

## The Two Essentials for Getting Through Challenging Times

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You can hardly turn on your computer or television these days without getting bombarded with news about the global financial crisis, stock market crashes and bailouts, rising unemployment, and more and more people losing their homes. It can make you feel like hiding under the covers for the day or the rest of the week.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was entrenched in the Great Depression, he talked about a similar fear during his inaugural speech. Roosevelt declared that even more worrisome than the particulars of the dire circumstances of those days, fear was the greater threat. He described fear as that "nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance." He called upon U.S. citizens to strengthen their resolve to move forward by facing the conditions and losses of the day.

Once you face your losses head on and mourn them--whether you have lost your home, your job, or are living in fear you may lose your job soon--the best thing you can do is start focusing on what you can control and remember what you are made of. These two steps can help you make it through challenging times and keep you on track towards new goals in the future.

### 1. Focus On What You Can Control

However much you wish you could, you cannot control the stock market, economics, the weather, or what your boss says in the company meeting. Do you give up? Or do you begin to define what you can control and take steps to find ways to manage what is under your control? For example, you can control how you respond to alarming news (and how much you listen to it) and you can control how you respond to your circumstances.

Let's take a look at Jim, an IT Manager, who sees his company's stock tanking. He is concerned about cutbacks and layoffs. Although he can't directly control the stock fall, he can control his response to it and start to work on creating new systems that increase revenue. Jack Canfield, co-author of *The Success Principles*, writes about doing what it takes in his article, "Going the Extra Mile Will Get You Even Farther." "Successful people go the extra mile. Plain and simple...they are unwilling to give up, even in the face of difficult times." While putting in this extra time and effort, manager Jim can also explore other job options as his "Plan B"--another action within his control.

### 2. Remember What You're Made Of

We've all experienced challenging times. We try to avoid them, but they are a part of life's great adventure. Think back to one of those challenging times. What were the strengths in you that helped you through? Call on those strengths now!

In *Finding Work in Tough Times*, I wrote about Teresa, a 40-something manager, who rode a career wave that peaked and crashed: "'You could see a trend,' says Teresa. 'I knew my position was in peril because I was finished with a large project and was looking for things to do. I was not surprised, but it was disturbing.'" Instead of cowering in fear, Teresa tapped into her stores of resourcefulness and "stick-to-itiveness" to find an interim job for six months until she landed another high paying management position.

Further wisdom from Roosevelt reminds us that, "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith." To stay calm, strong, and focused as you continue onward, home in on what you can control--how you respond with your emotions, thoughts, and actions. Also remember who you really are and what you have experienced and learned so you can tap into the same strengths that have pulled you through challenging times before.

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