

Resilience, what is it? How do we build it?

What is resilience? The simplest explanation of resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. It is our ability to adapt and bounce back when things don't go to plan. Resilient people don't dwell on failures; they accept the situation, learn from their mistakes, and then move forward.

Often, we wonder how some people seem to remain calm when faced with adversity, while others appear to become unstuck. People that can 'keep their cool' during those situations have what we call resilience, that ability to cope with life's problems and setbacks.

The problems and setbacks that resilience can help us deal with and overcome may include job loss, financial difficulty, disappointment, health issues, natural disasters, medical emergencies, divorce or bereavement. Instead of falling into depression, or avoiding problems with unhealthy coping strategies; resilient people face these difficulties head-on. However this does not mean that they experience less distress, grief, or anxiety from anyone else experiencing a similar setback. It means that they handle life's difficulties in a way that encourages strength and growth. For many, this will mean they may emerge even stronger than they were before the setback.

On the other hand those who lack resilience may instead become overwhelmed by setbacks. They may dwell on problems and use unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with life's challenges. Disappointment or failure might drive someone to unhealthy, destructive, or even dangerous behaviours. These individuals can be slower to recover from setbacks and may experience more psychological distress as a result.

Being resilient during a time of adversity does not remove stress or life's difficulties, nor do people who possess resilience see life through rose-tinted glasses. They understand that setbacks happen and are a part of life and that sometimes, life is difficult and painful. They still experience the emotional pain, grief, and sense of loss that comes after a tragedy, but their mentality allows them to work through such feelings and recover. Resilience gives people the strength to tackle problems head-on, overcome adversity and move on with their lives.

How can you build resilience? Resilience is not something that we are born with, it is something that is developed through our experiences and our environment as we grow, but it is also something that we can develop ourselves. There are many ways that we can build up resilience and coping abilities and the final part of this article will explore some of these.

Find a sense of purpose; this could be goals in our personal life or at work, a passion or hobby. Something that gives us that daily motivation.

Build positive beliefs in your thinking and attitude; having confidence in your own ability to cope with the stresses of life can play an important part in resilience. Can you convert negative thoughts into positive messages such as “I can deal with this”, “I am going to give this my best try” or “You can do this”.

Develop a social support network; whilst just talking about a problem with a friend or loved one won't resolve the issue, it will allow you to share your feelings, receive or provide support, come up with possible solutions to your problems and potentially put things into perspective. It can often be reassuring to hear that we are not the only one going through a particular difficulty.

Embrace change; change is a leading factor of increased anxiety and stress as we are often not in control of the change. Can we embrace that change happens to everyone and try to explore and accept the change rather than dwelling on, resisting or denying the change.

Be optimistic; whilst we don't want to ignore the problem or issue, it is important to maintain a hopeful and positive outlook of what is to come.

Look after your physical wellbeing; staying on top of things like our sleep, diet and exercise can be effective in minimising the impact of a problem, improve our mood and provide us the energy to focus on overcoming that setback.

Develop your problem solving skills; research suggests that people who are able to come up with solutions to a problem are better able to cope with problems, than those who cannot. When you come up against a new challenge, make a list of some of the potential ways you could solve the problem.

We will discuss this topic in more detail and share some other insights such as the Robertson Cooper model of resilience as well as the ‘Stress Bath’ concept during the **‘Resilience, what is it? How do we build it?’** webinar on Thursday 28th May 2020 at 11am.

You can register to join the webinar at -

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8424425513724275981>.

If you miss the webinar it will be available after to watch back using the same link.

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