



Stand In Your Power

After Job Loss

by Randy Siegel
"The Career Engineer"

Stand Tall in the Storm: Three Strategies for Coping with Crisis

Randy Siegel

Looking into her face as she shared her story I faced my greatest fear. My friend had lost everything: her marriage, home, and almost all her savings. “I’m starting over,” she said matter-of-factly, “and that’s not so bad.” Not so bad! I thought. It’s the worst thing that could happen.

The supports holding up her life were being cut out from underneath her, yet she was still standing. She was standing even taller than before.

Less than one month ago, another friend was sharing a similar story. He was on the verge of bankruptcy. His income source had dried up, and his life savings were quickly dwindling. His beautiful house was on the market, and he was desperately trying to sell his beloved grand piano.

While my two friends’ situations are similar, the way each is dealing with them is not. One is racked with anxiety; the other is calm, almost serene. What appears to be a closed door to one is a swinging door to the other. Walking through it, she is entering a new life and a new way of being.

Originally, she came to me for advice, but I became the student. In sharing her life, my friend was teaching me how to face turmoil with grace. As she talked, three strategies for coping with crisis emerged.

One: Practice gratitude.

“How do you stay so positive?” I asked.

“I’m no saint. I have my moments,” she admitted. “There are days when all I can do is cry. But most days, I focus on all I have to be grateful for, and that list is a lot larger than you may think.

“I’m grateful for my friends, family, and for my health. I’m also thankful for my car, my clothes, my work, and this beautiful day.

“I’m also thankful for this difficult time, even though that may sound crazy,” she continued. “In it is a life lesson if I’m open to learning.”

“A life lesson?” I asked.

“Sure, think about it, Randy. Don’t you grow more in times of crisis than when everything’s going your way?”

She was right. I grew more during my divorce than at any other time in my life. My divorce was one of those defining moments. My friend was helping me to see that dark time in a whole new light.

Not long ago, I saw a television show on spirituality. A woman who was going through a bankruptcy asked a panel of spiritual counselors for advice. “Focus on what you have to be grateful for,” one counselor concluded. “Start out small if you must, but start somewhere.

“For example, be thankful that you are breathing, and if you are on a breathing machine, be thankful for the machine.”

It’s been said in many ways, by many different people that in order to change your life, you must change your thoughts. Practice gratitude always, but practice it especially during times of crisis.

Two: Align your life with your values.

Crisis brings clarity because it beckons us to reexamine our values. Crises are wake-up calls, and wake-up calls come in different forms. My father’s came after his first heart attack. Health, one of his values, had been neglected. In realigning his life with his values, he changed his diet, lost weight, and began to exercise daily. These activities added years to his life as well as life to his years.

Our current economic crisis is causing many Americans to reexamine their values. The Cadillac Escalade in the carport doesn’t seem as important as it once was. We are being invited as a society to be less materialistic and more spiritual, and many are heeding the call.

Have you identified your core values or guideposts for living? If I were to ask you for your top seven, could you rattle them off within a few minutes? Most of us would need some time to think.

Take time for introspection and catalog your top seven values. Then look at your life to see if you are living them. I did this recently and set a goal to review my core values—along with my purpose statement—before making every major decision, instead of unconsciously selecting which path to take.

Three: Flow, don’t fight.

Midwives say that if a mother fights the pain of childbirth, she delays the birth. It’s when she surrenders that the baby comes. Crisis is a lot like childbirth; we have to surrender to the pain of letting go.

The Buddhists teach nonattachment, and for me it’s a tough lesson. I want to hold on to the known even when the known is not that great. I cling and clinch until a big wave hits and pries me off the rocks and into the river. It’s then that I remember the river guides’ advice.

When you go white-water rafting, the guides tell you that if you are thrown from the raft, put your feet up, and flow with the river. In crisis, we’d be smart to follow the same advice.

Flowing with the river doesn’t excuse us from action. Action is imperative in order to move ahead with our lives. But a different type of action is called for; it’s inspired action. Inspired

action requires us to set intention and act upon inspiration. Follow the energy; act on those intentions that carry a lot of “juice.”

I hope to never face what my two friends are facing. Losing financial security is one of my greatest fears. Still, like an unwanted houseguest, crisis surely will come to visit from time to time. Rarely does one go through life unscathed.

When crisis comes I will find strength in remembering my friend’s three strategies: practice gratitude; align your life with your values; and flow, don’t fight. By practicing them, I will stand tall through any storm.

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You have just read the first chapter of Randy’s latest eBook ***Stand in Your Power after Job Loss***. In this information-packed book, you’ll learn:

- How to harness the power of positive thinking in your job search and reclaim your power.
- The most effective strategies for finding work in today’s down economy
- The best ways to write winning cover letters and resumes
- How to interview to impress
- The questions you are most likely to be asked in an interview and those questions you should ask

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