will come from being more social.

Perhaps, your new habit will be to engage in meaningful conversation with one person each day. What's the payoff for doing so? It might be so that you can form closer relationships or maybe it's so that you can better network, potentially opening doors to promotions and other such opportunities. Remind yourself of the reward when you're feeling too introverted to initiate conversation.

### **Give It Time**

If you're a natural introvert, using our above example, you'll need to be realistic and to realize that moving past your comfort zone will be a process. Actions require repetition in order to become habits. Becoming a social butterfly won't happen overnight. In fact, you may never be the life of the party. However, increasing your social and professional connections is a realistic goal. Give yourself at least a month of repeated practice to see if being more talkative becomes a part of your routine.

Most importantly, don't give up. Be easy on yourself if you don't meet your objective one day. Give it a go the next day and keep trying. Forming new routines is an investment that can serve you well when navigating challenging times.



## Sleep On It – How A Good Night Sleep Puts Everything Into Perspective

Trying times are exhausting. It can seem like every day is a battle, and this stress often begins to take its toll on your body and mind. One of your biggest defenses to this onslaught is actually adequate sleep. You may not realize just how important it is to include proper sleep into your daily routine, especially when you're going through a challenge. Keep reading, and I'll share with you how a good night's sleep puts everything into perspective and helps to keep you in prime condition to handle the battles that come your way.



### **Better Memory**

Sleep can improve your memory, helping you to learn more. In fact, while you're asleep, your brain is busy "practicing" skills you've learned during your waking hours. This process is called consolidation. Essentially, sleep helps to cement what you've already learned into your working memory. This is definitely advantageous during periods like starting a new job or finishing a degree.

### **Improve Creativity**

Along these lines, not only does your brain consolidate memories while you sleep, it also reorganizes them in a way. During restful periods, your brain is working to restructure your memories from the day, which can actually result in improving creativity. Such a benefit is great for helping you to complete creative projects. It's also beneficial in spurring out-of-the-box thinking, which can always come in handy during periods of life transition.



### **Increased Attention**

Sleep deprivation adversely affects a wide array of brain functions. Cognition and concentration are two of the big ones. It's been shown that lack of sleep can cause [similar effects as alcohol intoxication](#). That's pretty significant.

On the other hand, adequate sleep improves cognitive functioning and attention. When you're struggling with a problem or a difficult time, you definitely want to be at the top of your game in order to have your best shot at overcoming the issue.

### **Less Depression**

One of the biggest zappers of productivity and motivation is depression. Falling into such a state during tumultuous times is bound to be more likely for those predisposed to depression. You can try to keep that from happening by getting into a regular sleep routine. Poor sleep has a strong link to depression. Working to form a solid sleep habit may help keep depression at bay.

### **Better Social Function and Emotional Regulation**

When you're exhausted, you're more apt to miss certain social cues such as tone of voice or change in facial expression. These problems can lead to interpersonal misunderstandings or other unnecessary difficulties.

Lack of sleep also puts you at the mercy of your emotions, rather than in control. When you're emotional, you're not likely to make your best decisions. Sleep helps you to feel better prepared to handle your interactions with others and with your own emotions.

These are some of the top benefits of a good night's sleep. You'll feel more alert, steady and excited about facing each day when you've gotten adequate sleep.



## You're Stronger Than You Think – A Look Back At What You've Overcome

Today, I want to talk about my favorite strategy to overcome hurdles. When we're facing tough times, we frequently get down on ourselves. We feed ourselves negative messages and wonder if we'll ever get things right. That's a destructive pattern to be in and one that's incredibly difficult to pull yourself out of.

However, you can actually use your own life as the catalyst to move yourself forward when you're feeling down on yourself. You're stronger than you think. Looking back on what you've overcome and on past accomplishments is a powerful way to push yourself forward and to get back on your feet when you're feeling down. Let me show you what I mean.



### Gain Perspective

We've all had good times and successes in our lives. It's easy to forget that when we're surrounded by struggle. Remind yourself of the things you've done well in your past, and you'll soon start to gain perspective. You'll see that you once were able to do something you're proud of, which will let you know it's possible to do it again. It's good to examine your past accomplishments in order to deconstruct the ways in which you were able to get the job done back then. This exercise shows you that the same thing is possible now.



### **Boost Confidence**

You'll probably start to feel more confident in yourself immediately when you reflect on something you're proud of from your past. Instead of feeling despondent and full of despair, you can use your newfound perspective to remind yourself just how much talent and ability you have. Relish in the ways in which you were able to accomplish this past goal and use those feelings to propel you into believing positive thoughts about your current abilities. You'll feel ready to face the world in no time.

### **Feel Happier**

You can even get a happiness boost when you revisit past wins. Immerse yourself in the emotions you experienced at the time and try to recreate them in present day. This shot of positivity often builds upon itself to improve your mood all day long. Reminding yourself of your competence and skill is a great way to make you feel happy quickly.

### **Get Motivated**

Once you're feeling more confident and happy, with a fresh perspective on life, you'll feel far more motivated to tackle your to-do list. Rather than sink into depression or fall into destructive habits, you can use these positive feelings as a catalyst to get you moving toward your goals. A reminder of how you've overcome tough times in the past is sometimes just what you need to get motivated for the future.

See what I mean about the power of remembering past accomplishments? Grab a pen and paper, and then start writing down some of your proudest moments. Use that information to fuel your future success.



## The Benefit Of Having A Therapist Or Coach Can Help You Overcome Challenges & Cope With Change

We've covered a lot of ground so far when it comes to managing times of transition. You understand just what an emotional impact tough times can have, and you've learned a lot of useful strategies for coping with life's stressors.

Now I'd like to get real about when it's time to bring in reinforcements. Sometimes we need to ask for help from a professional. We simply don't have the emotional or physical resources to deal with a situation ourselves, and it's okay to reach out for assistance. Let's talk about the benefits of having a therapist or coach to help you overcome challenges and cope with change.



### Types of Helpers

There are a lot of professionals who can help you through this period, depending on the problems you're facing. Take some time to think of which ones might be of most benefit to you. If you're unsure, perhaps a quick summary of some of the more common ones will help.

A therapist is often a go-to resource for when times are hard. This counseling professional is trained in ways to help you to recognize unhealthy emotional patterns, learn better coping strategies and work through psychological patterns of your past. They can usually help in nearly any troubling situation.



Maybe a life coach is what you need if you simply feel stuck in a rut and would like someone to help motivate you toward bigger things. This expert can help you to gain insight on your true desires and provide you with ways to accomplish them.

A career coach is another such professional that is specifically trained in matters dealing with the workforce. This would be your best resource if you need a career change or are facing job troubles.

When looking at fitness and health goals, a personal trainer is your best bet.

### **Why Enlist a Professional**

These are just a few of the helping professionals you could enlist to assist you in overcoming your current challenge. Ask around for referrals if you think another expert is better suited for your needs. Do a bit of online research to guide your decision.

Whichever type of helper you decide on, there are lots of reasons to reach out. It's frustrating to try to overcome an obstacle when you simply don't have the knowledge, resources or skills to do it, and it's counterproductive to your end goal. Why keep beating your head against the wall when you could actually make some progress by getting help? You'll save yourself time and trouble in the long run.

### **Benefits of Getting Help**

Asking for help is difficult for many of us. Just know, however, that it doesn't make you weak. In fact, it's really the smart thing to do in a lot of cases.

Getting help can propel you toward more success than you could accomplish on your own, sometimes more than you ever realized was possible. For example, if you're trying to lose weight and get healthy so that you can be more involved with your family, a nutritionist and personal trainer can provide you with tools that you might never have known about on your own. When you know the right way to eat for your particular needs and discover exercises that will target your specific body issues, you're bound to reach your goals faster than if you're simply trying what seems like a good idea to you.

Sure, any positive steps are beneficial. However, informed actions are usually far more effective. Enlisting professional help will provide you with the information and knowledge you need to move forward in the most strategic manner you can.

Hopefully, you now see the benefits of getting help in overcoming your challenges. Never be afraid to reach out for assistance. It's almost always a good idea.



## Lean On Your Support Network

While we're on the topic of enlisting help, now is the perfect time to talk about forming a support network. Seeking assistance doesn't always have to involve professionals or experts. Sometimes the best helpers of all are those people who are closest to you. Rallying trusted individuals around you during times of transition or stress can be a great form of therapy. Let's look at the ways you can lean on your support network and the benefits it can bring.



## ***Lean On Your Support Network***

### **Reasons Support Is Often Lacking**

Sometimes we get into a pattern of depending on only ourselves. There are lots of reasons for this. Society repeatedly tells us we should pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. It's easy to think that we should solve all our problems on our own and simply put on an outward appearance of being put together.

In addition, today's communities tend to be spread out. We may not have family nearby or be close with our neighbors. Perhaps you don't belong to a community like a church or sports team. It can be hard to find the ones who will help you through the dark times.



## **About Your Support Network**

A support network can be made up of nearly anyone. Brainstorm a list of people who might be willing to lend a hand when you're in need. Then write next to each name the strengths this person holds. Perhaps your favorite aunt has a great sense of humor. She might be the perfect person to reach out to when you're feeling sad and need a laugh.

If you do feel you're lacking such supportive people in your life, your brainstorming list can be about ways to find such folks. Maybe you could take a class on something you've always wanted to learn or join a group of like-minded people pursuing a particular hobby or social cause. Everyone needs to feel supported by people who get them. Your support network is made up of your particular people. Choose ones who lift you up.

## **Benefits of a Support Network**

There are tons of benefits to be gained by forming a support network. One of the biggest is simply a listening ear. Sometimes you just need someone who will understand and hear you when you're down.

Another benefit is actual physical support. For example, you may need help moving if you get a new job in a different town. Having a group of folks you can turn to when you can't do a task on your own provides tremendous peace of mind. A social outlet is also a basic human need that can become your support network. Being able to call a friend to hang out with is a comfort we all need.

Don't go through the hard times alone, if you can help it. Reaching out to your support network isn't that difficult and offers so many benefits. Any problem seems fixable when you have people to help you along the way.



## Simple Ways To De-Stress & Take Your Mind Off Things

We've discussed the importance of self-care. When you're feeling rejuvenated, you can better conquer the world. At least you can stand a shot at overcoming that day's battles, anyway.

I'd like to circle back to this topic and share with you some simple ways to de-stress and take your mind off things. Leisure and fun are an important part of the human experience. Don't neglect them when you're facing challenges and change.



### Write

If you enjoy writing, you may wish to start a journal. This is a great way to let the stress go. Taking all the frantic thoughts in your mind and transfer them to paper or the computer screen can be a fantastic way to process what's weighing heavily on you. You'll gain perspective through journaling, as well, and can often find solutions that would have otherwise been hidden.

### Socialize

Humans are social creatures. We've already discussed the benefits of having a support network. Socialization is a big part of that. Having fun with others is rejuvenating. Letting off some steam and enjoying the presence of people you enjoy is one of the best stress-relievers ever.



## **Exercise**

Exercise has a calming effect on nearly anyone. Even if you're not usually one to work out, you can benefit from some sort of physical activity. Your body will definitely thank you, and your energy levels will also increase. Yoga or meditation are forms of exercise to consider if you're not into strenuous activity, and these practices are actually some of the most beneficial when it comes to creating peace of mind and calmness.

## **Pamper Yourself**

Pampering yourself with a warm bath, a cup of tea or an at-home facial can be incredibly relaxing. It takes your mind off the troubles of the day, and it rejuvenates your spirit. Pampering doesn't have to cost money. A simple investment of time on yourself in this way will provide you with a wealth of rewards.

## **Go Outside**

The outdoors has transformative properties like almost nothing else. Surrounding yourself with nature and fresh air will give you a quick boost and help you to appreciate the world in which you live. A change of scenery is also a quick way to gain new perspective and feel less burdened. Sometimes all you need is a fresh view.

## **Practice Gratitude**

Speaking of perspective, practicing gratitude is one of the most wonderful ways to gain some. Instead of focusing on what you're lacking and the troubles in your life, take a few minutes each morning to write down what you're thankful for. This shift in focus will have a transformative effect on your mood. You'll see things in a whole new light.

When facing a challenge or tough times, sometimes you just need a break to renew your spirit. Give some of these suggestions a try or come up with some more personal ones for yourself. You'll soon be feeling more energized and able to overcome your obstacles.



## Support Groups Can Be Helpful When You're Feeling Alone

One of the things you now know about getting through challenging times is the benefit of not trying to handle it all alone. I've shared information with you about finding professional help and reaching out to your personal support network. There's another outlet we haven't touched upon, but that I think is important, when it comes to finding people to lean on during your rough spots.

Support groups of various types exist and can be incredibly helpful when you're feeling alone or don't know how to cope with a particular problem. Read on to learn more about them and to see how one might be able to help you through a particularly rough patch.



### About Support Groups

There are support groups to assist people through all sorts of different issues. No matter what you're dealing with, there are likely others who are experiencing the same thing.

Mental health groups are common. These are usually run by trained practitioners such as therapists or counselors. They can address specific conditions like bipolar disorder or depression.

Another type of popular group is those for those with addiction. These networks, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Narcotics Anonymous, offer a judgment-free environment for those who have substance abuse issues or their families. There are also groups that are meant to help people with an addiction to a specific drug or substance.



Bereavement groups for individuals dealing with the loss of a loved one are another kind you might find. In addition, people with medical conditions may wish to look for a support group to help them understand their options and to cope. For most types of support group, there is an option for both sufferers and for their loved ones. Caregiver or parent groups are common.

### **Benefits of Support Groups**

Support groups can offer so many benefits. For one, they're a valuable resource. Sometimes you need information that's simply not easily accessible on your own. Also, it's therapeutic to be able to talk to people experiencing a similar situation to your own. People in your life, even those close to you, may simply not understand what you're going through.

Involvement in a supportive environment such as a group setting lets you know you're not going through a situation on your own and that you're not different. It's soothing to see that others are like you, to be able to hear about their similar struggles and the ways in which they are dealing with them.

The leaders of support groups often provide incredible advice and insight on your specific problem. This can also be said of fellow group members. Sometimes hearing their stories can be most insightful.

### **How to Find Them**

Finding a support group to fit your needs is probably not all that difficult. You can start with a quick search online for a group catering to your specific interest in the nearby geographic area.

You may also wish to talk to your doctor, if it's a medical issue you're struggling with. Social service agencies can point you in the direction of groups to help with mental health conditions. Local hospitals are often a source of various supportive services, as well.

If you're comfortable sharing your personal details, friends and family could also point you in the right direction for helpful information.

Truly, it isn't necessary to fight your particular battle all alone. A support group offers so many benefits and can make your journal much more manageable.



## Learn To Accept Help

Now that we've talked about various ways to receive help to get through life's challenges, I should probably address a problem I know many of us have. Reaching out for and accepting that help can be one of the most difficult parts of going through hard times. There's a vast array of reasons folks may be resistant to give in and admit they can't do it on their own. Maybe you're one of these people. If so, I hope you're willing to learn to accept help in your life. Accepting others' goodwill can be one of life's most important lessons.



## Learn To Accept Help

### Why Accepting Help Is Hard

We live in an independence-oriented society that frequently sends us the message we should be able to take care of ourselves. Phrases like, "pull yourself up by your bootstraps", "suck it up", "get over it" and more are commonplace. No wonder we think our problems should be solvable on our own quickly and that we aren't allow to seek assistance. Many of us also don't like feeling like a burden to others. We don't want to bother anyone or to be seen as weak. In addition, we may not want to be in anyone's debt. Perhaps theses notions come from that greater societal message of independence. It could also be something that's taught to us while growing up in our family of origin. Internalized messages such as these take effort to overcome.



## **Benefits of Asking for Help**

I'd like to once again go over the benefits of getting help. You know it can be tough to ask for the assistance you need and you know why that's the case. I don't think the potential gains of allowing others to assist with your needs can be overemphasized.

First of all, you can learn a lot by being vulnerable to others. You'll make discoveries about yourself, the helper and society in general. Accepting assistance can lead to tremendous self-discovery and growth. You often receive concrete information that can help you, as well. Perhaps talking to someone about your problem will provide you with a piece of knowledge you didn't have before, one that may relieve your struggle. You gain a new perspective when you seek help. It can be refreshing to know you're not alone. Finally, you might just learn how much it benefits others to help you. People like to feel useful.

## **Why You Should Accept Help**

Accepting assistance from your support system, or even from professionals, lets you know that you're part of a greater network and that you're not alone. That can be very powerful when you're struggling and may be the catalyst you need to make big strides in your situation.

Asking for help increases your empathy and compassion. You'll be able to feel for someone else in the future who may need your guidance. Not allowing yourself to seek assistance from others is actually doing a disservice to everyone, especially yourself. It's a fact of life that everyone needs a hand now and then. Letting people help you can make them feel good and shows you the ways in which the world is interconnected. Being willing to receive, as well as to give, is simply a part of living in a greater society.

Learning to accept help is hard. Believe me; I know it can feel demoralizing. However, it doesn't have to. Getting assistance from others can be rewarding and can bring people together. It shows your humanity and invites self-growth. Plus, it's simply a practical thing to do, as it pushes you to reach your goal in a more effective way.



## Don't Let Your Confidence Suffer – Here Are Some Confidence Boosting Tips

When times are hard, life events can take a tremendous toll on your self-esteem. It's hard to feel good about yourself when everything seems to be going wrong or when you're experiencing loss.

Unfortunately, taking a hit to your self-concept can often initiate a harmful cycle of negativity that's hard to break free of, and depression can take hold. One trick to getting back on your feet is to kick your confidence back into high-gear. Follow these confidence boosting tips if you want to fake it 'til you make it, so to speak.



### Stand Tall and Proud

It's true. Your posture can have a direct effect on the way you feel. Slouchy encourages mopey or tired feelings, while standing tall and walking with purpose help you to feel strong. Not only will you feel better and more in control, you'll appear more approachable to others. The effects can feed off of each other, helping you to gain energy from increased social interaction and to feel genuinely more sure of yourself.



### **Make Some Lists**

Seeing statements in writing can have a great deal of impact on our emotions. They serve as a reminder and as physical evidence of what you may already know, but sometimes forget. I'm a firm believer that writing lists can be therapeutic and healing. Choose your own kind of list or write several. Yours can be a record of your proudest achievements from your past, as we've discussed previously. These reminders are a quick way to feel more capable and competent. You may also wish to write a gratitude list to put things into perspective or even a list of what you've done today, as we sometimes lose track of the energy we put forth just in our everyday life.

### **Shut Down Negative Self-Talk**

Nothing kills your self-esteem like your own trash talk. Don't feel bad. It's common to get down on ourselves during challenging times. We all do it. However, it takes proactive and intentional effort to overcome those thoughts. Take a look at your lists for inspiration on replacing those bad thoughts with helpful ones. Don't let the negativity become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### **Channel Your Heroes**

One way to add some swagger to your step is to think of the qualities you admire in others and try to exhibit more of those in your own life. That's not to say you shouldn't be yourself or that you should put on an act. On the contrary, I recommend choosing characteristics you already possess and simply wish to portray or enhance on a more regular basis. This small exercise can have a big impact on your self-view.

While these suggestions may seem insignificant, they truly can make a difference in the way you present yourself to the world and in how you feel about yourself. Try a few on for size to see if you notice a difference. It's worth a shot!



## In A Funk? Take A Shower And Get Dressed

Previously, we talked about how to boost your self-confidence in troubled times. I gave you quite a few suggestions, and I stand behind those as powerful ways to feel better about yourself quickly. However, I left one idea out because I think it deserves its own focus.

It's not unusual, when dealing with life changes or traumas, to find yourself in a position of being at home with no place to go. During these times, it can be incredibly tempting to stay in your pajamas or yoga pants all day long, without bothering to shower or indulge in other grooming routines.

In fact, the same can be said even for folks who need to leave the house for work or other obligations. This habit has a way of feeding a negative cycle of depression and feeling worthless. I'd like to take some time to discuss just how beneficial it can be to your mood to take a shower and get dressed each day.



### Up Your Confidence

I touched on this earlier, but it's the most obvious reason to get yourself put together there is, so I'll bring it up again. You'll simply feel more confident if you are wearing clothes you feel attractive in and when you take time to indulge in a grooming routine you enjoy. I'm not saying you have to wear the latest fashion or apply a meticulous layer of makeup. I do encourage you to dress and adorn yourself in whatever makes you feel most presentable to the world. For most of us, that's not sweatpants or pj's. You'll have more energy and faith in yourself when you do these small things, I truly believe that.



### **Get More Done**

Once you're feeling more confident, it's easier to be productive. In fact, just that small act of showering and getting dressed can spur you on to accomplishing even more tiny feats. Maybe you'll have the energy to make that phone call you've been dreading or to sit down to revamp your resume after procrastinating for the past two weeks.

### **Improve Your Mood**

As you get more done, you'll feel happier, or at least in a better overall mood. The lack of inertia that comes with depression or sadness can seem incredibly difficult to overcome. Taking the time to invest in your physical appearance can sometimes be the small act that breaks you out of the spell of despair. It's worth trying, anyway.

### **Take Care of Yourself**

In fact, it all goes back to the concept of self-care we talked about earlier. Taking the time and effort to invest in your well-being can go far toward improving many aspects of your life. Primping a bit to face the day is, indeed, a form of self-care. You'll almost always feel more energized and optimistic when you do.

I know it seems too easy to actually work, but taking a shower and getting dressed is a powerful step toward getting out of your funk. It's at least worth a try. You may be surprised how well it works.



## Look At How Far You've Come Already

One of the toughest parts of a challenge or change can sometimes be smack dab in the middle. When you're in the thick of things or facing a plateau in your progress, feeling overwhelmed is inevitable. Take a tip from one of our earlier strategies and try looking back at your accomplishments in order to boost your confidence. This time, however, just look at how far you've come already during this particular rough patch. Seeing the progress you've made on this journey can be a catalyst to push you toward the finish line. Let me explain a bit more.

### Write It Down

I'm a big fan of writing things down. The act of writing can be therapeutic. It can also help you to process things differently than if you were to simply reflect on things in your mind. Also, you have a product to look back on when you're done.

Reviewing your notes can be most helpful when tracking your progress. So I recommend making a list or writing some notes about the actions you've taken so far with regard to your current circumstances. You can also compare and contrast your situation from when it began and where you are now.

Another option is to record the ways in which your feelings have changed over time. Anything is fair game as long as it demonstrates to you that you have, indeed, made progress.

Journaling is a method we've already discussed that can help you to process your emotions regarding challenging times. This activity has lots of uses.

### Talk It Out

If writing isn't your forte or doesn't seem like your preferred processing method, perhaps you can consider talking to a trusted friend about your progress. It's also possible that a professional therapist might be the best choice to act as your sounding board. Any supportive listener will usually do.

Venting can be a therapeutic act on its own, but do make an attempt to at least add some constructive processing to your conversation. It's good to get your feelings out. You also want to try to understand them and to see the bigger picture of your journey. Your friend or therapist might be able to help you to shed light on the ways in which you've grown over the course of your struggle or how many successes you've had along the way. We can't always see these things on our own.



## Have a Party

Yes, I'm recommending you hold an actual celebration. After reviewing your progress through journaling, taking notes, talking to someone or self-reflection, you'll surely be able to come up with a list of achievements you've made. Why not take time to celebrate them? I can't think of a better way to acknowledge how far you've come. It can be through a big party with all your favorite people or an intimate get-together with just your closest circle. This type of activity is fun, and it's affirming.

If you don't feel up to planning such a venture or socializing, there is another option. Give yourself a reward for your hard work. Even something as small as a bubble bath or an ice cream cone can be a fun reward and provide motivation for future gains.

These are merely a few examples of ways you can take note of how far you've come on your journey so far. No matter what you choose, be gentle with yourself and give yourself the credit you deserve for all your hard work.



## Digging Deep – Getting To The Core Of Your Anxiety About Change

Earlier, I talked to you about fear of change. I shared some of the most common reasons so many of us are afraid of the unknown and what to do about it. I'd like to re-visit that topic and encourage you to get down to the deep-seated motivations behind your feelings.

Knowing why you're anxious or afraid is key to finding a way to overcome the paralysis such emotions can bring. Let spend some time getting to the core of your anxiety about change so that you can get past it.



### Why We Fear Change

First, let's review some of the reasons change can be so scary. The fear of the unknown is the biggest reason change shakes us up. This is particularly true for those who value order and control.

Another big factor is worry that you somehow won't measure up. Usually, it involves the feeling of somehow not being enough. Perhaps it may be that you fear not being smart enough to figure out how to manage the change.

Maybe you think you do not deserve enough to do well. A common concern is the suspicion one isn't likeable enough to others to be able to succeed. Much of this is interconnected to the fear of failure. You may even fear success. This is actually a common problem.



## **Discover the Reason for Your Fear**

Now it's time for some real introspection. In order to overcome your anxiety, you need to understand the underlying reasons for it. Take some time to sit with your feelings. Write down anything that comes to mind with regard to what may be your most pressing worry.

If you're unsure, keep asking yourself "why" and delving deeper into what's bothering you. With each answer you find, probe further into why it is you feel that way. This exercise is quite useful in uncovering hidden or buried feelings. Once you have at least an idea of what's driving your uncertainty, you can move on to find ways to handle the feelings surrounding it.

## **What to Do About It**

It's important to determine whether your fears are warranted or if they are simply an automatic response from your subconscious mind. Be honest with yourself. Fears with a real cause for worry should be addressed in order to head off further problems.

Try not to procrastinate dealing head on with issues that are solvable. If you believe your worry is causing you to seriously shut down or inhibiting your life in some way, it would be wise to seek professional help in the form of a therapist or counselor. These folks can use their expertise to help you get to the root of your problem in a safe, effective and efficient manner. Long-term stress can also be damaging to your health.

Finally, use self-care techniques discussed in earlier posts to help soothe your fears once you determine what they are. Re-frame negative or irrational thoughts. Eat well, exercise, get your sleep and enjoy leisure time to help you relax or to maintain your energy levels and clear thinking.

Discovering the cause of your fears surrounding change will take some time, effort and honest self-reflection. Once you face them, you'll feel more empowered to move past them.



## Finding Inspiration to Change and Overcome Challenges

It may seem like a rough patch will never end. Some times of transition are definitely longer than others. Finding the silver lining during these days can be next to impossible.

However, it's important that you do learn to look for hope when you're struggling. Otherwise, you're bound to remain in the depths of despair for even longer than necessary.

Do yourself a favor and follow these tips for finding inspiration to change and overcome challenges in your life.



### Help Others

It may seem counterintuitive to consider what you can do for other people during these times when you're struggling so much, but this is one sure way I've always found to gain perspective.

Volunteering your time with a philanthropic organization is definitely one way to give of yourself. Seeing your hard work help someone less fortunate will make you feel good. It can also be inspirational to witness the ways in which others are navigating tough times.

Another way to be inspired is just to help a friend or someone in your closest circle. Perhaps you could lend an ear or do them a favor. Any small act of kindness is usually its own reward.



### **Look for the Lesson**

We've discussed how life's struggles can often present us with the biggest opportunity for growth. Try to see the lessons your struggle is teaching you. In what ways are you learning? This eye-opening awareness can light your way through the hardest parts of a difficult journey if only you welcome it in. The clarity gained through challenges can teach us so much about what's important and how we want to live.

### **Share Your Story**

Talk to a trusted friend about what's going on. Maybe they will have some ideas or resources that could help you move past a particular obstacle. At the very least, venting is pretty cathartic and might help you to recharge your batteries a bit. If you're feeling ambitious, starting a blog or an online journal can be a wonderful way to find others who are going through similar things. You'll know you're not alone, and your story is likely to help someone else.

### **Let Others Inspire You**

When you're in need of inspiration, you'll almost always find it when you look for it in others. Whether it's someone in your life or through a story you find while researching online, hearing how someone else overcame an obstacle to achieve something you'd like for yourself can really motivate you to action.

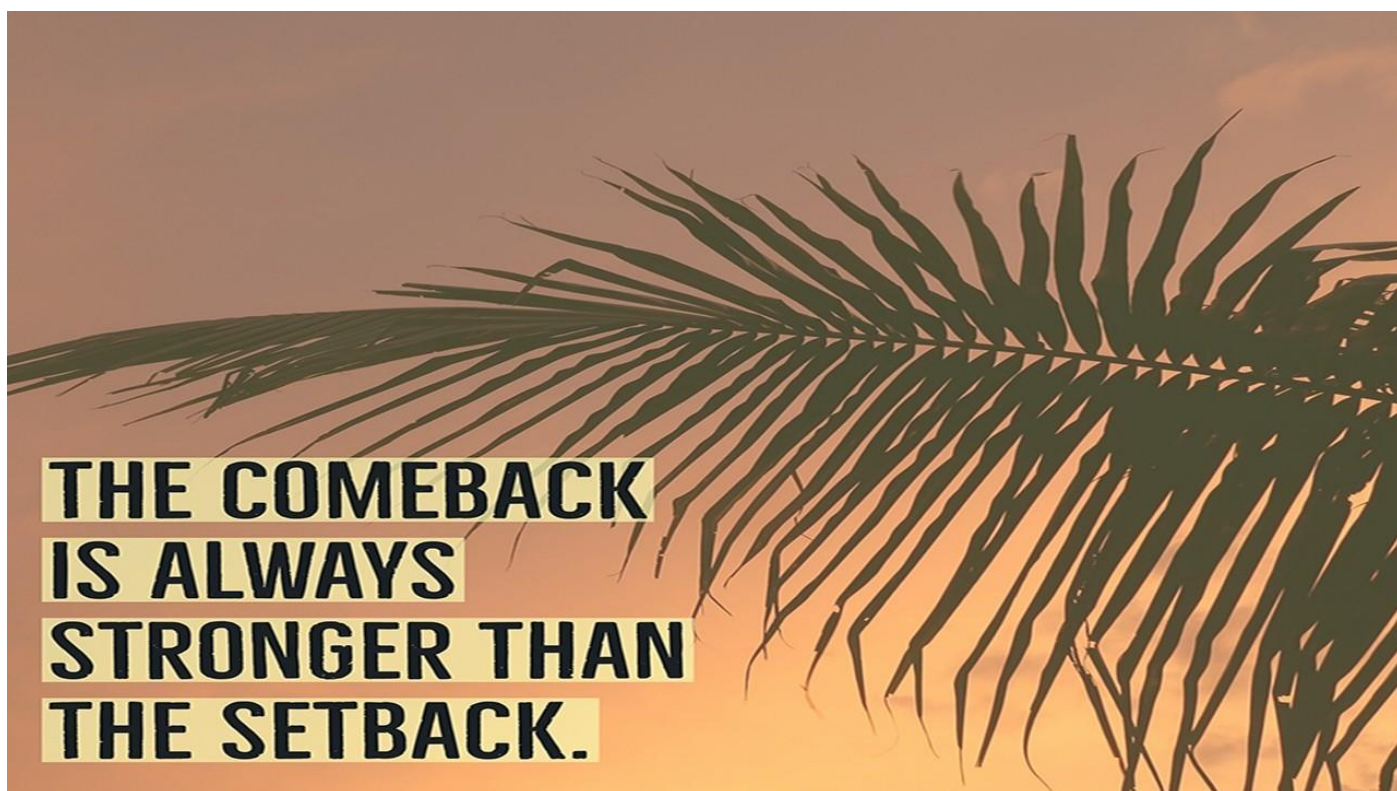
The key is your mindset. It can be easy to allow negative feelings like jealousy or insecurity surface when hearing of others' success. Push those aside and remember that you're just as capable as those folks. Focus, instead, on their actions and how you can incorporate such things into your own pursuits.

Finding hope and inspiration during tough times surely isn't easy. Start with these suggestions to help you overcome challenges and make the changes you desire. You'll soon see progress.



## Don't Let Temporary Setbacks Get You Down

Times of change and difficulty require a lot of effort and focus on your part to navigate and to move past. When you've put in so much time and dedication, it's devastating to encounter a setback. You feel like all the progress you've made has been lost. It can be incredibly difficult to get back on your feet and to keep pushing ahead. Don't let temporary setbacks get you down, though. Follow these tips to move past them and put yourself back on track.



### Don't Dwell on the Negative

Focusing on the struggle steals your energy. You get stuck in the bad times, and you truly are less able to do what needs to be done in order to reach your goals. You'll feel more empowered by taking a short amount of time to let yourself feel the pain of the loss you encountered and then to brush it aside so that you can begin building yourself up again.

### Remind Yourself of Your Why

Maybe you're feeling defeated because you've forgotten why you desire success in the first place. You want to overcome this challenge or deal with this time of change in a positive way for a reason. What will compel you to get back on the proverbial horse? Take some notes, do some journaling or talk to a friend if you need to get straight on your personal motivations for overcoming this setback. Dig deep to rediscover your why, and you'll likely feel energized once again to fight the good fight.



### **Affirm the Positive**

Your confidence is likely shaken once you've been knocked down. That's understandable. Try writing down or saying out loud some affirmations to remind you that you have a lot to offer. These concise, positive statements become believable with repetition, and your brain will see them as factual, leading you to act on these words. Give it a shot.

### **Build on Your Baby Steps**

When you're feeling emotionally shaken and overwhelmed, it can be hard to take even the smallest step to get out of your funk. However, sometimes that's really what you need in order to see a snowball effect of progress. Just one baby step in the right direction can help you to feel more motivated, making it easier to make even bigger strides toward your goals.

### **Find Your Cheerleaders**

Reach out for help when you're feeling stuck. Remember all the benefits we've talked about when it comes to having a support network. Call one of your most motivational friends to set up a coffee date. Look to those who know you best and who are the most affirming to give you the honest scoop on your potential. They'll have you believing in yourself in no time.

Getting back on your feet after a setback is possible. The hardest part is sometimes just deciding how to get started. I hope these suggestions will help.



## Celebrate Your Victories and Successes

I truly believe that celebrating our successes is overlooked far too often. We get so focused on the finish line and the big prize that we forget to pat ourselves on the back for the little wins that ultimately help us reach our destination. That's why I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you just how important it is to celebrate your victories and successes. Let's look at the benefits of doing just that.



### **You'll Gain Perspective**

Recognizing your small victories gives you wonderful perspective on how far you've come. You can feel proud of your accomplishment while looking back on the success you've had thus far. If you just keep going without noting and celebrating your mini-wins, you're more likely to get burnt out and to not even notice how well you're doing. Celebrations give you a reality check.

### **It Drives Momentum**

Having a little party of giving yourself a reward also gives you a burst of energy to keep that momentum going. Success builds upon success. You'll want to continue doing great things once you've taken the time to recognize this newest victory. Your mind and soul just naturally want more of the reward you've just gotten.



### **Your Brain Is Hard-Wired for Reward**

In fact, that momentum you feel from celebrating your high points is actually backed by science. A portion of your brain known as the "reward circuitry" is activated after you make an accomplishment, even a little one. Chemicals, like the neurotransmitter dopamine, are released into your brain when your reward circuitry is kicked into high gear. These are known as "feel good" chemicals, and they lead you to experience the high and positive emotions that come from a job well done. Success also raises endorphins, leading you to feel happier. So keep on celebrating!

### **Celebrating Provides Motivation**

You'll want to keep having these wonderful feelings once you experience them. It's part of what causes you to keep moving forward and feeling motivated to accomplish your next goal. Take advantage of the momentum gained by these feel-good chemicals to push you onto the next task on your list. Celebrating gives you the motivation you need to go forward, especially during otherwise difficult times.

Don't forget to encourage others to celebrate your success with you. Recognition by those who are important to you will increase the effects of the above suggestions. If you're feeling unmotivated or stuck, be sure to take time to recognize even the smallest accomplishment you've made recently. The rewards will be significant.



## Reflect On How Far You've Come And Where To Go From Here



We've really covered a lot of material. I hope that means you're feeling confident that you have what it takes to tackle the tough times. I know it's scary to face change and to take on a challenge. Believe me, I've been there.

You now understand that mindset has a huge impact on the ways in which you handle difficulties. You see why the unknown can be so scary and how to overcome that fear. You've gained some concrete tools to help you move beyond the biggest obstacles and to push past any plateau.

Don't forget that self-care, leaning on others and celebrating your little victories are necessary when dealing with troubling times. Every opportunity you find to bring some sunshine into the dark times should be seized upon. Taking these proactive steps will ensure you don't fall prey to the darkness that can threaten to overtake you.

My goal in writing this ebook is to help you understand that you have more power than you may have realized. Your circumstances don't have to control you. There are strategies you can use to move past difficult times or life setbacks. Knowing this and having the tools I've provided in this challenge can go a long way toward taking you to the place you wish to be.

What has had the biggest impact on you? What tips and ideas have you found the most helpful? Those are the strategies that you want to come back to again and again.

Take a few minutes today to reflect on how far you've come and the positive experiences have you had.

