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## Tips for Dealing with Adversity, Crises, and Failure

By the Association of Corporate Counsel

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### *Highlights:*

- *A crisis or adversity can be an opportunity for professional growth.*
- *Failure can be an opportunity to deal with negative feelings.*
- *Knowing your value to your company can help you see the positive in an adverse situation.*

How to deal with adversity and failure? Failing is part of life, and usually involves negative feelings that can even lead us to question our self-worth. While it may be tempting to focus on such thoughts and feelings, consider the tips below to self-reflect, learn, and move forward. This list is mainly based on the ACC Webcast “[What Does Not Sink You Makes You Smarter: The Lawyer Thriving Professionally in a Crisis](#)” by Benedikte Leroy, General Counsel of Volvo Trucks, Paul Anderson-Walsh, Co-Founder of The Centre for Inclusive Leadership, and Trevor Faure, CEO of Smarter Law Solutions.

1. Dealing with a crisis or adverse events will require you to use both **logic and emotion**.
2. **When adversity or a crisis occurs**, it can raise questions of how you feel about yourself.
3. **Having humility** helps to mitigate negative feelings that arise from failure.
4. Understand that **personality impacts how people react** to a crisis or adversity. In a professional crisis or adversity, it is tempting to look at a failure as meaning we as a person are a failure.
5. **People who are self-conscious** tend to view failure as indicative of their personal inadequacy, and decide they are a failure.
6. **People who are confident, less self-conscious** often say they failed in a particular situation, but do not view themselves as failures, and they deal with failure through self-reflection.
7. Crises and failure tend to exacerbate **negative thoughts and feelings that are already in the background**.

8. **Acknowledge** your negative thoughts or feelings that may accompany a failure or crisis (such as low self-esteem), but **don't dwell on these**.
9. **Look for the lessons learned in adversity**. It helps to become more resilient.
10. **Knowing how to process failure** is key, and an indicator of success. A good strategy to deal with failure is to **keep the will to succeed, come up with a plan that lays out how specifically you will reach your goal, and reach out** to others who can help you.
11. **Cultivate people** (within or outside the organization) who will help you when a crisis occurs. Identify people you trust, with whom you can safely share, ideally people who care about you beyond what they may need from you.
12. **Knowing your value** to the organization can help to protect your self-esteem during a crisis.
13. Ask yourself **what core values and passion motivate you**. You can build on these to fuel your will to overcome adversity and to keep progressing.

**Learn more** in the ACC Webcast: [“What Does Not Sink You Makes You Smarter: The Lawyer Thriving Professionally in a Crisis”](#)

**Read** [“Seize the Hidden Opportunity of Crisis,”](#) by Jonathan Cullen, *ACC Docket*, December 2016, pp. 55-61

**Read** [“3 Well-being Tips to Stay Centered in a Crisis,”](#) by Merridy Woodroffe, *ACC Docket*, 24 April 2020, [www.accdocket.com](http://www.accdocket.com)

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