

## Dealing with Adversity - Parable of the Carrot, the Egg, and the Coffee

(Author unknown)

A young woman went to her mother and told her how hard things were in her life. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about thirty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied. Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its richness. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?" Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity ... boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling

water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. “Which are you?” she asked her daughter. “When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?” How about you? Does the boiling water of pain change you? Have you gone into hardship fragile like an egg, but come out hardened and bitter? Or strong like a carrot, only to be softened and defeated? Or, like the coffee beans, have you allowed the situation to be an opportunity for growth and change?

If you would like to get in touch to share your leadership journey with us, please email us at [inquiry@coachingleaderstosuccess.com](mailto:inquiry@coachingleaderstosuccess.com)