

The Victim Support Foundation (VSF) is a non-governmental, not for profit organization that introduces victims of violent crime to the benefits of professional, emotional, mental and practical support. These services help them cope and overcome the many challenges that are associated with the personal effects of violent crime.

In an effort to fulfill one of our objectives to educate victims and public on support techniques that assist on the journey to recovery, the following is an excerpt from the manuscript "Bounce Back Better, The Game Shifter 10 Key Steps for Overcoming Adversity." The book will become available later in 2016.

**We are constantly faced with situations that take us out of our comfort zones or catapult us into despair. It may be attending a function by yourself, not knowing anyone else there... and you are an introvert. Or it may be losing a job or simply the prospect of losing a job. Perhaps you are awaiting the results of a medical examination; you play a variety of scenarios in your mind: "I have cancer...or diabetes... or high blood pressure...or a heart condition"... and the list goes on. It could be the devastating news of the death of a loved one. Divorce may be on the horizon. Maybe you left home blissfully unaware of dramatic circumstances that would soon unfold: a robbery or an accident involving serious personal injury.**

**When we are dealt with circumstances that upset our equilibrium in life, what do we do? Do we stop doing all that we set out to do? Do we pretend that we are superhuman and fight and struggle unsuccessfully against those upsets? Or do we adjust our internal meters, reset our goals and circumnavigate around the obstacle? To be able to stand tall, with your character strengthened and your dignity maintained, I suggest that it is best to select the last option.**

**Initially you may have to stop doing some activities which become beyond your new capacity. You may need time to come to terms with the situation. The time needed for grief and eventual acceptance of the setback is unique for each individual. This is an essential step before anyone can overcome any type of challenge. Some persons need very little time; others need days, weeks, months or years. It does not make you inferior to someone else if you need more time than they appear to need.**

**Instead like in the fairy tale, Cinderella, no one else can fit exactly into your shoes. Your inherent traits such as personality, your experiences, your beliefs, values and faith, your position in life and your resilience are some of the factors which determine the size and shape of your proverbial shoe. Science is now finding evidence that there is a secondary, chemical-based system which works along with the main central nervous system for relaying messages throughout the body. This secondary system uses large molecules to translate emotional experiences into physical symptoms or signals. This means that emotions are not experienced only in the brain but they may also trigger biochemical reactions in almost every system in the body. It supports the mind-body connection; what affects the mind does seem to affect the body.**

**Thus there is evidence that you should not allow anyone to minimize your grief or the time you need to heal after an experience that was traumatic for you. We have to be prepared for such challenges and go through a process of grieving, customized for our unique situations. There is one**

**catch though; while grieving is important if it becomes an obstacle to healing then professional help becomes imperative.**

**However, once you are past the grief stage of a trying experience then acceptance of your current situation will step in and you will be ready to take responsibility for reassessing and resetting your goals. The real challenge is not in avoiding the hurdles of life but in being able to recognize them for what they are: catalysts of change. It is in being able to embrace those obstacles which stand in the way of the path that you selected for yourself and using them to sidestep to another path. Great insight is gained when the curved ball thrown at you is used to your advantage. The greatest gain comes when you are able to discern that the ball was curved to divert you in a different direction.**

**In allowing yourself to feel it is also important to pay attention to when you begin to feel overwhelmed or when the weight of grief is becoming too burdensome. At such times it may be in your best interest to share your burden with someone else. It may be as simple as saying to a close friend or relative, "I just need someone to sit quietly with me." Alternatively you may turn to someone outside of your immediate support circle. You may feel a greater level of comfort disclosing more information to someone with whom you are less intimate. Perhaps professional help may even be considered and necessary.**

**Do not make the mistake of thinking about acceptance as giving up. Acceptance and giving up are on opposite spectrums of resilience. Acceptance means coming to terms with the loss you may have experienced. It implies acknowledging the extent of what has happened, neither do you enlarge its effect nor reduce the magnitude of how much it hurts. Instead you recognize it for what it is, you examine how deeply it hurts and why. In this way you will take away from the experience, the energy of emotion needed to propel you into a brighter future, knowing that there will be more obstacles but that if you can overcome this one then you are better equipped to combat any further hurdles in the event of life.**

This excerpt focuses on one step in the Bounce Back Better Game Shifter book by Caron Asgarali. Nine other steps are shared in the book. The steps are essential to recovery from challenging, life defining events. Other books and resources are available for those needing to face and overcome the effects of trauma at the Victim Support Foundation's website [www.tntvsf.org](http://www.tntvsf.org).