

Riding a runaway train:

Five strategies for developing a sense of control in turbulent times | Regina Barr

Think about the last time you rode a train. You likely went to the station, purchased a ticket, waited on the platform for the train to arrive as scheduled, boarded the train and safely arrived at your destination. There was little or no excitement, just another normal day at the station, right?

Now what if you stepped on the same train and the conductor suddenly cried out that the brakes had failed and the train was out of control? You might panic, pray or even pass out. Why? Because you no longer felt you were in control.

That's what it feels like in the current business environment — a runaway train over which we have no control. But there is something we can control. We have the ability to control our response to the situation. How? Here are five strategies to help you feel in control no matter what the situation.



1. Develop a sense of purpose. Let's face it. We all need a reason for being. If you haven't spent time reflecting on the meaning, purpose and value of your life, now's the time to do it. This will provide the compass to navigate unexpected challenges when they arise.

2. Believe in yourself. An anonymous source once said, "Believe in yourself and all things are possible." As a human being, you have the capacity to be resourceful and creative which means that you have the power to solve any problem that comes your way. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

3. Develop a rubber skin. Learn how to bounce back from any situation. Don't let your fear get in the way. When something unexpected happens, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, learn what you can from the situation and then move on.

4. Be Optimistic. Become the person that sees the opportunity in every situation. When faced with multiple possibilities in a situation, tell yourself "It's all good." Believe that everything will work out for the best — no matter what happens — and guess what? It will.

5. Laugh at yourself. It has been said that laughter is the best medicine. In fact, studies show that laughter can actually help you maintain a healthy heart, reduce stress and mitigate depression. How? By shifting your focus away from stressful events and by providing a positive outlet for emotions. So, find the humor in your situation and go ahead, laugh out loud. Can't find the humor? Fake it. You'll still derive the same benefits.

The only thing you can count on these days is uncertainty. How you cope with uncertainty will determine your sense of control over the situation and ultimately the outcome. Use these five strategies when you're feeling out of control and you may just find that things aren't so bad after all. 

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