

Change and Challenges: Developing Your Personal Resilience

Techniques and Tactics for Developing Resilience

Techniques: ways to adjust your thought patterns to encourage resilience.

- **Reframe the situation:** When you can reframe your situation to give you a fresh and positive outlook on the changes you experience, they may not feel so bad. This isn't just thinking that things aren't as bad as they could be, but seeing the good in what's happening. Think of a tighter budget as a way to be creative within the limits you have. Most changes also create opportunities, so try to find those.
- **Remind yourself of strengths:** We all needed to be reminded of our strengths, especially when we face difficulties and challenges. Because of your natural strengths, you'll be able to cope. You can keep a list of them in your wallet, and pull it out when you need it.
- **Practice problem-solving:** Having good problem-solving skills and being able to think on your feet helps you to adapt readily in changing circumstances. Take note how the people around you solve problems, and put those methods into practice in your life.
- **Improve your self-control:** Managing your emotions and impulses well can help change feel less overwhelming. Even when you're not facing changes, try to keep your emotions from going to extremes, and check yourself if you feel like you're escalating. Don't lose your common sense.
- **Grow in flexibility:** Flexibility is a key part of resilience. We can get stuck in routines of daily life, but we often need to get out of those ruts in order to survive change. It enables you to bend painlessly with changing situations. To grow more flexible, practice letting things go and letting others have their way. Think about things from others' points of view and try to work with them. Be willing to change your habits and routines to rise to your changing needs.
- **Fake it till you make it:** Even if you don't feel strong or resilient, acting like you are can create new brain connections. After a while, it sinks in and becomes real for you.
- **Focus on what you can control:** There are many things you can't control as you deal with changes in your life, but thinking too much about those can weigh you down. If you focus on the things you can control, and start taking active steps to manage change, you'll feel more resilient.
- **Rethink your worries:** If you are a natural worrier, compartmentalize your worries so that they don't snowball out of control. Set aside a certain time to consider what is worrying you and don't let those thoughts take over the rest of your day. Also, ask yourself, what's the worst that could happen? Once you identify the possible consequences, you can make preparations or fix things to avoid them.
- **Let go of shame and blame:** Some negative changes can lead people to blame themselves and others. That results in shame and anger. Most of the time, though, no one is at fault. As you release the hard feelings you've held, you will feel more at peace as you face the future.



Tactics: action steps to prepare for change and to practice resilience.

- **Build a support network:** Staying connected is very helpful for growing more resilient. Having a strong support network is like a safety net that helps to cushion the extreme effects of change. The encouragement of friends and family can also make you feel more prepared before change happens.
- **Learn from experience:** You have had past experiences that have challenged your ability to cope, and so have those around you. Remember what you learned from your experiences, and talk to others so that you can learn from theirs as well. Don't forget how resilient you already are.
- **Gather facts:** When you go through changes, you may not have all the information you need readily available. It helps to get more info about what is happening. Do some research, or ask about the issues at work, the things your spouse is concerned about, or the health problems you're dealing with.
- **Get perspective:** Try to see other sides of the story. Get some understanding of what is behind the change you see. Remember that you're not the only one affected. As you widen your perspective, you'll have a better base to understand and accept the changes.
- **Expand your skills:** Find out what you need to know to succeed, or look for ways that you can gain more knowledge and skills. Are there classes you can sign up for to increase your skills, like taking a class on office applications, learning how to design a web-page, or studying a second language? Grow your knowledge base *before* it is required. This makes you ready for change when it happens.
- **Explore your options:** Change can actually open a door to a world of opportunities. Get in the habit of identifying all the options in front of you, instead of focusing only on the most obvious. As you explore the different options, you can better grasp what's happening and use that information to develop short- and long-term plans to keep your options open moving forward.
- **Help others:** As you're able to help and serve others, you may feel stronger and more able to help yourself. You could comfort a friend in need, or volunteer at a service organization.
- **Find the humor:** Not every situation is humorous or amusing. Although that can weigh you down, you can still find ways to laugh and enjoy other aspects of life.
- **Make a move:** Don't just think about being resilient, but commit to making a move in a positive direction each day, even if it is just a very small move.
- **Have a mantra:** Think of a sentence or a quote that you can repeat to yourself to remind you of the positive. Use this to replace negative thought patterns. Repetition is powerful, so make sure you're repeating ideas that encourage you and help you stay on track, not thoughts that tear you down.

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