

Developing Resiliency

What is Resiliency?

It is the innate power to heal, regenerate and grow which is expressed in strengths of emotion, intellect, and spirit. It is what keeps you going in a toxic work environment (did I say law firm?).

Like the willow tree, people thrive if they have a strong, healthy root system. A healthy body, sound mind, and a solid support system provide resiliency to weather storms and remain strong.

Resiliency also involves the ability to learn from life's painful lessons that allows you to both cope and grow from your encounters with adversity. Looking at troubles as having a duality – expressed as risk and opportunity – is a resilient attitude.

Resiliency is a web of characteristics:

- **Insight** - asking tough questions and giving honest answers.
- **Independence** - distancing emotionally and physically from the sources of trouble in one's life.
- **Relationships** - making fulfilling connections to other people.
- **Initiative** - taking charge of problems.
- **Creativity** – converting stress and pain by using imagination to express oneself in art and hobbies
- **Humor** - finding the comic in the tragic.
- **Morality** - acting on the basis of an informed conscience.

Core Values

The values at your center provide you a 'moral map' which guides behaviour and secures your resilience:

- Integrity: being honest, fair, responsible, and loyal
- Support: supporting and caring for other people
- Cooperation: cooperating with others
- Acceptance of difference: Accepting, respecting, living with and finding the positive side of difference in others
- Respect: respecting the rights of others, and acknowledging your own rights and responsibilities to others
- Friendliness: being friendly and socially responsible, and including others in activities

Coping with change

The more you are willing to be yourself, in all the complexity of life, and the more you are willing to understand and accept the realities in yourself and others, the more change seem to be released into action. To the degree to which each of us is willing to be genuine, then we find ourselves changing with ease and others we relate to also changing.

Strengthen your inner resources

Resiliency is built by reconceptualizing your life history and present existence to recognize what is fine, strong, of value in yourself. It is retelling your story from the perspective of a healthy adult. It is about facing difficulties by asking “How can I use my strengths to overcome this problem?”

Each person’s greatest room for growth is in the areas of her greatest strengths. “What is right with you is more powerful than anything that is wrong with you.”

Only you can control your inner resources:

- **Self-worth – to accept yourself as you are**

“It is only when I can be myself, when I can accept myself that it is possible for me to understand others and accept others.” Carl Rogers

- **Self-confidence – your reputation with yourself**

“These are my reliable strengths....”

- **Positive self-concept – objective and verified**

“I am competent, resilient, durable, creative, and enjoy life...”

Conversations with yourself about yourself and your environment should be:

Objective

Factual

Focused

Descriptive

Verified

Authentic self-esteem

For an example, let’s look at this from the perspective of a mentoring relationship. To attract the mentor you need, you must display certain desirable characteristics yourself:

- Positive attitude
- Commitment to work
- Drive for success or enthusiasm for life

- Congeniality
- Receptive to feedback

Exhibiting your resiliency

- **SMART careers**

Lawyer coach Ellen Ostrow tells us that *career resilience* requires setting smart goals: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-oriented, **R**ealistic, and attached to a **T**ime line.

- **For a resilient life-style:**

- Practice relaxation techniques.
- Manage your stress to reduce your strain.
- Adopt healthy nutrition and be active physically.
- Adopt moderation in your work and expectations.
- Be patient with yourself. Tolerate and accept yourself.
- Build friendships and community.
- Develop your spiritual life.