From victim to survivor, from loser to winner – LET’S TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY AND HAVE THE LAST LAUGH

We all know life is unfair and there is no certainty in life. Living each day through life’s ups and downs, we do our very best to sail through life whilst trying to control the impact of unwanted external factors such as financial pressures, health issues and social problems.

When a big crisis suddenly hits us like an asteroid from outer space, we are emotionally wounded and left wondering what we have done to deserve it. Sometimes we might be hit by a series of unexpected problems coming from all directions, like a meteoroid storm, which leaves us emotionally drained and exhausted.

There is no quick fix to a lot of the awkward problems life throws at us, whether it’s financial, medical or legal. Sometimes life can be cruel and take away what we cherish the most, such as a loved one, a successful career, a reputation that took many years to build, good heath, a happy home, a loving relationship, a peaceful retirement. In our loss, we are trapped in cycles of deep turmoil, anguish and distress. We can’t see a way out, we struggle hard to break free from the difficulties but to no avail. For some of us, we spent many months or even years trying to repair the damages and trying to rebuild a new life.

Based on thousands of tips and strategies shared by many victims who fought injustice for years, we have condensed the huge volume of advice into this short article. Whilst this short article does not contain all the answers to life’s problems, but it was written by people who truly understand (because they have suffered horrific tragedies in the past) and we hope this article can help you to explore ways in which you find physical, mental and emotional strength to deal with the challenges in your life. Below are the 9 strategies other victims found helpful for coping with what life throws at them:

1. **Get enough sleep** – Sleep helps your mind and body to recover from negative emotions such as anxiety. It’s hard to say how many hours is enough, but most people need between 8 and 10 hours sleep a day when they are going through a very rough patch. Be creative when trying to help yourself sleep and dream better, for instance, put some lavender oil on your pillow, cuddle a pillow in bed and wear comfortable pyjamas.

2. **Eat good food** – When feeling anxious or under huge pressure, we don’t have the motivation, energy or time to cook a proper meal, but we can still find
creative ways to live on a balanced diet. Think creatively when considering how to come up with healthy meals that can be prepared quickly, such as a ham sandwich with salad, fruits and yogurt. Ensure you drink plenty of water when feeling stressed or working hard.

3. **Do some physical activity everyday** – This is because physical activity such as a walk in the park or skip for 10 minutes is actually an emotional lift as well as helping you to release some steam after a stressful event. Physical activity stimulates brain chemicals leave you feeling calmer, more relaxed and more confident. What type of physical activity depends on your personal circumstances, here is a list for you to consider: walk to the supermarket or shop, housework, swimming, skipping, dancing (e.g. Zumba), workout in a gym, badminton or any physical activity you can do safely.

4. **Maintain social contact** – When fighting a personal crisis, we tend to withdraw from social situations and concentrate on our difficulties, but social contact helps us to feel less isolated and increases our emotional well-being. Social contact doesn't have to be face-to-face, telephone or internet communications are just as effective for boosting our sense of being well-connected. Try to communicate with a fellow human being at least once a day, it could be something simple as a hello (with a smile) to your local shop keeper when buying milk or newspaper.

5. **Build up your support network** - To ensure we have enough mental strength to persevere, we need support from fellow human beings (family, relatives, friends, colleagues or strangers). If you find yourself fighting a personal battle alone, then it’s time to draw up a plan to recruit supporters. If you have supportive family, relatives or friends to help you, then cherish them. If you have no one, then now it’s time to start do something about it. Here are some ideas: join a local group (e.g. knitting club, political group or religious group), join Twitter, join Facebook or set up your own victim’s support group.

6. **Recharge your battery** – Once a day, spend at least half an hour either doing nothing or do something you really enjoy (e.g. a hobby you are passionate about). Once a week, spend at least half a day doing an activity that helps you to feel rejuvenated, it might be visiting a friend, watching a film, spending time with a loved one, reading a book, play a game or do something that makes you feel good about yourself.

7. **Establish your legacy** – Fighting for justice can take months or years, during this period, you can set up a support group, a campaign or a charity for fellow victims, which will earn you respect and authority. This action will ensure what you suffered was not in vain and you will be remembered by other people for many years. There is misconception that you need money to start a charity. The law says your group can be called a charity if its aims are charitable, its
functions are for public benefit and it has at least 3 trustees. You can find out more from the Charity Commission website.

8. **Grow bigger than your problems** – No matter how big your problems are, you can grow bigger than the problems. There are many ways to achieve this but the most effective way is to show kindness, compassion and wisdom. In human history, all the great people have used these qualities to change the world for the better. Think of heroes like Nelson Mandela or Gandhi of India, they used compassion, patience and wisdom to achieve their goals. If someone or a group of people caused you to suffer losses in your life, do not sink to their level, rise above them (e.g. set up a charity). They may have lost their humanity, but you will keep yours and enjoy life.

9. **Have the last laugh and be a winner** – As a result of what happened, you may need to make some major changes in your life. Such changes could mean switching career, moving home, launching legal actions etc. We hope the advice from other victims summarised in this article will give you some useful hints on how to cope during the long journey of recovery. We trust you will find strength to start again and rebuild a meaningful life. We want you to remember that no matter how tough life is, how badly other people treat you or how unfair the world is, your heart will maintain that you are a worthy human being, you are unique, you deserve respect, happiness and love. We wish you well and invite you to join our UK-wide national campaign for more compassion for victims. We leave you with 4 comforting and inspirational short poems recommended by other victims:

Poem 1:

“Tears may flow in the night, but joy comes in the morning.” (Anon)

Poem 2:

“Being defeated is often a temporary condition, giving up is what makes it permanent.” (Anon)

Poem 3:

When you’re sad, we wish you joy;
When you’re discouraged; we wish you hope;

When your spirit is low, we wish you beauty;

When you’re troubled, we wish you peace.

(Anon)

Poem 4:

“If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build anyway.”

(Mother Theresa)

This article was researched and written by a registered therapist with many years' experiences in helping victims and donated as a gift to Heal the Regulators campaign.

Heal the Regulators is a UK-wide national health campaign and support network for patients and health practitioners who experienced injustice. Due to lack of funding, we currently don't have the capacity to take on cases but please join our support network.

Email us: message2014-01@yahoo.co.uk

Find us on Twitter @heal_regulators