

Building Personal Resilience



Stress is a part of everybody's life, but sometimes events such as the loss of a job, the death of a loved one, a diagnosis of a serious illness, or a divorce, can create extreme physical and psychological stress reactions. The ability to function and adapt to extreme stressors is called resilience, and can be developed and enhanced by anybody.

People who are considered resilient in the face of difficulties tend to have the following characteristics:

PROBLEM SOLVING: They size up the situation and think of strategies to deal with it. They have confidence that there is something that can be done to move forward, and they believe in their ability to do so.

LIFE PURPOSE: Keeping their purpose in sight does not mean they are always happy or relaxed, but they are willing to sacrifice short-term pleasure for long-term goals.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE: Their lives include exercise, relaxation, and good nutrition.

RELATIONSHIPS: They have a variety of attachments to people and animals.

VALUES: They care for other people, in their immediate circle and the larger community. They believe in their ability to make the world a better place for all.

The above are not characteristics we "just have," they can be developed by incorporating the following into your life:

ACCEPT CHANGE: Remember that you cannot always change an event, but you can change your reaction to it. Acknowledging the reality of what you do have control over helps you focus on areas where you can take positive steps.

DEVELOP GOALS: Take small realistic steps daily that help you feel a sense of accomplishment. Imagine the best or most realistic outcome, rather than remaining focused on the worst possibilities.

MAKE CHANGES IN YOUR LIFESTYLE: Eat and sleep well, avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine, find time to relax and nurture your spirit. These changes can make all the difference in coping with challenging situations.

REACH OUT TO OTHERS: Support from people who care about you strengthens and comforts you. It also can be helpful to reach out to others who need assistance.

TEND TO YOUR INNER LIFE: Spending time alone in meditation or prayer, or writing in a journal can help you put stressful events in perspective, and gain a sense of trust in your ability to persevere.

REACH FURTHER: If you are struggling with developing your own resources, it may be helpful to talk to a professional about strategies for moving forward. You can contact us for a referral to a qualified professional.



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