

## How to Survive Through the Tough Times

It seems no matter who you speak to or wherever you look, the current economic situation has affected many. It's hard not to get overwhelmed during these challenging times. However, there are things that you can do to help you cope and survive through this difficult situation.

- **Limit your exposure to the news.** While I don't recommend "burying your head in the sand" and pretending that everything is fine (isn't that denial?), you don't need to inundate yourself with the minute-by-minute updates and details of how bad the economy is or that the situation will get worse before it gets better. Constantly exposing yourself to the "bad news" will further overwhelm you and increase your stress.
- **Focus on what you can do.** Yes, these challenging times have presented us with situations that we have no (or limited) control over. But despite this, there are probably things you *can* do even if it means curtailing your spending or revising your resume. The point is to find what you can control and **DO SOMETHING**. Remember, doing is better than brooding.
- **Develop your skill sets.** If you have been faced with a job loss or perhaps you see this "looming on the horizon," start examining (if you haven't already) your skill sets. What skills do you have from your previous (or current) job that is transferable to another position? Are there skills that you feel you need to acquire? What can you do to improve your skills? Look into continuing education courses, seminars, self-study courses, or simply your own independent study. There are many ways to access this from formal programs to courses offered through the public library system or via the internet (e.g., YouTube, various websites). That is, you don't need a big budget to further your personal or professional growth.
- **Seek support from others.** It's important to have support from others, but you don't want to create a situation that fosters more "doom and gloom." Your support network should not be one where everyone just complains about their difficulties, but one where there is encouragement and support to move forward. This may entail looking into local networking events or interest groups that may be outside of your usual social circles or groups.
- **Balance your life with positive activities.** Now, more than ever, it is important to incorporate positive activities into your life. There's a lot of negativity around us now, but that doesn't mean that you have to have that in your life. There are many opportunities to incorporate positive, uplifting activities in your daily routine---take a walk, connect with a friend, help others. By doing something positive, you realize that despite all that is happening around us, there are still positive aspects of life.
- **Reassess what's important in your life.** I've always said that there is nothing like a crisis situation to bring the core issues to the forefront. In other words, when you're faced with a challenging situation, this is when you really come to grips with what's important in your life such as family and friendships. It's easy to take people and

relationships for granted when “things are going well.” Perhaps this is the opportunity to really examine this to see if you’ve neglected these areas and to make some changes.

Remember that although we may not be able to control the situation around us now, we are certainly able to control how we react and respond to these challenges.

“Challenges are gifts that force us to search for a new center of gravity. Don’t fight them. Just find a different way to stand.”

-Oprah Winfrey

“Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict.”

-William Ellery Channing

© 2009 LTI Associates, Inc.

Bio:

*Psychologist Dr. Linda T. Inatsuka (FL Lic. #PY0005714) provides strength-based, solution-focused counseling and coaching services to empower individuals to solve problems such as overcoming depression and grief, finding relief from anxiety and stress, promoting healthy behaviors, and rediscovering the joy in their relationships. She can be contacted at (813) 985-6121 or [drlinda@liveempowered.com](mailto:drlinda@liveempowered.com). Sign up to receive your FREE subscription to the e-newsletter, Live Empowered! at [www.liveempowered.com](http://www.liveempowered.com).*