



Ride With Resilience!

High in April, down in May, back on top in June. The song "That's Life" conveys the idea of the fluctuations of life: the euphoric, the good, the bad and the traumatic. We humans tend to bounce back from adversity, sooner or later. Why is that?

We start young by building our resilience with the smaller stressors of growing up. By finding and practicing our strengths to deal with the stress, almost on an unconscious level at this time of life, we grow into adulthood becoming more confident in our abilities to handle the tough times and come to realize that the challenges in life seem to be temporary. Unfortunately some of us have to develop skills "under fire" at a very young age for survival due to a troubled family situation.

The way we naturally develop a skill set for resilience can be built upon and refined as different situations present themselves. Because we all react to stress, trauma, and grief in different ways, we all need to learn and hone the personal skills that work for us the best on an individual basis. There are some basic approaches though that anyone can use to help themselves where ever they are on the learning curve.

- Since the most basic of skills were learned when we were younger, look at your personal history and find past experiences and what you did in these stressful situations. Did it relieve your feelings? Did it improve the situation? Or did the situation become more enflamed? Did you have to find a new method? Did you have to reach out to another individual to help you through? Were you able to become flexible and move forward with a newer, more positive outlook? In the end did you realize that this was a temporary event in your life that needed to be dealt with and then move on? Did you realize there may be others that have gone through similar situations?
- Moving forward, did you encounter similar experiences and move through them more easily and maybe more quickly? Did this instill a feeling of

confidence in dealing with these kinds of experiences in the future? Did you pick up new skills?

This self-analysis of past events and actions on your part are important. This makes you more AWARE of your strengths and weaknesses and where you are most vulnerable (forewarned is forearmed). Doing this investigation can consciously teach you how you may be able to personally respond to future life challenges and make you more hopeful in your results.

Here are a few pointers when trying to build up your powers of resilience:

Some people get their kicks, stompin' on a dream. Avoid others' negativity. Make healthy connections with people. Positive thinking people help you to stay focused on the positive steps you need to take to strengthen your resilience. They will listen to and support you if you ask for help. Also, if someone asks you for support, help them. Helping others lifts your own spirits.

But I don't let it get me down, 'cause this fine old world keeps spinnin' around. One thing you know for sure- no matter what is going on in any individual's life- the day to day tasks of living need to be taken care of. That's why, even if you are feeling like rolling yourself up into a ball, you have to keep things in its perspective. Look to the future -is this disaster the catastrophe you at the moment think it is? Or when you look back on it- it won't be the gargantuan crisis it seems to be right now? Put things in their proper space within your world. Because you need to continue in a forward movement through life you also have to take care of yourself. Keep doing the things that you like to do, remember to exercise and eat smart. You need to be tip-top to deal with life and working out your thoughts and feelings caused by the events that caused tumultuous emotions and insecurities, leaving you in uncertainty.

I've been a puppet, a pauper, a pirate, a poet, a pawn and a king. Consider these difficult situations as lessons that can teach you a great deal about yourself. It may be a bummer of an experience right now, but there is so much to be taken advantage of when you are feeling vulnerable. You realize how strong you really are. Consistently, people that have dealt with hard times and tragedies, cite how they had a better appreciation for living life more fully and how they grew as a person, becoming stronger and recognizing a greater self-esteem within them. Every experience, good and bad, is a learning experience.

I've been up and down and over and out and I know one thing: Each time I find myself flat on my face, I pick myself up and get back in the race. If you are living life you have to accept that things change. Once you accept that you need to become adaptable to those changes, no matter what they are, you can focus on setting new goals clearly. With new goals in mind you can develop and maintain a hopeful outlook and you can make positive changes in your life. This all helps you to see that the situation is not insurmountable.

I thought of quitting, baby but my heart just ain't gonna buy it. You develop self-confidence as you trust the new actions you are taking. Your new super self-image grows and your problems shrink.

And if I didn't think it was worth one single try, I'd jump right on a big bird and then I'd fly. Move towards the new goals you have set for yourself and take action instead of wishing traumatic experiences would all clear up by itself.

These are difficult events to process. Processing can be helped by journaling your thoughts and feelings; meditating; participating in spiritual practices; writing a song; or singing it! That's Life!

With Gratitude,

Kai