



BOUNCING BACK FROM *BAD TIMES* 9 WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

By Susan G. Warner, contributing writer

Resilience is the ability to cope with hard times, trauma and stress. It doesn't mean you won't feel sad or hurt when bad things happen. It means that when life hands you challenges, you can overcome them.

Resilience is not the rare gift of the few. Ordinary people of all ages have it. And those who don't have it can learn it.

Traits of resilient people

People who are resilient tend to have a positive outlook. They take control of their own lives. When tragedy strikes, they are better able to stay balanced and work their way through the setbacks. If you don't have these traits now, don't worry. You can cultivate them.

Nine ways to become more resilient.

Here are some ideas that may help you build your resiliency:

1. **Get connected.** Having strong relationships, for many, is the most important factor in resiliency. Know who you can turn to when you need help or advice.
2. **Take care of yourself** — mentally, physically and spiritually. Do things that help you relax. Eat well, sleep enough and exercise. Make sure you're up to date with your health care.
3. **Take action.** Ask yourself: "What can I do to improve this situation?" Then do it. This can help you regain a sense of control.
4. **Be goal-oriented.** Set some realistic goals you can achieve and make progress toward them, even if they're small steps.
5. **Go with the flow.** Things always change. Focus on changes you can control.
6. **Look beyond the moment.** During bad times, remind yourself that you will get through this. Remind yourself, "this too, shall pass."
7. **Look on the bright side.** Try to cultivate a positive attitude. Instead of focusing on what is wrong, turn your attention to what is right.
8. **Practice positive self-talk.** Give yourself credit for the good things you do. We truly are how we think.
9. **Learn from experience.** Remember how you and others have dealt with past problems. Think about what you did and how you can apply those lessons to what is happening now. Look to others you respect, who have gone through tough life challenges — and learn how they coped. These lessons may be invaluable.

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National Institute of Mental Health. What is post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD? Accessed: August 4, 2016.

Womenshealth.gov. Stress and your health fact sheet. Accessed: August 4, 2016.

American Psychological Association. The road to resiliency. Accessed: August 4, 2016.

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