

A dramatic sky with dark, swirling clouds and several bright, jagged lightning bolts. In the bottom foreground, the dark silhouettes of evergreen trees are visible against the lighter sky.

Difficult Moments Teach Us  
**WHO WE ARE**

## **Table of Contents**

---

<b>The Dark Tunnel .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Lessons You Learn.....</b>	<b>2</b>
You Learn Who Your Friends Are .....	2
You Learn The Depths of Your Spirit .....	2
You Learn What Matters To You .....	3
You Learn To Be Thankful.....	4
You Learn To Change & Accept Change.....	4
You Learn Your Sphere Of Control .....	5
You Learn You Choose Your Mindset .....	6
You Learn How Strong You Are.....	6
You Learn About You .....	6
<b>The Benefits Of Difficult Times .....</b>	<b>8</b>
The Benefit Of Help .....	8
The Benefit Of Backup .....	8
The Benefit Of Knowledge .....	9
The Benefit Of Coping Strategies .....	9
The Benefit Of Empathy .....	9
The Benefit Of Success .....	10
The Benefit Of Relationships .....	10
The Benefit Of Spirituality .....	10
The Benefit Of Appreciation .....	11
The Benefit Of Possibilities .....	11
<b>Coping Tools &amp; Support .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Write It Out.....	12
Solve Your Problems.....	13
Shift Your Thought Process .....	13
Seek Support.....	14

<b>Be The Support .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Final Thoughts .....</b>	<b>18</b>

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is strictly for informational purposes. Every possible effort has been made in preparing and researching this material. We make no warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability of its contents or any omissions.

# The Dark Tunnel

---

The most difficult moments in life can often feel like walking through a dark tunnel or falling into a dark deep hole. Deep down you hope that you can escape it, but with no light in sight, it's difficult to claw your way back.

It might not feel like when you're trying to survive it, but even the toughest of times deliver silver linings. In the most challenging times of your life, you grow. When you face tests, you find out what you're made of and in those moments, you can rise to the top and come through stronger than ever before.

No one wants to struggle through life. In fact, no one wants to admit that they are struggling at all. We carefully curate our social media posts, cautiously airbrushing photos, tailoring the hashtags, and curating the perfect image of a perfect life.

**That's not the reality of life.**

It doesn't matter how perfect someone's life looks on a page of selected squares, that isn't real. That's the image they want to project and they don't want you to see the pain they carry.

It shouldn't be a surprise, you probably don't share your difficult moments either. That's not the snapshot you want people to see. You will meet struggle, that's one thing in life you can count on.

**What you will find, though, is that even in the most difficult times life throws your way you can learn who you are.**

# **The Lessons You Learn**

---

Before we talk about the benefits of difficult times, let's talk about the lessons you learn from the difficult moments you walk through.

## **You Learn Who Your Friends Are**

It might be a sad lesson to learn, especially when you lose friendships and have to trim the fat, but don't underestimate the lesson. When you struggle, you see who is there standing by you.

The people who rally around you when you are going through hardships are the people who deserve to be there in your happy moments. If someone doesn't care then they're not going to make an effort to support you through difficulty which means you can let go and move on.

It doesn't feel good to know that someone you care about doesn't view you as a priority, but it's going to save you energy, time, and focus on the long run. You may have spent a lot of your time and energy supporting them through difficult times and now that you know they won't do the same for you?

You can move on in the knowledge that you're better off without them. Difficult moments teach you who and what matters. They show you the people you should be grateful for, the people who will stand by you no matter what, through the thickest and thinnest moments.

## **You Learn The Depths of Your Spirit**

Spirit, power, strength... lessons build character. When you have a complaint remind yourself that as painful as it might be, it's going to help you build character. As painful as it is, as annoying as it sounds, navigating difficulty builds

your strength and spirit like nothing else. There's nothing quite like difficulty to force you to leverage what you have to come out on top. Difficulty forces you to dig deep, it forces you to draw from your well of patience and power to overcome.

Every time you survive difficulty your internal scoreboard lights up. It's like all of those wins or losses are being carefully pushed into the correct column by your internal synapses.

It's taking inventory of all your wins and using that to bolster your confidence so rather than merely surviving you will be thriving, even in the face of the most difficult situation. Learning just how powerful you are is an incredible byproduct of difficult times.

## **You Learn What Matters To You**

If there is anything that difficult times do well it's flip your world upside down and shake everything loose. If it isn't nailed down, then you can expect it to go flying. It sounds stressful and it is, but it can also be a comforting exercise to learn what sticks, what works, and what sticks with you even when everything runs amok.

When your world rights itself and you're right side up you start to pay more attention to all of those things that stuck. You start to look after them more carefully.

We spend so much time worrying about things we don't need to worry about. Sometimes it takes difficult moments to remind us what is important enough to worry about. It's a nice reminder that you can turn down the volume on all that noise you needlessly worry about.

## **You Learn To Be Thankful**

Whether we realize it or not, navigating difficult times has a lasting impact. Difficulty changes you, it alters your view of life, and it helps shape the future version of yourself you've yet to discover. You learn who you are, you discover what matters, you get a better understanding of *who* matters.

And, perhaps most importantly, you start to build a deeper appreciation for all of it. Lessons make us thankful for what we have because nothing highlights just how rich we are than a struggle.

Surviving difficult times gives you a broader view of what hardship is and what it means. You can look back at things you always complained about and realize those were just worries and they weren't as difficult as you thought they were. You can be grateful for the difficulty and you can be thankful for everything you have.

## **You Learn To Change & Accept Change**

There's nothing like a good challenge to show you where you have been going wrong. When faced with these home truths our impulse is to run in the other direction and try to escape or avoid it. Denial will do! But sometimes the reason we face difficulty is that something is off.

For example, you constantly fall ill because you don't eat well, sleep enough, or exercise. You are deep in debt because your poor mental health is fueling big spending. You trusted someone who didn't deserve your trust and they backstabbed you. Your partner broke up with you because you tried to control things because your last relationship was a mess. There are all types of causes and effects that accompany difficulty. That's not to say you're to blame for every

bad thing in your life, rather, that sometimes these difficulties are simply a lesson that you need to change. Or, that you need to learn to accept change.

When faced with difficulty, look inwardly rather than immediately looking to the external circumstances to blame. Is there an area in need of improvement? Is there something off with your attitude, outlook, or habits?

## **You Learn Your Sphere Of Control**

You cannot control everything in your life. In fact, you actually can't control much in life, but what you can control is you. That's your sphere of control. Your sphere of influence may be a bit wider, but your sphere of control begins and ends with you.

You have no control over the family you're born into. You have no control over losing a loved one. You have no control over whether you're a victim of something. You have no control over a terminal illness. When faced with difficulty, you have two choices – you can fall apart and be the victim or you can find a way to rise above it and win.

Surrendering to the circumstances of life is what makes you vulnerable and weak. Surrendering makes you easy to influence, which means you are vulnerable to bad influences. You make the wrong friends, your mental and emotional health grows unstable and it can have far-reaching effects on your life.

But that's only if you *choose* that. That's only if you *allow* that to happen. You don't have to take that path.

You are in control of yourself and if you choose not to paint yourself as the victim, then you won't be. If you choose good friends and healthy habits you

won't fall prey to difficult times, you will rise above them. You choose a healthy environment. You choose positive influences. You learn continually and build skills to last a lifetime.

## **You Learn You Choose Your Mindset**

You might not be able to change the way things are, but what you can change is how you view it. It's up to you to choose your mindset. When you master your mindset, you realize that no difficulty can master you.

It takes physical and mental strength to overcome life's most difficult moments. You will need that strength, along with plenty of support from your friends and family. That's not enough, though, you also need a positive outlook.

Life delivers both pain and leisure and you have to use them to your advantage rather than allowing them to use you. Pain can serve as your motivation, it can make you determined to work smarter, harder, and succeed.

## **You Learn How Strong You Are**

Difficulty makes you stronger, it just does. It reminds you that no matter what happens to you in this life you will find a way to overcome it. You'll be just fine. The strength you have from years of lessons and difficulty has built up and it has become one of your most valuable assets. Your willpower can overcome anything, no matter how difficult.

## **You Learn About You**

You are both your best friend and your worst enemy. One of the biggest challenges you face when going through difficult times is your self-esteem. Sometimes you just hate yourself. You hate that you've let everyone down. You hate that you've failed. You hate that you didn't have enough self-discipline. You

hate yourself for past mistakes. You can't forgive because you're too angry, sad, and upset at yourself. You just can't let go of those negative feelings you have toward yourself.

That isn't how you would treat your best friend if they were experiencing the same issue. This is why you need to understand that as you are your own worst enemy you have to balance it by being your own best friend as well.

You can keep blaming yourself for everything that's gone wrong or you can choose forgiveness and move on. By dwelling on it all you accomplish is prolonging the pain and delaying the healing. To heal you have to accept your circumstances, forgive, and move on.

When you feel yourself slipping into your own worst enemy territory when you're going through difficulty, I want you to stop and ask yourself how you would approach the situation if it was your best friend telling you their problems. Would you put them down? Would you lay blame at their door? Would you offer support and advice?

By this point, you should have learned plenty about who you are and what motivates you, use that knowledge to your advantage and start being your own best friend.

# **The Benefits Of Difficult Times**

---

## **The Benefit Of Help**

For a long time and for a lot of people, asking for help is a sign of weakness. People shouldn't or don't ask for help because it makes them feel vulnerable. When everything is going well you don't need to ask for help because you're busy living that independent life you have built for yourself.

There are times where you won't need help but being unable to ask for it when you need it will only hold you back. There's no harm in asking for help, it's not a sign of weakness, though it will make you feel vulnerable.

Vulnerability isn't bad and if you rely on the right people it's an important aspect of building strong relationships. Once you go through difficulty and learn to ask for help you learn how important it is. You'll never take help for granted again.

## **The Benefit Of Backup**

Earlier, we touched on the lesson of finding out who your friends are. That is also a benefit, but it's more to do with knowing who you can depend on when the chips are down rather than trimming the fat.

When you run into difficulty in the future, you need to know who you can rely on to help you through it and that's what difficulty will teach you. You know who is there to stand on the sidelines and cheer you on and you learn who is prepared to jump in and hold you up to cross the finish line when the time is right.

## **The Benefit Of Knowledge**

Difficulty teaches you about what matters in life, it highlights what's important to you, and it gives you a deeper understanding that nothing in this life that is worth having comes easy.

When you have to constantly overcome adversity to get to where you're going then you know just how hard it was to get there. Difficulty helped build you into the person you are now and that knowledge can help shape your future. You don't just know what it takes, you know that you are capable of doing it.

## **The Benefit Of Coping Strategies**

Once you've been through one difficulty you start to put together coping strategies and mechanisms that will help carry you through future difficulties. It might be with small steps such as making time for a hobby, or it could be bigger steps like visiting a therapist.

Once you get through a difficult time you figure out exactly how to cope with it to make sure it doesn't knock you down, that's something you can take with you.

## **The Benefit Of Empathy**

In an ideal world, you wouldn't need to go through difficult times in order to develop empathy or compassion. However, sometimes that's what it takes to deepen empathy and compassion. You may already be a compassionate, empathetic person but the benefit of difficulty?

It deepens everything about the life experience. That empathy and compassion you deepen? It can help you build stronger relationships and it can help you establish more trust in those relationships.

## **The Benefit Of Success**

The more difficulty you face the harder you work to get what you want and the more successful you will be. It's difficult to chase success when you don't know what you should be chasing because you don't know who you are or what you want. Difficulty helps you learn more about all of those things.

There is also the aspect of your friendship group pushing you to succeed and wanting to see it happen.

## **The Benefit Of Relationships**

After going through difficult times, you get a better sense of just how important your relationships are. We've already touched on how you learn who you can rely on, but more importantly, you understand just how important those people are to you and how valuable vulnerability is in building strong relationships. The time you spend with loved ones is important and those people can help you get a better handle on who you are.

## **The Benefit Of Spirituality**

Whether you are religious or not, you have a spiritual side that needs to be fed. While religious people feed their spirituality by spending time in prayer, holy texts, and their community, non-religious people can nurture their spirituality through meditation, community, and even self-care.

It's difficult to maintain that when life throws you a curveball. But even though you feel powerless in times of difficulty your spirituality offers you a raft of support to carry you through.

## **The Benefit Of Appreciation**

When you are faced with difficulty, especially when it takes you to the edge, you learn to view life differently. That shift in perspective can help you see just how appreciative you should be for the life you are leading.

It might not always be easy, but every challenge you have faced, every obstacle you have overcome, has led you to this moment now. Your life is what it is because of all of your experiences and as frustrating as difficult times are, they help shape you. When you experience brokenness and life leaves you bruised then you learn to appreciate what you have more.

## **The Benefit Of Possibilities**

You have walked through difficulty, you have learned more about yourself, and at the end of it all, you can look at life through a new lens. The lens of endless possibilities.

# Coping Tools & Support

---

You will face difficult moments in this life and as much as they teach you about how you are, you still need coping tools and strategies to navigate them. There is a wide variety of them, but some key tools you may find useful include writing or journaling about your feelings. Writing is an excellent outlet to work through your thoughts and process your emotions.

Problem-solving can also be an effective way to cope. When you focus on solving problems you are focused on *your* sphere of control and that can help you cope with the most difficult moments that life delivers.

Positivity can also help you deal with difficulty, choosing a positive mindset makes difficult times much easier to deal with.

## Write It Out

To continue on with the idea of writing or journaling. You can take it further. If you're dealing with difficult moments, whether it's an event or ongoing, writing it out can help you get a grip on chaotic thinking. As well as providing you with a healthy emotional release you gain insight into yourself.

Consider the best method of writing for you personally. Will you respond well to scheduling 10-15 minutes of writing at the same time each day? Is it more suitable for you to write about difficult times and events when they arise?

Perhaps you would prefer to write in letter form and address it to your past, present, or future self? It isn't about the content, the grammar, or even the artistry. This writing is for you and you alone. Whatever you choose – stick with

it. It might be painful as you get started, but the more you work at it the easier it will become.

## **Solve Your Problems**

When you're dealing with difficult and stressful moments you cannot allow yourself to waste energy by blaming others or stewing in self-pity. All that will accomplish is lessening your power. Instead, put your problems on paper and make them more manageable, find a list of solutions for every problem you record, and silence your inner critic.

Use your list regularly and assess it to get yourself through this situation as painlessly as possible. You can even use it as a pros and cons list if it helps. Sometimes, there is no such thing as a great solution, don't be afraid to accept a solution that is reasonably good or even just fine.

If you get caught up looking for a perfect solution you will only breed disappointment. When you have the solution, you can break it down into smaller steps to create your action plan.

## **Shift Your Thought Process**

How you approach problems and difficulty will dictate how effective you are in tackling them and how much it influences your mood. Take control of your thought process and move your mind away from negative thinking to more positive thinking. Learn to manage excessive worries and embrace calm.

There are plenty of ways in which you can do this but start by asking yourself just how realistic those fears and worries are. Your imagination can get out of control and think up worst-case scenarios that will never come to be.

If you know you're a big worrier, then consider scheduling daily worry time. When you feel negativity bubbling up within you, you can shove it off and delay it for your daily worry time.

Difficult times are an opportunity for growth, learning, and improvement. Never forget that. In every situation, no matter how challenging it feels, work hard to focus on the best aspects of your life.

## **Seek Support**

Sometimes the most basic help can make the biggest difference and seeking support is a big one. You can ask for help managing multiple tasks when you are struggling.

You can ask someone with similar experience for advice or guidance. You can lean on friends and family for emotional support. Or you can seek the support of a professional to walk you through the emotions related to the difficulty you're experiencing.

## **Be The Support**

What if it isn't you that needs support? What if it's someone in your life who is juggling a lot of plates? You can be the support they need and in doing so, you can prepare yourself for dealing with future difficulty. Everyone hits a rough patch and when it happens to someone you love it isn't always easy to help them through it.

When going through distressing times our brains and bodies struggle to think logically, it's difficult to see the world clearly. This is why strong support is such an important part of the process.

**If someone in your life needs support this is how you can be their rock.**

- **Compassion**

A compassionate ear is key and one of the most helpful things for you to do now is to listen to your person and offer them support and compassion. Approach them with care and let them know that you are there.

Allow them to share their experience with you and ask them guiding questions to make them feel comfortable and supported. Maintain a neutral, friendly expression so they feel comfortable sharing with you. To ensure you are hearing them correctly repeat back what you hear.

Whatever you do, do not express judgment, instead, provide them with helpful resources.

- **Coping Strategies**

You have a clear understanding of how important coping strategies are so encourage your friend to find coping strategies that will be effective for them and their situation.

One of the best ways to improve your mindset and headspace is to pay attention to themes and patterns and find a strategies way to handle them. So, ask your friend what does and doesn't work for them. There are plenty of ways to cope with difficult times and make them a little bit easier.

You can have a discussion about coping strategies and help them create an effective action plan. Encourage them to determine the practical steps they would like to take as well as what type of support you can offer them to ensure they achieve the goals they're aiming for.

Once that's in place, support them how they asked you to, and be sure to check in to make sure they're coping. You can also gently remind them on how best to manage the moments they are struggling with.

It helps if you run them through the strategies that worked for you and what has worked well for them in the past. It's difficult to see things clearly when you're in the midst of a difficult time. So, shifting the focus to success is important.

- **Care**

There are often warning signs when mental health dips toward a rough patch. That isn't always an easy conversation to have, especially if you're the person struggling.

Maintaining good mental health is a challenge for all of us but look out for your closest friends and let them know you care. If a friend starts to lose interest in their favorite hobbies, they are struggling with daily tasks, avoiding you, or other social interactions, and there is an uptick in their substance use then you need to sit them down for a serious conversation.

The signs of poor mental health differ from person to person, but you know your friends well enough to recognize when they aren't themselves. Don't be afraid to broach the subject if you feel like someone you love is in need of help.

Sometimes, the most important thing you can do is simply let them know you are there for them if they need you. The best thing you can do for your friend is encourage them to seek professional support if they are struggling seriously with their mental health and difficult times.

The best part of having a strong social circle is that it's a two-way street.

## **Final Thoughts**

---

Difficulty is inevitable, it's going to happen. You can't find the light until you first walk through the darkness. As challenging as that is, it's a necessary part of the process, and remembering that is what will help you through it.

The lessons you learn will help shift and change your view of life. It will teach you who matters, what matters, and just how strong you are.

That's what difficulty can teach you, and if you use them to your advantage, there's no telling just how far you will go.