

Bouncing Back After Adversity: *The Recovering Power of Resiliency*

Challenge and change are a fact of life. How do you deal with unexpected or stressful times? Resiliency is the emotional strength that helps you recover quickly and thoroughly from change and bounce back after any adversity. It is a skill that can be applied to any area of life.

The following are 7 main qualities of a resilient person:

1. *Be Optimistic*

In any life situation you are always responsible for at least one thing. You are always responsible for the attitude towards the situation in which you find yourself. Your attitude is your reaction to what life hands you. You can have either a more positive or a more negative attitude. Your attitude is under your control and can be changed. Problems and challenges do exist. Having an optimistic attitude involves believing you can cope, and acting in such a way as to influence the outcome. With the right attitude you can be a resilient person.

2. *Focus on Solutions*

Do you see problems as opportunities for learning and growth or as automatic setbacks? Problem solvers are open to new ideas that bring about resolution. They are adaptable and expect change, so they are ready for it. Are you resourceful and take an active approach in solving problems? A resilient person copes with stressful things in life and becomes stronger as a result. They are “doers” not “complainers,” and able to find meaning and purpose in their struggles.

3. *Cultivate Supportive Relationships*

Are there people around you who are caring and supportive, who bring you up instead of down? Do you have family or friends that support you during tough times? These relationships are especially valuable in childhood. And parents, grandparents, teachers, or other mentors may no longer be present, but demonstrate the importance of supportive relationships. Supportive relationships encourage our resiliency and our success.

4. *Enjoy Simple Joys*

Do you “stop to smell the roses”? A resilient person can take great pleasure in small things. Many things in life that can bring happiness and joy cost little or no money. Can you list 20 things that you like to do? How many options to enjoy something does life offer? Many things are just fun, and others offer enjoyment simply because they give you a sense of accomplishment when you do them. Get together with a friend or two and share your list. You may be reminded of things you like to do but have forgotten.



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5. *Live by Sense of Purpose*

Do you have a mission and vision for your best life? Are there things you are passionate about that help you move through difficult times? Resilient people participate fully in things that are meaningful to them. They may be involved in social or community events or provide a service to other people. Having a sense of purpose encourages setting and achieving goals for daily living as well as for accomplishing increasingly challenging tasks.

6. *Care for Yourself*

Do you take responsibility to reduce the stressors in your life? Resilient people know their needs and are also not afraid to ask for help. They are self-disciplined and able to act independently. They are also proactive, not dependent on external things to cause them to thrive. Self-care further includes knowing when to take a break.

7. *Maximize Strengths*

What are you good at? Are you integrating these skills and strengths into your life? A main characteristic of resiliency is the ability to cultivate strengths to positively meet the challenges of life. Everyone has some natural and enduring qualities that, when put to use, expand their achievements and benefit those around them. Give your strengths away! Resilient people are also able to tap resources and relationships in a way that maximizes their strengths and encourages others as well. This can be especially beneficial during tough times of change or tragedy. Discover your strengths and put energy into developing them; there you have extraordinary potential!

Resilience is more than just coping. It is excelling in the little and large challenges of life, and coming through them even stronger than before. Just as spring flowers are able to pop up and thrive after winter, so can the resilient person bounce back after a difficult event, such as loss, divorce, financial setbacks, or sudden illness. But just as the grass needs water, sun, food, and nurturing to become green again, we need these seven vital qualities to recover from adversity. With the power of resiliency even though “dry spells” or “heavy rains” or “strong winds” can grab some petals from the “stem,” life renews, bounces back, and even thrives.

Apply resiliency to any area of your life and you have a proven formula to get more done in less time, and with more energy, in a constantly changing world. Less stress and less anxiety will follow!

If you find yourself having trouble bouncing back from the crises that will likely come your way, you may want to seek professional counseling. Contact Centerstone at (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357, and ask about supportive services in your area.



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About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), celebrating 50 years of service in 2006, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. A not-for-profit organization, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families. Centerstone is devoted to research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Each year, the organization provides services to more than 45,000 individuals. The Centerstone network includes more than 60 facilities throughout the middle Tennessee region. For more information about Centerstone, please call (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.