



## 7 Ways to Get Past Tough Situations Quickly

By Lori Deschene

**“Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you respond to it.”**

**-Charles Swindoll**



One day everything seems great in your world—maybe not perfect, but overall things are going to plan. And then something happens.

You lose your job, or someone you love, or your home, or maybe even your health.

It isn't fair. You don't deserve it. You didn't see it coming. You didn't plan for it. You have so many feelings and frustrations you don't know what to do first, or if you want to do anything at all.

It would be easier to sit around feeling bad, looking for people to blame and complain to, rehashing what you could have done to make things happen differently. Or what you would have done if you only realized before. Or what other people should have done to help you.

All great options if you want to maximize your misery and feel justified in doing it. Not so great if what you want is to deal and move on.

You have to do this eventually when something bad happens, and the faster you do it, the sooner you'll improve your situation.

There is no shortage of opportunities to practice dealing well. If you'd like to work on improving the 90 percent of life that is how you respond, you may find these tips helpful:

### 1. Make acceptance an immediate priority.

Dealing with a bad situation can be a lot like dealing with grief, and people often go through the same stages: shock and denial, pain and guilt, anger and bargaining, and so on.

You might not be able to fully squelch your emotions, but you can decide to accept what's happened, regardless of how you feel about it. The sooner you accept it, the sooner you can act from where you are, which is the only way to change how you feel.

It's like the quote from a recent post on getting started when you don't feel ready: "Don't wait for your feelings to change to take action. Take the action and your feelings will change."

### 2. Remove "fair" from your vocabulary.

As kids, we're all about fair. "He took my train—it's not fair." "You said you'd buy me a new bike—it's not fair!" "I had that crayon first—it's not fair."

You'd think we'd learn early on that life isn't fair, but instead we cling to how we think things should be. Hard work should be rewarded. Kindness should be reciprocated. When things don't work out that way, we feel angry at the world and bad for ourselves.

Feeling outraged about life's injustices won't change the fact that things are often random and beyond your control. When you start going on an unfair spiral, remind yourself, "It is what it is." And then choose a reaction that aligns with the way you'd like the world to be.

### 3. Focus on the life lesson.

In *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*, Richard Carlson recommends pretending that everyone is enlightened but you—that everyone you meet is here to teach you something.

In this way, you'll see someone who annoys or frustrates you as an opportunity to work on your patience. This same mindset can help improve the way you interpret and respond to events in your life.

If you lost your job, perhaps the life lesson is to determine your true purpose. If your relationship falls apart, the life lesson may be to become more independent. Focusing on the lesson allows you to work on positive change, which will make you feel empowered instead of deflated.

### 4. Question whether it's as big a problem as it seems.

We often turn minor upsets into huge catastrophes in our minds. Little in life is as horrible as it appears to be at first. Some things are challenging, like losing your job, your home, or worse, someone you love. But most situations can be solved.

Sometimes they're even blessings in disguise. Barbara Rommer, M.D. interviewed 300 people who'd had near-death experiences. The majority of her subjects experienced spiritual awakenings, proving that what didn't kill them only made them stronger.

Whatever you're dealing with, is it really the end of the world? And more importantly, if you bounced back with an even better situation—a higher paying job or a more satisfying relationship—how impressed would you be with yourself?

### 5. Make "be strong" your mantra.

"What doesn't kill us makes us stronger!"

This idea has saved me many times over. At twenty-one, I spent four months hospitalized with a serious illness and missed my college graduation. So much felt unfair about how it all panned out.

Then I remembered what my friend Rich had told me: "I know you feel powerless right now, but you're going to rock the world when you get strong." Whenever I deal with adversity, I remind myself to keep rocking.

### 6. Remember you can continue from this new place.

It's easy to get attached to the road you're on, especially if it makes you happy. When something or someone throws you off, you may feel disconnected from who you want to be or what you want to do in life.

It may help to remember a hurdle doesn't have to obliterate your plans. Even if you lose your job, you can still pursue your professional goals, and maybe even more efficiently.

There is always more than one way to address a problem. The sooner you focus on finding a new way, the sooner you'll turn a bad thing good.

### 7. Ask yourself how someone you respect would handle the situation.

I recently put my heart into a blogging competition. I had to get votes from the public to win, and I ran a huge campaign to accomplish that. I ended in second place with just over 57,000 votes.

When I didn't win, I felt disappointed and even a little embarrassed. I'd failed in front of thousands of people. My best wasn't good enough.

So I asked myself how someone with integrity would handle the situation. The answer: She'd congratulate the winner, identify everything she learned from the experience, and move on to the next goal with her head held high. Acting on that advice made me feel proud of myself instead of disappointed.

People will remember the things you accomplish, but the way you handle life's challenges can affect them just as strongly. Life happens, and it isn't always easy. You can bemoan it and fight it, or see dealing with life's challenges as the most important challenge of all.

You can't always get what you want, but you can work at being who you want to be no matter what life throws at you.



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