

Developing Resilience

Resilience is all about keeping going when things don't go your way. It's not being put off by set backs but learning from them.

Being successful rarely involves hitting the jackpot first time. When people make it to the top in their chosen field, they usually have tales to tell of numerous knock backs and how they overcame them.

There is no mysterious art to building resilience, just a willingness to change some old habits of thinking about the less fortunate events in our careers and instead, using them to our advantage.

Tips to help you develop your resilience

Know where you are going and why

One key ingredient of resilience is having goals you care about. Knowing where you are going and really wanting to get there, gives you the motivation to keep going when things don't go well.

When did you last sit down and work out what it is you are passionate about and want to achieve in your future? This doesn't have to be any great 100-point plan, but needs to set a direction you can strive towards, make decisions and priorities around and dream about.

Be your own campaign manager

If you experience a set back and perceive it as a personal slight, it's very easy to step inside your own head and start cataloguing all the similar experiences you can find, to reassure yourself that you actually are unlucky or that everyone really is out to get you. Not a good place to take action from.

If instead, you experience a setback and immediately take a mental step back to view it and yourself in this situation from a distance, you can then analyse what has happened as if you were your own personal adviser or campaign manager. This will give you the headspace to consider more useful options and steps you can take towards the next opportunity.

What are the lessons?

Nobody does everything right first time. You generally learn far more from your mistakes than you do when things go perfectly. So next time things don't go to plan, forget about being embarrassed, frustrated or feeling stupid. Instead, be grateful that you have been given a useful experience and make sure you take the time to learn all you can from it. And of course, take steps to do it differently next time.



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What can you do?

Ever seen a rabbit get caught in bright headlights? It just sits there, frozen by fear rather than running away, which would be the sensible thing to do. Many of us react the same way when we make a mistake or when we have a negative experience.

Taking action is a great way to stay resilient in a crisis. It doesn't even matter if you don't do the 'right' things, just getting out and doing something makes you feel better, because it helps you remember that you still have choices, and control over your own actions

When you hit a bump in your career road, sit down and identify three things you can do in the next week – and go do them!

Keep a strong social network

Never underestimate the benefits of having a good network of friends. They are not necessarily going to have solutions but you can talk things through with them, which helps you get it out of your system, and find a new perspective.

Friends can help you see the funny side, reaffirm your worth as a human being, and sometimes deliver unpalatable home truths (that you can do something about). Most of all they care about and value who you are, not what you are doing.

Keep things in perspective

Remember that you are so much more than your career. Anything bad that is happening with work is only happening to that part of your life. This only impacts everything else if you let it. Of course if you lose a job this has a financial impact on other areas of your life, but your health is unchanged, your relationships are still intact, the things you care about are still valid.

Use the parts of your life that are going well to support you to take steps to address the areas that are struggling. Focus on what you can do

See the funny side

A sense of humour is essential when times are hard. Finding something about it that is ridiculous or quirky, or imagining what this situation would look like to a visitor from Mars, can help you find a more useful way to see a difficult situation.

One useful exercise is regardless how hard the knock is, to see some benefit to it. Where this is hard to do, finding a silly one, that makes you smile, can be enough to help you move on.



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Recognise how much control you have

Imagine knocking over a cup of tea. Do you wring your hands worrying about how quickly the tea is running towards your phone or computer keyboard, muttering to yourself that you've always been unlucky with hot drinks? Or, do you grab the kitchen roll or tissues, and soak it up before it does any harm? Many of us face crisis in our lives as if we were watching that cup of tea and feeling powerless to intervene!

One of the biggest issues in being resilient is combating feelings of being out of control. Many of us sit feeling trapped in situations where we tell ourselves we have no choices.

Pretty much all situations have choices, even if some of those are unpalatable to us. Taking control of even small things in our lives can start to make bigger changes occur. When we start to flex our mental 'control' muscle, funny things happen elsewhere, because we start to see ourselves as competent and capable individuals, which makes it easier to take action and to weather knock backs.

Be prepared to ask for help

No man is an Island and all that. Generally when people describe themselves as 'self-made', they generally underestimate the various leg ups they've had from people, whether it was the education that was provided for them by their family, introductions that were made by friends to the right people, or 'lucky' breaks they were given by useful contacts. Most people get a little help along the way.

There is no shame in asking for help, because one day, you may be able to help someone else in your situation. It's just not necessary to think you have to carry the load yourself all the time.

Stay Optimistic

Know that somehow things will work out for the best for you. That's not to say that you should continue to forge blindly on down a path that is bearing no fruit. It's about staying open to feedback, being aware of alternative opportunities and flexible about the route you take. Most of all it's about enjoying the journey.



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