



Heart & soul

Cate Mackenzie, our resident love coach, helps readers open their hearts to relationships they never thought possible

Step out of the shadows

Tough situations aren't easy to deal with, but you can reap spectacular rewards from them

It can seem like the end of the world when you are faced with challenging, traumatic or even life-changing situations. However, these testing times can be an opportunity to discover a much stronger side to yourself and to better understand your needs.

I'll give you an example. When two dear friends of mine were diagnosed with serious illnesses, they realised they needed to take more care of themselves.

Since then, they've slowed down and are paying far more attention to their own wants and needs.

Difficult situations allow us to get in touch with lost pieces of ourselves, parts that we may have buried when we were children. When something problematic occurs, such as a health problem or communication breakdown with your partner, it triggers childhood feelings, such as rejection, not being good enough, or fear and anger. But instead of giving into these feelings, we need to take control of them and make them work positively for us.

It's not just the different situations and challenges we face that help us grow, but the different people we encounter too.

The key to handling

times of conflict and challenge is to learn to calm down and be present. Take a moment to breathe and relax and find the answer you need so you can gather the courage to take the next step in your life. This could mean having an honest talk with someone, moving home, or making lifestyle changes.

'Take that next step by just being you...'

And try to remember, if you hadn't experienced that tough time, you might not have found a way to summon your strength, become present and discover a new part of yourself that's willing to take risks on this adventure called life and become the person you want to be.

You may always have felt as though you were waiting to become 'good enough' before you would dare to listen to your true self and try to achieve what you wanted in life, but why wait?

What if you are good enough today? What would you do, or become? What if the difficulties occurring now are pushing you to

accept yourself and take the next step? Make that move today!

We can often fear growth but instead of looking at life's challenges as negative moments, see them as chances to push yourself towards greater things.

How to face challenges

When you are confronted with a challenging situation, use it to your advantage by asking yourself the questions below, then doing a simple meditation:

'Who would you be without your fear?'

If you did not feel so afraid what would you do?'

What would the dream life you desire look like?'

What daily tools do you need to help you stay steady and achieve those goals?'

Now allow yourself to become calm, then visualise a golden ball of light between your hands.

Feel the shape of the ball and its strength and energy. Place your dreams and wishes (the home you want, clients you want to work with, books you want to write, the good health you want to have) into the ball as smaller globes of light, then pull the ball into your belly.

Do this every morning for two weeks and notice how the tricky challenges you are facing become less of an ordeal, and your life begins to take an upward turn. ■

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Cate Mackenzie is a love coach and couples counsellor with more than 20 years' experience. For more information about her work, visit catemackenzie.com

View challenges as opportunities