



## **How to be more resilient?**

Resilience is critical to our overall well-being. It affects everything from our mental and financial health, our intimate relationships to our ability to handle trauma and loss. Taking the time to build up resilience is probably one of the single best things you can do to improve your health, relationships, and happiness levels. Studies have shown that characteristics associated with resilience, such as optimism, self-worth, and social support, can improve health outcomes in people with chronic conditions. On the other hand, low resilience has been linked to worsening of disease activity and reduced quality of life. The true essence of resilience is how you show up during both small and big moments of adversity — like somehow, at some point, finding a way to get out of bed after losing a parent, a child, a partner, a sibling, a best friend. Given the circumstances, that's a monumental win.

Let us look at certain practices that can be followed to confront emotional pain more skillfully:

### ***Change the narrative.***

When something bad happens to us, we often replay that event multiple times in our mind. As a result of that, we go through the same pain repeatedly, and it is self-induced. This process is called rumination and it does nothing to move us forward towards healing and growth. What you can do to overcome this is practice free writing continuously for 20 minutes about an issue, exploring your deepest thoughts and feelings around it. When we engage in free writing, we are forced to confront ideas one by one and give them structure, which may lead to new perspectives. When you call to mind an upsetting event, try to list at least 3 positive things about it.

### ***Practice self-compassion.***

Fears and adversity can make us feel alone. We wonder why we are the only ones feeling this way and what exactly is wrong with us. Whenever you feel overwhelmed by pain or stress, you can try self-compassion using 3 main steps. The first is try to be mindful. This means without any judgment or analysis, notice what you are feeling. Simply make an observation and repeat it to yourself. For example, 'this is a moment of suffering', or 'this hurts', or 'this is stress'. The second step involves trying to remember that you are not alone. Everyone experiences deep and painful human emotions, although the causes might be different. You can say to yourself that suffering is a part of life, or we all feel this way or we all struggle in our lives. The third step is being kind to ourselves. Put your hands on your heart and say something like 'May I give myself compassion', or 'May I accept myself', or 'May I be patient'.

### ***Practise mindfulness.***

Our most painful thoughts are usually about the past or the future. We either regret or ruminate on things that went wrong, or we get anxious about things that might. When we pause and bring our attention to the present, we often find that things are okay. Practising mindfulness brings us more into the present and it offers techniques for dealing with negative emotions when they arise. Strong feelings tend to manifest physically, like tight chests or knotted stomachs and relaxing the body is one way of releasing them. Studies have found that meditation is linked with greater well-being and less reactivity to stress.

### ***Face your fears***

Getting to know your fears is an important part of getting to know yourself and how you react when bad things happen. One way to build that self-awareness is to think back to a time when one of your fears came true. Once you have that event in your mind, review and respond to questions such as “Did your pre-worrying about the event help prepare you?”, “How did you feel one week after that bad thing happened?”, “How did you feel one month later?”, “What did you learn about yourself after going through the event?” and “Who came to help you out?” These questions will help you understand better your fears and how you typically respond.

### ***Control what you can and leave the rest***

Often times, we find ourselves fretting about many things that aren't in our control. But, there are some steps we can take to fix this. So, instead of being fixated on the problem, focus on how you can change the situation for the better. If there is something you can do to alter the outcome favorably, then do it by all means. Having faith in yourself can also be great for your health. So, while things may seem dire sometimes, don't give up on yourself or your beliefs.

With best wishes,  
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