We may be facing a few health, financial, or relational problems, but more frequently, our hard times arise from our mind. Mental hard time is mostly a wounded ego. In such times, all we need is a shift in our thinking, the way we see and interpret life. Here are five tips to help us rise above our challenges.

1) Is this the worst?
Ask yourself, ‘Is this the worst that can happen to you? How do you think you would have handled something worse than this?’ You are anxious about the money you have lent to someone; think, ‘What if the person had refused to pay it back.’ When we draw a longer line parallel to another, the latter one looks shorter. It is our overthinking that makes any situation seem like it is hard to handle. The moment we change the track of our thinking to – ‘This is not the worst’, the panic that crippled us subsides, and that situation becomes easy to manage.

2) How can I use this hard time for my growth?
Instead of feeling bad, weak, blank or confused, let’s think how we can utilise hard times to become braver, stronger, more creative and loving. You’ve been trying hard to achieve something but you are not being successful. Think differently, ‘If this doesn’t seem to be yielding result, let me try another way.’ When we meet with a wall, if we don’t feel dejected and get stagnated, we will discover within us, a surge of energy that will open up more avenues for handling the same situation efficiently and that situation becomes easy to manage.

3) Start healing your wounds instead of increasing them
When you make a mistake, your wounded ego can blow it up to an extent that you condemn yourself, ‘I have no worthiness. I have lost the rajipo of my Guru.’ Correct, you have. But rajipo can be regained too. Instead of being your enemy, be your friend. Be humble to accept your mistake and with a heart filled with deep gratitude and love, work hard to win back the rajipo. Turn hysterical moment into a historical moment, one that you reminisce as an event that made you braver and stronger.

4) Learn to appreciate and enjoy all seasons
Everyday one cannot get sunshine. Learn to appreciate even the cloudy weather. This will take away all your desires, anxieties and insecurities. You won’t say this is a hard time and this time is soft. ‘Hard’or ‘soft’ are not nouns; they are adjectives reflecting your conditioned mind. How can you be strong and creative if you keep complaining about life? All those you consider as heroes, even they have a lot of ‘external sufferings’. When you learn to enjoy all seasons, you will become a bright and warm presence for those who need to rise above their clouds.

5) See yourself getting purified in the fire of hard times
Sometimes or rather always, a bad day for your ego is a good day for the soul. We become more matured to endure and handle life passing through the fire of hard times. We always count our losses. Why don’t we start counting our blessings? Sometimes we have to pay the price for our foolishness. But let’s be grateful that we could catch at the bud stage before it could grow into a big disaster. In hard times, we get to know our strength as well as our weaknesses. But knowing our weakness in itself is strength. Ultimately we come out stronger, wiser than before.

When life is showing us opportunities, we are busy planning ahead in time, ‘Once this finishes I shall do this. And if this doesn’t work, what would I do?’ Not realising that life has already given solution to all our problems, we are so busy thinking that we miss the important lessons life wants us to learn. Make hard time a satsang. Understand that it is your desire and ego that is projecting difficulties while others see ‘Your hard time’ as insignificant. Don’t just jot these points down and save them in memory. Repeat and apply again and again till they become your beliefs.