

Resilience Resources and Exercises

Resilience Tests

There are a number of websites that offer free resilience tests and reports where you can track your resilience over time by taking the test numerous times.

<http://www.robertsoncooper.com/our-products/i-resilience-free-report>

<http://www.thewellbeingproject.co.uk/my-resilience.php>

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/resilience-quiz.htm>

Resilience Exercises & Techniques

Resilience Exercise 1

1. Identify an example where you had a negative emotional reaction to change (e.g. angry that a colleague was promoted ahead of you)
2. Identify an example where you were resilient in the face of change (e.g. managing when a colleague goes on sick leave for six weeks)
3. Think about why you may have reacted differently in each case.

Resilience Exercise 2 (Salvatore Maddi and Suzanne Kobasa)

1. Describe a key stressful situation
2. Think out how it could be worse
3. Think out how it could be better
4. Make up a story – how worse could go bad
5. Make up a story – how better could go well
6. Plot out what specifically you will do to prevent worse and achieve the better result

Resilience Exercise 3 (American Psychological Association)

Focusing on past experiences and sources of personal strength can help you learn about what strategies for building resilience might work for you. By exploring answers to the following questions about yourself and your reactions to challenging life events, you may discover how you can respond effectively to difficult situations in your life. Consider the following:

- What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
- How have those events typically affected me?
- Have I found it helpful to think of important people in my life when I am distressed?

- To whom have I reached out for support in working through a traumatic or stressful experience?
- What have I learned about myself and my interactions with others during difficult times?
- Has it been helpful for me to assist someone else going through a similar experience?
- Have I been able to overcome obstacles, and if so, how?
- What has helped make me feel more hopeful about the future?

Resilience Exercise 4 – Act “as if” (Amy Morin; 13 Things Mentally Strong People Don’t Do)

It can be tempting to wait until you feel different to make a change. But waiting until you feel good about yourself before applying for a promotion, or waiting until you feel happy to invite your friends out for a night on the town, could backfire. Instead, studies show you should behave like the person you want to become. When you change your behaviour, your thoughts and emotions will follow.

When you’re sad, you might hunch your shoulders and look at the floor, but doing so keeps you in a depressive state. Put your shoulders back and smile, however, and you’ll feel an instant boost in your mood.

Don’t expect feelings of confidence to come out of nowhere. Instead, ask yourself, How can I act confident? Acting like a confident person, even when you’re filled with self-doubt, helps you feel surer of yourself. Research shows acting confidently increases other people’s confidence in you. Try asking yourself, What would a mentally strong person do? Then, act as if you feel strong already. And you’ll grow a little stronger.

Hunt the Good Stuff (US Army – Master Resilience Training Skills based on work by Martin Seligman)

Hunt the good stuff is used to notice positive experiences to enhance optimism, gratitude and other positive emotions and counter negativity bias. Record three good things each day; think about the following...

1. Why this good thing happened?
2. What this good thing means to you?
3. What can you do tomorrow to enable more of this good thing?
4. What ways you or others contribute to this good thing?

Try to do this for at least 2 weeks to see the benefits.

Five ways to change your victim mindset (Emily Roberts MA)

1. **Take Inventory.** Are there situations and circumstances that you have been blaming others for? Ones that you can honestly say you had a part in? Even if you had the slightest part of this experience, taking note that you were part of it, can give you the freedom to learn from this and move forward. It may be difficult to do, but is very valuable in building a new lens on life.

2. **Acknowledge.** Many of the reasons for playing the role of victim are due it being reinforced by others. Receiving pity from others may not seem like a positive experience, but in essence that's what we are doing when we don't take personal responsibility, we try and get others to feel pain for us or with us. Make a list of some of the areas in your life you would like to take more control over, and problem solve solutions.
3. **Forgive.** Chances are you are holding on to negative feelings towards someone or something that put you in this role. Give yourself some validation. Yes, people did hurt you. Now, with this, also accept that this is not happening now. Rather, it happened in the past. When you can learn to forgive and try to move forward, the less of a burden this is for you. If needed, seek out support for this with the help of a therapist or coach.
4. **Create a new story.** Focusing on the old story isn't serving you. It may in the short term, but telling yourself a new story where you are actively problem solving and taking on more personal responsibility will help you to get past the victim shadow.
5. **Gratitude.** Rather than focusing on what you don't have or what happened that has kept you locked into this role, look at everything you do have. Take a moment to see what you have learned about yourself from these experiences. Ask yourself what beautiful outcomes have been created by past situations that may not have appeared to be in your best interest, but have created the you that you are today. Think of all that you have to be grateful for and often times your focus will be on the positive not the negative.

Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PMR):

Progressive Muscular Relaxation is useful for relaxing your body when your muscles are tense.

The idea behind PMR is that you tense up a group of muscles so that they are as tightly contracted as possible. Hold them in a state of extreme tension for a few seconds. Then, relax the muscles to their previous state. Finally, consciously relax the muscles even further so that you are as relaxed as possible.

By tensing your muscles first, you will probably find that you are able to relax your muscles more than would be the case if you tried to relax your muscles directly.

Experiment with PMR by forming a fist, and clenching your hand as tight as you can for a few seconds. Then relax your hand to its previous tension, and then consciously relax it again so that it is as loose as possible. You should feel deep relaxation in your hand muscles.

For maximum relaxation you can use PMR in conjunction with breathing techniques and imagery.

Models & Theories

GRIT (Angela Duckworth)

Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals.

One way to think about grit is to consider what grit isn't.

Grit isn't talent. Grit isn't luck. Grit isn't how intensely, for the moment, you want something.

Instead, grit is about having what some researchers call an "ultimate concern"—a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding

steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow.

Talent and luck matter to success. But talent and luck are no guarantee of grit. And in the very long run, I think grit may matter as least as much, if not more.

<http://angeladuckworth.com/ga/#faq-125>

Mental Toughness (Professor Peter Clough)

Mental toughness is best understood as a mindset which describes the default response we make when faced with stressors, pressures or challenges.

The 4 C's of Mental Toughness

1. Control: Involves the extent to which individuals feel in control of their lives and circumstances, as well as how one controls their emotions.
2. Commitment: Describes how committed an individual is to complete set goals.
3. Challenge: The extent to which someone will push the boundaries, embrace change, and accept risk.
4. Confidence: The extent to which people believe in themselves.

https://www.ambitionschoolleadership.org.uk/documents/569/TL_Quarterly_Q5_14_Strycharczyk.pdf

Locus of Control

Locus of control describes the degree to which individuals perceive that outcomes result from their own behaviours, or from forces that are external to themselves.

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_90.htm

Circle of Influence/Concern

The author Stephen Covey encourages us to only focus on concerns that we have control over. He outlines the “circle of concerns” as all of the stuff that worries us – and then a smaller “circle of influence” (within the larger “circle of concerns”) that only contains stuff that we can actually control.

<http://www.crowe-associates.co.uk/coaching-and-mentoring-skills/circle-of-influence-and-circle-of-concern/>

[http://www.londonleadershipacademy.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/What is in my control-LAL1.pdf](http://www.londonleadershipacademy.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/What%20is%20in%20my%20control-LAL1.pdf)

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

https://psychologytools.com/worksheets/free/english_gb/unhelpful_thinking_styles_free_en-gb.pdf

<http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/ThoughtRecordSheet.pdf>

Mindfulness & Relaxation Exercises

<https://www.livingwell.org.au/mindfulness-exercises-3/>

<http://www.consciouslifestylemag.com/mindfulness-powerful-exercises-peace-of-mind/>

<http://beaumont.ie/index.jsp?p=528&n=532#relaxation>

<http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations>

Further Information and Reading

Websites

<http://www.liggywebb.com/files/id/541/view/the-little-book-of-resilience.pdf>

<http://library.thelearningarchitect.com/resilience/>

<http://carolepemberton.co.uk/resilience-coaching/>

www.actionforhappiness.org

<http://www.stepsforstress.org/index.htm>

<http://www.babcp.com/files/Public/what-is-cbt-web.pdf> - Information about Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/workplace-stress.aspx>

<http://www.working-minds.org.uk/documents/emotional-resilience-workbook.pdf>

http://www.themindfulnessinitiative.org.uk/images/reports/Mindfulness-APPG-Report_Mindful-Nation-UK_Oct2015.pdf

<http://www.mas.org.uk/uploads/articles/strengthening-personal-resilience.pdf> - *Strengthening Personal Resilience* (Derek Mowbray)

<http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/understanding-the-importance-of-resilience/> - Harrington, A. 2012. Personnel Today [Online]

Books

Resilience at Work - Salvatore Maddi and Deborah Khosaba

Packed with insightful examples, case studies, and self-assessment tools, *Resilience at Work* explains how to:

- * Approach change as a meaningful challenge no matter how stressful the circumstances, and stay committed to your work, rather than detaching and giving up.
- * Gain control by understanding the upside and the downside of change, and take actions to influence beneficial outcomes.
- * Turn stressful changes to your advantage and map out sound problem-solving strategies.
- * Resolve ongoing conflicts and build an environment of assistance and encouragement between you and your coworkers.
- * Decrease feelings of isolation and powerlessness by understanding the 3Cs that give you the ability to thrive amid disruptive changes: commitment, control, and challenge.

The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles - Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte

Everyone needs resilience, and now two expert psychologists share seven proven techniques for enhancing our capacity to weather even the cruelest setbacks. Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte are seasoned resilience coaches and, through practical methods and vivid anecdotes, they prove that resilience is not just an ability that we're born with and need to survive, but a skill that anyone can learn and improve in order to thrive.

Flourish - Martin Seligman

Flourish offers inspiring stories of Positive Psychology in action - innovative schools that add resilience to their curricula; a new theory of success and intelligence; and evidence on how positive physical health can turn medicine on its head. Building on his game-changing work on optimism, motivation and character, Seligman shows us how to flourish and bring well-being into both our personal lives and society as a whole.

Developing resilience: a cognitive behavioural approach – Michael Neenan

Developing Resilience shows how people can find constructive ways of dealing with their difficulties by using the techniques of cognitive behaviour therapy as well as listening to the wisdom of those who have prevailed over adversity.