

TIP SHEET: For Surviving or Thriving in Difficult Times

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1. **Gain perspective: find ways to step back and get a wider or longer view on issues or challenges.** A Pavlovian experiment illustrates this very well. He led hungry dogs to a 4' high by 4' wide chain link fence with food on the other side. The dogs were only released right at the fence. Instead of backing up to go around the fence, the dogs fixated on getting through the fence to the food. Becoming too involved in problems can lead to emotional blindness.
2. **Work from a framework of possibility.** You are not a passive responder to stimuli. You are an initiator of plans. Reframe problems/obstacles as interesting challenges or opportunities for change.
3. **Foster networks, partnerships and collaborations.** Don't fall into the heroic mode of leadership; you cannot do it all by yourself. Collaborative problem solving almost always leads to better solutions.
4. **Have a vision.** Flow to where you want to be. Develop metaphors and mental models that allow you to realize your vision.
5. **Take time to strengthen your core, your centre.** Articulate your principles, values and beliefs. Determine what you need to flourish in your personal, professional, and creative life.
6. **Be passionate about what you do; care, participate fully.**
7. **Make productive decisions.** Don't cut things for expediency or from fear. Focus on the most important factors or issues for you and your organization's long term health and sustainability.
8. **Work at building a positive culture in your organization.** Develop a culture and way of working that brings out positive subjective experiences as well as the achievement of organizational goals and aspirations.
9. **Take a long term view to protect future relationships and revenues.** Now is not the time to give up on the work required to build and deepen relationships with the audience, donors and community stakeholders.
10. **Get out and have fun!**