

Resilience: Bend and bounce—so you won't break

During these rapidly changing tunes, resiliency is an essential trait that is in high demand.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back, adapt to adversity and roll with the punches. It provides the flexibility for us to restore ourselves, and our lives, after experiencing a setback or loss.

Although there may be a genetic fact or involved, **resilience is not something you are born with. You can learn, build and develop that trait.**

Become more resilient by following this advice:

1. Connect

Resilience does not mean standing alone through hard times. **Relationships with others who are supportive and positive are essential to achieving and maintaining resilience.** Mentors, friends, family, advisers and co-workers can provide encouragement and advice during uncertain or troubling times. ___ Isolation creates brittleness and inflexibility: **You're more likely to sink into a negative state of mind when you're alone to focus on your losses or failures. Your** connectedness involves not only receiving but also **giving encouragement, experience, strength and hope.** When you reach out to support and share with others, you gain and build resilience and allow yourself a chance to heal from your **personal failure.** Remember to have fun. Fun does wonders for your sense of humor, your resilience and your health.

2. Learn and laugh

Allow yourself to review past events and reinterpret them, drawing strength from your experiences. As you review your life, step back and look at yourself objectively, as if you are watching a movie. Review your story and find humor, inspiration and courage where you can. Give yourself credit for character and grace, and **avoid blaming or judging yourself or others.** Refuse to engage in beating yourself up or “should-ing” yourself to death. **Accept the things you can't change and take stock of the things that are within your power to change.** One thing that is always in reach, always in your power to change, is your attitude. Everyone has a story. Remember that you are the author of your life story; you may prefer to think of yourself as **the** director of your “life movie.” If so, cast yourself as the hero. You can find your bearings and begin working toward a triumphant third act or conclusion. And, as in movies, a little comic relief can't hurt. **“Remember, you're working on the next scene in your life's movie, so make it a comeback story—a triumph of the human spirit theme.”**

3. Plan

If you want to build resilience, you will need a **daily plan of action.** **Action creates motivation, and motivation creates more action.**

Be proactive in the face of adversity, failure, loss, illness or injury. Advance in the face of difficulties or challenges, one day at a time.

Remember, you're working on the next scene in your life's movie, so make it a comeback story—a triumph of the human spirit theme. Reach out and march headlong toward all that life has to offer.

Think: *This experience did not destroy me. I can use what doesn't kill me to make myself stronger and more flexible.*

Set measurable, attainable goals and be consistent with your action plan.

4. Practice being optimistic

Always look forward to a bright future. **Visualization is a powerful tool** used by athletes and performers, but it is effective for people from all walks of life. At least once a day, take time to visualize yourself where you want to be, and celebrate it as though you are already there.

Permit yourself to feel all the peace, exultation and joy that comes as you picture yourself in this specific, happy situation, having reached your goal. **It's good to visualize the same thing each day—repetition programs your subconscious mind.**

Write affirmations **or** use mantras. Those tools can help you to establish your own inner cheerleading squad. When you

choose a mantra, be sure it's positive. "It's temporary," "I'm learning" or "I'm healing" are positive mantras. Obviously, "Why me?" or "It's not fair" are not positive mantras. Practice meditation and develop skills to counteract negative feelings and mindsets.

Remember that if you feel good, things will go better. And **feeling good is a choice.** You can change negative thought habits; that has been scientifically proven with behavioral therapies. Use positive self-talk. Direct your inner dialogue, allowing moment-by-moment opportunities to encourage yourself as a friend, mentor, coach and advocate.

It's your movie, your life story. Often, the best-loved films are stories where underdogs triumph: where the lead characters, presented with adversity, discover their deep inner strength, embrace change, learn powerful lessons, bounce back and ultimately win the day. **Resilient people view difficulty as an opportunity to adapt, create, innovate and advance in one or many areas of their lives.** Does art imitate life, or is it the other way around? That's up to you.