

Disaster Re-energizing Plan

Natural disasters often leave behind massive destruction and untoward chaos. What is left in widespread areas is not only devastating for the people directly affected by the disaster but disconcerting and unsettling for people everywhere.

Many can see and even feel the pain and utter hopelessness in real-time thanks to electronic media. The same holds true for all victims whether from a tsunami, earthquake, tornado, flood, fire, war, famine or drought.

The obvious destruction caused by such major disasters pales in comparison to the enormity of loss. The despair, sadness and helplessness in the eyes of the victims is very disquieting even when a continent away.

Personal disasters can be filled with just as much despair and sadness only on a smaller scale, such as the sudden loss of a parent, a tragic car accident, an unexpected life-altering illness and even the loss of a dear pet. For many, a beloved pet such as a dog, becomes a 24/7 companion, nurturer and guardian. Lives revolve around the care, feeding and loving of a pet and in return the pet provides unconditional love. The loss of an animal companion can be just as devastating as the loss of a human life.

Re-energize While Coping with Disasters

Whether your disaster is enormous like the tornado that ripped through Joplin, Missouri a year ago or comparatively smaller like the loss of a pet, care needs to be taken to strengthen and revitalize yourself. Distress, grieving and helplessness gnaw away at your personal and emotional energy levels.

Since you cannot prepare for most totally random and unexpected disasters, they must be viewed from a different perspective. What can you do to regain your strength and pick yourself up again?

Nurture Yourself. One of the best positive energy builders in your life during a disaster or crisis is to acknowledge the “good things” in your life and your surroundings. It can be little things like being grateful for food on the table or a good friend – to huge things like your freedom, your children, a good income, a roof over your head or good health.

Make a list of all of the things for which you are grateful. Remember the good times you had with your loved ones or the years of joy with a pet. You can do this

mentally, on a writing tablet or in a journal. In fact, creating a *gratitude journal* and using it regularly will return hope and bring balance to your life.

It is important to nurture yourself so you are in a position to help others.

Limit the Flow of Negative Thinking. Find ways to balance the flow of negative thinking while going through a disaster. For example, limit the amount of media time as a disaster unfolds. View the news so you can obtain necessary information about what is happening in a disaster area, in your surroundings and in the world, but stop there. Too much media exposure to great loss imbeds that negative energy in your mind, body and spirit. The same holds true if you dwell on personal loss. You amplify the loss and create more grief instead of looking forward.

Balance all of that negative energy with some positive viewing, reading or listening. View light humorous television programming that will make you laugh and contribute to re-energizing your spirit. Listen to soothing or uplifting music. Go for a walk, take an art class, bake cookies, talk to a friend, meditate or pray. Positive words, thinking and actions uplift your spirits.

Help Others. Do something kind for others in need. Call a family member you haven't spoken to in a long time, take flowers or special food to an invalid, or volunteer at your local church, synagogue or soup kitchen. Get involved in a local charity or civic organization, volunteer at the library or visit veterans and their families.

There are so many people in need of encouragement. The more you focus on others during times of disaster, the less you focus on your own distress and discouragement – and the better you feel about yourself.

In many cases, you may be able to help others suffering from a major disaster with a donation of money, food or clothing but you may not be able to travel to the site where the disaster occurred. By helping someone in your community, you will be providing positive energy and hope, which in turn provides you encouragement so you can move forward in your life with your own hope regenerated.

Major natural disasters and significant minor disasters often bring the best out of people, whether it is their personal disaster or a disaster a world away. It is up to

everyone to provide encouragement and maintain hope during the time of disasters so it can be shared with those in great need.

Remember, you can and must find hope and a way to re-energize when a disaster strikes, whether global or personal. Take care of yourself first so you can help care for others. The positive energy you will discover is hope, and hope rapidly becomes contagious when shared with others, especially those in need.

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