

Stockdale

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What I'm about to write is not my own at all; it is taken from an article about the Stockdale Paradox: <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/what-the-stockdale-paradox-tells-us-about-crisis-leadership>

There are many lessons relevant to many of us; I will share some:

- “If it feels depressing for me, how on earth did he survive when he was actually there and *did not know the end of the story?*”
- “I never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade.”
- You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.
- I lived on a day-to-day basis. ... [M]ost guys thought it was really better for everybody to be an optimist. I wasn't naturally that way; I knew too much about....
- The Stockdale Paradox—have faith, but confront reality—can be seen in slightly different forms in many cultures.
- “What, then, is to be done? To make the best of what is in our power, and take the rest as it naturally happens” . Therapy techniques such as radical acceptance similarly emphasize the point of letting go of desires and beliefs about what should be and seeing reality as it is.
- “They experience despair and stress, and acknowledge the horror of what’s happening. But even in the darkest of places, they see glimmers of light, and this ultimately sustains them.”
- Adaptation is breaking and unlearning, followed by consolidation, during which the new circumstances—though they may be unwanted and hostile—are accepted as “real,” and the survivor begins to function again.
- There is no point at which this becomes easy. Success in a long-term survival situation means getting up and fighting each day. “The persistent practitioner of endurance who carried the day for courage. The game of physical intimidation was not won or lost in one grand showdown.
- However, such advice can backfire if it creates a black-and-white mentality in which one lapse invalidates the whole (the “I’ve eaten one cookie so I may as well eat the whole bag” syndrome). The most important thing is to get up each day with determination, not entrapped by the failures of the previous day.

Perhaps there is some benefit for someone. Godspeed!

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