

At one point or another, you will surely face a crisis. Your loved one could be diagnosed with a terminal condition. Your marriage could end. You may find yourself in a dire financial situation.

The list could go on and on. No matter who you are, how much you earn, how solid your life is, crises are inevitable. But how you respond to these crises is optional. Staying strong during a crisis is key to getting through tough times. Here's how to stay mentally strong during a crisis:

1. Accept reality

When faced with bad news, it's easy to waste a lot of time thinking that things like this can't be happening, or that this shouldn't be happening to me. But this is not the time to waste your vital resources worrying about justice.

Accept the situation. That does not mean that you have to agree with what is happening, but it does mean that you are willing to acknowledge reality. Only then can you take positive action.

2. Don't worry about building strength now

Trying to build mental toughness in the middle of a crisis is like lifting weights just before trying to lift a heavy box. This is not the time to worry about developing strength, it is time to put the strength you already have into action.

3. Seek support

Talk to your friends. Get help from a professional. Contact your loved ones. Whatever you do, be sure to ask questions, tell people what you need, and get the emotional support that can help you.

4. Practice self-care

As difficult as eating and sleeping may be, it is important to take care of your body when you are in the middle of a crisis. Take a few short walks when you can, make healthy eating choices a priority even when time is short, and give your body and mind a rest.

5. Ask yourself what advice you would give a friend

Sometimes a crisis requires you to make tough decisions. And when you're feeling overwhelmed and really emotional, those tough decisions can seem impossible to make, especially when you have to do it quickly.

Whether you have to decide what medical procedure to try or if you need to find a new place to live, ask yourself what advice you would give a trusted friend. That helps take much of the emotion out of the equation, which can be key to making the best possible decision (even when you feel like you're between a rock and a different place).



6. Create a useful mantra

Develop an affirmation, such as "I've survived tough times before I got over this too," and repeat it as needed. It can help drown out the negative thoughts that are sure to swirl through your mind, and it can keep you on track so you can move on.

7. Prioritize what needs to be done

When you're in the middle of a crisis, you may have to give up a few things so that you can focus your energy on the task at hand. Create a to-do list to help you prioritize what needs to be done. And write things down, as your memory is sure to fail at times when your stress level is high.

8. Find time to experience your emotions

While you don't want to suppress your emotions forever, there are also times when you need to regulate your feelings so you can be productive. Crying in the doctor's office can get in the way of asking the questions you need answers to. Likewise, allowing fear to take over can prevent you from taking action.

Sometimes you may need to move quickly, with little time to really think about how you feel. That is fine when you are in an acute crisis. But just be sure to set aside time later to experience painful feelings - it's a crucial part of healing emotional wounds.

9. Take small steps

A crisis can make you feel overwhelmed by all the things you need to change, achieve, or resolve. Break those big tasks down into small steps.

Whether you need to sort through a loved one's belongings after their passing, or need to shed some serious weight to resolve a health crisis, identify something you can start working on today.

10. Do something that helps you maintain a sense of normalcy

When you are in the middle of a crisis, you can feel like the whole world is upside down. Maybe you spend all day every day sitting in the hospital next to a loved one. Or maybe you are applying for work from the moment you wake up to the moment you fall asleep.

Doing something that helps you feel "normal" may help you stay mentally stronger. Watch your favorite show before falling asleep. Go for a walk in the morning, as you always did before the crisis. Whatever it is, look for a dash of normalcy that can continue even when life feels anything but normal.

Build strength after the crisis is over

After the acute crisis is over, take time to relax from the stress you endured. Whether that means planning a weekend hike in the mountains or scheduling an appointment with a therapist to help you move forward, take the necessary steps to help you grow from your experience.

