

What Would MacGyver Do? Make the Most of Trying Circumstances

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Based on all the bumper stickers that read, "I'd rather be sailing, dancing, island hopping. . . ," wanting to be somewhere we're not is a human dilemma! When this happens and you're at work, what do you do?



Did you ever watch the 80s TV show called "MacGyver?" MacGyver was an *everyday hero* who'd be trying to help someone and end up in the toughest spot, like getting locked in a walk-in freezer. Instead of panicking, struggling, or just giving up, he'd calmly take stock of what he had within his reach, perhaps a shoe string, a match, and a bobby pin, and somehow he'd get out alive-- *and* catch the bad guys.

In your life, you're the everyday hero. You're the one trying to do what it takes to get the job done-with whatever you have at hand. Trying to be health conscious by exercising consistently, eating balanced meals, spending time with family, getting enough sleep, etc., often gets placed in the "when I have time" file. Some days, the weightiness seems impossible. In addition to an already full load, you have several big projects nearing deadline, need to meet with an unexpected, key client, conduct performance reviews with your employees, and attend a conference.

When this happens, what do you do? Do you panic about how you'll get everything done, muscle your way through at a crazy pace, or just give up and hope for the best, forgetting entirely about your most valuable resource- you? These reactions may get you through the immediate crisis, but over time they can negatively impact your health and ability to function optimally.

If instead of resorting to the usual overwhelming response, you could do what MacGyver does and look around for the obvious, simple solutions.

For example, you're tired from sitting in a long meeting, and you know you'll be working late to get the rest of your tasks done, missing your after hours workout or just downtime away from the office. Instead of feeling trapped, mentally "checking out," or getting annoyed, think like MacGyver. *"Ok, I'm in this meeting for another hour, but I could . . . "*

Taking his simple approach you'd calmly take stock and look for ways to bounce back-shifting both your energy and attitude-in that very moment. While your need may differ from a bobby pin, a string, and a match, there are simple things nearby you can look for and use.

While teaching a class to a group of employees, I asked them to give me examples of how they could create positive change when they're in what seems like an unbearable or at least trying situation. They came up with the following list, and for your benefit, I've added the positive effect their suggestions would have on your physical and mental well-being:

- Drink water - This suppresses hunger, flushes toxins, moisturizes skin, lubricates tissue and increases mental clarity.
- Breathe deeply - to relax muscles, reduce anxiety and stress, and increase calm energy.
- Sit up straight - to increase tone in core muscles and reduce tension in neck and back.
- Exercise - Yes, you can do simple exercises while sitting in your chair to reduce fatigue and discomfort. See [Exercise While on a Plane](#)
- Stand up - Adjust the blinds, get a drink, or throw something away, and your body and mind will benefit from the increased circulation.

- Drop a pen - As you're bending over to pick it up, you'll stretch muscles and increase your brain oxygen supply. (A subtle and creative move!)
- See the positive - (Think of 5 or more things you're grateful for or appreciate about being in the meeting and the people there.) It will boost your attitude and change your perspective about being there.
- Smile - It's been proven that smiling makes you feel better, and it's infectious. :)
- Speak up - if you notice other participants also checking out or nodding off. Refocusing on the agenda or a short break may be just what the group needs to be more productive.

These are some simple suggestions. What would work for you?

Tap into your resourcefulness. Be creative. Make a game out of it. You may discover you have more options than you think.

If you do this in small ways throughout the day, you'll find yourself more present, alert, and maybe even more interested in what's going on in the meeting. And, you may find you have more energy to finish what's still on your desk. The challenges won't seem so tedious if you know how to slip in healthy practices as you work.

You can also use this approach when away from work. Where else do you find yourself feeling stuck and wanting to escape? Commuting? Traveling in an airport? Working indoors on a beautiful day? Pretend you're MacGyver and challenge yourself to find simple things you could use or do to make the most of a trying circumstance.

You'll find yourself spending less time thinking, "*I'd rather . . .*" and more time saying, "*I could . . .*" When you're not resisting what is, you have more energy and enthusiasm for being happier and healthier right where you are.

Enjoy!

Christine
MBA, Doctor of Naturopathy

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