

## Staying Calm Amid the Tempests of Change By Theresa Rose

Hurricane WAMU. Tropical Storm Enron. The Lehman Brothers Tsunami. In the increasingly tumultuous climate of Corporate America, it's starting to seem as if no place is safe. Nowadays, most places of employment – from small businesses to multinational corporations – contain a pocket or two of whispering staffers fretting over the impending change that is about to hit their world, or complaining about the one that just took place. They have nervously listened to economic reports of doom and gloom, heard rumors circulating throughout the office corridors, watched a steady stream of co-workers come and go, and grumbled every time a new organizational chart is delivered to their e-mail inbox. There's no doubt about it: People are scared.

Whether it is the result of witnessing several of the largest bankruptcies in modern history, a hostile merger or acquisition, massive reductions in force, or simply a change in management, workers across the country are being negatively affected by the widespread changes taking effect in the workplace. Stress and anxiety levels are increasing, productivity is decreasing and job-hopping is commonplace, thus lowering an already basement-level employee morale.

If you have ever been in a major weather event such as a hurricane, tornado or earthquake, you are undoubtedly familiar with the few basic rules of survival and protection. Corporate changes are not unlike these natural occurrences, as they can often inflict similar emotional and financial upset. If you find yourself in the throes of yet another career shakeup, here are a few helpful hints on how not only to weather the storm, but also to emerge head and shoulders above your competition once the dust settles.

- 1) **Expect it.** Every year a hurricane will hit land somewhere. It is not probable; it is *inevitable*. Change in the business world is exactly the same. A company is an entity, and like all entities, it grows and evolves over time. In fact, it needs to change, because a stagnant company will eventually become a failed one. If you know that change – potentially a great deal of it – is guaranteed to happen, it will help you minimize the shock and denial that sometimes surface when it invariably hits.
- 2) **Be prepared.** When a big storm threatens a community, there are two key steps to adequately prepare: develop a solid plan and secure the necessary provisions. You want to know what you are going to do and what you need to do it. The same holds true for your employment. Before the storm of change hits, decide now what you want from your career and how your skills, credentials and desires match your current employment. This may mean keeping your resume polished up, if only to boost your own comfort level and confidence. A calm, prepared employee typically survives the rocky roller coaster ride of corporate change a lot easier. As for provisions, you may want to identify what financial needs you and

your family have to be comfortable. Do you have all of your finances in place to ensure that these provisions are met? If not, it is wise to do so before the storm hits and your priorities will be on other things.

- 3) **Ride it out.** OK. The storm has hit. You have a new office, boss, job, or company (or maybe you just found out that you no longer have any of them)! The wind is howling, the shutters are banging and the power is out. Everyone around you is panicking. What should you do when you are in the eye of the storm? Now is the time to get grounded and centered. Take some deep breaths, and become your favorite tree (yes, you read it correctly: your favorite tree). Pretend that you have thick roots in your legs, and imagine that they are plunging deep into the ground below you. Trust that everything will happen exactly as it needs to in your highest good, and surrender to the Powers That Be. You are not in charge, but you have the ability to stay calm while the storm passes. Keep breathing!
  
- 4) **Clean up afterward.** At this point you are surveying the damage. As you look around, you can't help but notice the casualties and the huge amount of work ahead of you. First and foremost, give yourself permission to feel bad for a while, and honor the fact that you just went through a difficult challenge. If others are hurt by the change, extend a compassionate hand. But after a short period of time, decide that you want to get on with your life once again. Make a graceful exit from the pity party, roll up your sleeves and get to work. Start getting to know your new co-workers, learn the ins and outs of your new role or flesh out your next career trajectory. Whatever the results of the change are, know that the sooner you stop the self-destructive spin cycle of complaining, the quicker you will move back into a place of happiness and prosperity.

The spate of corporate fear can be addressed when we take our cues from the lessons of Mother Nature. By adequately preparing for and weathering the inevitable tempests of change, you will clearly set yourself apart from the rest of the people who are still cowering around the water cooler hoping that tapping their heels three times will return them to a safe, static work environment. Through awareness, preparation, centeredness, and acceptance, you will move swiftly through the blowing winds of change and ultimately emerge more joyful and successful than ever before.

About the Author:

*Theresa Rose is an inspirational speaker and author of the newly released, [Opening the Kimono](#). As the founder of [Serious Mojo Publications](#), Theresa specializes in fresh approaches to energy management, productivity and creative development. Her past experience includes several entrepreneurial and management positions, including owning and operating an alternative healing center, senior manager of marketing and product development for a Fortune 100 telecommunications firm and vice president of a consulting firm specializing in higher education. For more information, visit [www.TheresaRose.net](http://www.TheresaRose.net).*