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*We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage*



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Tips

1. *Find one person whom you can trust to give you objective information without sensation. Ask that person to be honest about the bad news as well as the good. Arrange to get regular updates -- initiate them yourself, if necessary.*
2. *Don't rely on the "network" (whether it is a people network or an electronic network) to provide you with accurate information about what is happening. What you will get are rumors or information without context. Make sure you check things out with your contact person before taking any news to heart.*
3. *Find at least one or two other people whom you can trust. Talk to them about the change and its impact on you. If you don't want suggestions, ask that they just listen for now.*
4. *Take an inventory of your current and/or potential losses. Then decide if there is something you can do to minimize or make up for each loss.*
5. *Make a decision, a choice. Even though you can't change what happened, you **can** decide your personal approach. □ CMP*

Coping with "Super-Charged" Change

There are times in our lives when change seems "super-charged," when it shakes the very foundation of who we are. Emotions run deep, what we fear may very well be reality, and we may be powerless to control or influence the change itself.

I experienced such change over the last six months, as my husband and I waited and waited to adopt our daughter. Five times we had travel dates. Four times we were canceled, sometimes at the last minute. Each time I felt like a toy boat on a beach, hit by a tidal wave that would not stop. I feared we would not get our daughter. I feared for my business. I feared for my soul because I was running out of hope.

In my head I knew about "change" and what I should expect. In my heart I was shocked at the pain and felt it would never end. I felt like I was "losing it." This is what I learned about coping when you cannot influence the change itself:

Information

Information was critical to me because I was desperate to understand the situation. Even negative information was better than none at all. When I had no information, I made up my own stories about what was happening, which made me feel more powerless. To help myself, I read a lot, I found a reliable information source, and I checked out rumors.

Contacts

Talking to others who survived the process was helpful, although timing was important. In the initial shock stage I did not want to talk to others who had succeeded. I just wanted to wallow for a while with someone who could sympathize. When I was ready to emerge, I looked to the stories of those who were successful to provide hope.

Choices

This was the most important to me -- recognizing my choice(s). When I realized that I could stop participating in this particular adoption program, I felt more empowered. I started to see and evaluate my options. Although I chose to remain, it was an *active* decision to live with the uncertainty of the process, and as a result, I felt less like a victim.

"Super-charged" change is showing up more often in our work lives with continued restructurings, layoffs, and new technologies that impact our perceptions of who we are and what we do. Although the change might be "transformational," it is no doubt painful. What I have learned is to be gentler with myself and others as we continue to move through the changes we face, and to affirm the pain while looking for new ways to live hopefully and powerfully. □ CMP