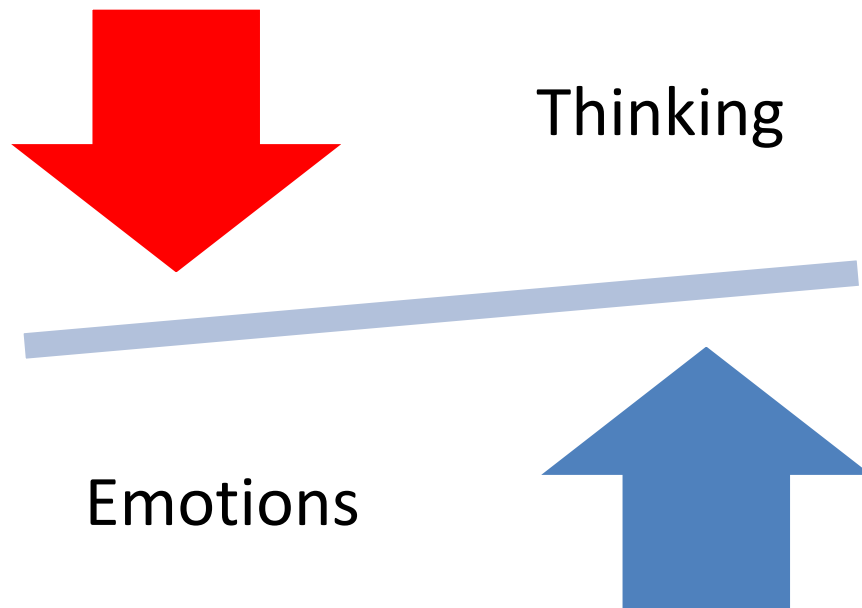


How to deal with difficult and uncertain times

1. Recognise that things are different. They were comfortable and reasonably certain and now they are not. Uncertainty means that you are in a different situation.
2. Because you are in a different situation it is most likely that you are going to have to do something different to resolve the situation. There is a saying – if you always do what you have always done you will always get what you have always got. Try something different.
3. Explore – treat this situation like a mystery. It is new situation and needs examining. There is one thing for certain - every new and uncertain situation has hidden in it some advantages. You just need to find them. Use the LADS system:
 - a. Listen – keep your ears open and your opinions to yourself. Your opinions will change the way others think – you need data.
 - b. Ask - ask lots of open questions – there is no such thing as a stupid question, question others and your own assumptions.
 - c. Diversity – get thoughts from as many differing views as possible especially the non experts – they often see things the experts don't.
 - d. Step back – become an observer of what is happening and don't get too involved especially at first. The UK police keep the top and the second commanders away from the scene of riots for example so that they keep a strategic view and not a tactical one.
4. There is a balance between our feelings and our thinking, it's a little like a see-saw. When we are focussed on thinking about things *outside of us* we don't notice what we are feeling. When we have strong feelings or emotions our thinking is usually poor. Hence the saying that someone has had 'a knee jerk reaction' to something. What we mean is that they have just reacted to the emotion that they have had to the situation and not thought about the situation. As this is a see-saw when we are in an emotional space, feeling things our thinking is low. When we are in a thinking space our emotions start to reduce. Exploring things in an

uncertain situation will help you stay in control.



5. Treat the situation as if you are on a mountain top and a fog has suddenly descended.
 - a. Keep people close as if you are roped together – sticking together is important now
 - b. Make sure everyone knows and is focussed on one thing – getting out of the situation so set a destination that everyone can recognise.
 - c. Listen to each other – good ideas often come from the most unlikely of sources.
 - d. Diversity of thinking is important now – get as many views as possible.
 - e. Keep in touch with people and become interested in how they are. This can give you early warning signs of frostbite and other problems. It will also keep you focussed in a thinking space and out of the emotional space. Givers do better in difficult situations than takers do.
 - f. Move slowly; make sure everyone is with you. Take this step by step. You should never run on a mountain!
6. Celebrate successes and use mistakes as good learning. Mistakes will happen. They give you feedback, welcome them and make sure that everyone knows that mistakes are made by people who are trying. In recent research on entrepreneur success it was found that those that made it big made more mistakes and learnt more. Dealing with new situations is a learning process – otherwise it wouldn't be difficult. People who don't make mistakes are usually spending most of their times watching their backs, being risk averse and are not spending all of their time and energy working on finding every possible way to win. One thing that is worth considering is that uncertainty is considered to be the number one cause of risk adversity. Unfortunately this means that at the very moment that innovation and exploration is required, when things are uncertain, the conditions are most likely to promote risk adversity. Now obviously you don't want fool hardy risk taking on a mountain in the fog, however at the other end risk aversion can cause paralysis. Having a strategy to promote

innovation and exploration can bring about new and better ways of doing things in a situation that as we have discussed previously is different.

7. Difficult and uncertain situations all have opportunities in them. Keep a mindset going that you are looking for opportunities. This will keep you positive and you will most likely find the opportunities. People who look for problems usually find them. People who are seeking opportunities in difficult situations likewise also usually find them.

For more help and great ideas we have a series of practical and engaging workshops and online seminars. Visit www.centrei.org/workshops for more.

The book *The Ambiguity Advantage* by David Wilkinson is available at all good book stores and can be ordered from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).