17 ACTION STEPS TO TAKE DURING TOUGH TIMES

Be positive. Surround yourself with positive and supportive people.

Remain calm and levelheaded. Count to ten. Try to make decisions based on fact rather than emotion.

Accept support. There are wonderful people who care about you. Don't shut them out, or worse, take your problem out on them.

Learn from the past. Have you faced a similar situation in the past? Apply lessons learned. There's no need to reinvent the wheel.

Seek professional counsel. Identify someone to serve as a sounding board. Gain from their knowledge, experience, and objective viewpoint.

Face reality. Don't run away from the problem; run toward it. Accept reality as it is, not as you want it to be.

Own the problem. Don't waste precious time and energy making excuses or casting blame. Move forward rather than dwelling in the past.

Make tough choices. Don't procrastinate or hold out for the perfect answer; there may not be one. Identify your options and create a plan of action.

Set priorities. Don't treat every option or activity equally. It's smarter to do the important things rather than to complete every item on your list.

Build momentum. Big problems are best solved in small pieces. Tackle short-term items to achieve wins while you address the root cause.

Remain true to your values. This is no time to compromise your integrity. Listen to your conscience.

Be loyal. Don't throw anyone under the bus to save your hide. In fact, putting the needs of others first may supply the positive energy you need to move forward.

Find an outlet for relaxation. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. Identify ways to relax and reduce stress.

Be a leader. These are the times when real leaders show their character. Lead by example.

Never quit. As Richard M. Nixon said, "A man is not finished when he's defeated. He's finished when he quits."

Keep the faith. When nothing seems to work, faith often does.

Learn from the experience. Make sure to learn from the experience. You may have to apply this lesson another day.

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