

ADVOCACY INSTITUTE

MAKING SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIC, EFFECTIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE

HOW DO ADVOCATES SUSTAIN THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

□ **Advice from Advocacy Institute U.S. Leadership Fellows** □

Be a mentor to someone new.

Being a source of support and guidance to a young person, or someone new to the field, can actually energize you. There's just something about being a contribution to others that ends up being a contribution to yourself.

Make contact with friends not involved with the issue.

Take some time to connect with friends or colleagues working in an entirely different issue area or different industry altogether. And who knows? They may provide you with a new insight that you never expected!

Laugh at and learn from your mistakes.

Who is it who said that every difficulty is an "opportunity for growth"? When we can allow ourselves some humor and humility about our mistakes, perhaps a way can open up to see what's now in front of us in a new light.

Don't take things personally.

When we're focused so closely on events, we can come to feel that every little thing that happens is a reflection on us personally. Remember that, as a person, you are so much more than the events happening around you.

Be with those most affected by the issue.

Sometimes we're so busy advocating our issue that we lose touch with those for whom we advocate. Spend some time with them to remind yourself why you're doing this work, why it's so important.

Take time out.

Yes you can. Other leaders will step up – and they'll thank you afterwards.

Realize it's not all up to you; don't try to carry the world on your shoulders.

Take a moment and remember your team – first your day-to-day colleagues, then your allies farther afield, all the way out to the broader social justice community. You are not in it alone; you don't have to carry it alone.

Spend time with friends and family.

Do something entirely different from your work. Throw an impromptu block party; go to that movie you keep meaning to see. Hold that newborn niece or nephew for awhile.

Remember there a divine plan for everything; get in touch with the divine.

Whatever your expression of the divine, a return to that context will never fail to recontextualize everything else, and give a sense of renewal.

Cook and throw a party for everyone.

There is time, to laugh and reconnect. There are rich sights and smells to be enjoyed. There are tasks that have a finite beginning and a finite end – and that are their own reward!

Compare your difficulties with those endured by people before you.

Our predecessors give us not only perspective, but also pride - a renewed energy to carry on their legacy.

Tell people about your work.

You'll find yourself remembering all over again what inspires you, why it is important.

Draw on energy from other positive people.

We catch the spark from one another and take fire again. Find someone whose enthusiasm is burning brightly in this moment, and let it kindle your own.