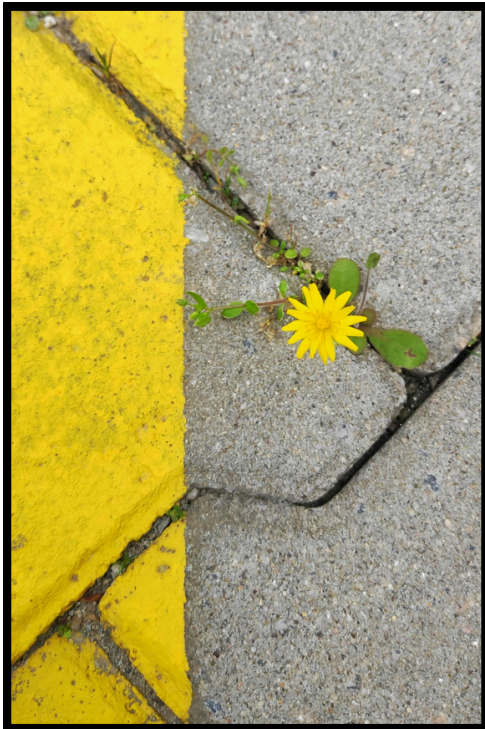


Resilience won't necessarily make your problems go away. Resilience can give you the ability to see past them, find some enjoyment in life and handle future stressors better. If you aren't as resilient as you'd like, you can work on skills to become more resilient.



If you have resilience, you may experience temporary disruptions in your life when faced with challenges. For instance, you may have a few weeks when you don't sleep as well as you typically do. But you're able to continue on with daily tasks, remain generally optimistic about life and rebound quickly.

Resilience isn't about toughing it out or living by old clichés, such as "making lemonade out of lemons." It doesn't mean you ignore feelings of sadness over a loss. Nor does it mean that you always have to be strong and that you can't ask others for support — in fact, being willing to reach out to others is a key component of being resilient. Resilience also doesn't mean that you're emotionally distant, cold or unfeeling.



BUILDING RESILIENCE

Check Your Resilience Quotient Quiz

Do you consider yourself resilient or not resilient? Or maybe you fall somewhere in between? People with resilience tend to possess certain characteristics. Use this chart to help get a general idea of how resilient you are. The statements on the left are characteristics of people who are resilient. Put a check mark next to each characteristic you agree that you have.

Characteristics of resilient people	
Statement	Check if you agree
I'm able to adapt to change easily.	
I feel in control of my life.	
I tend to bounce back after a hardship or illness.	
I have close, dependable relationships.	
I remain optimistic and don't give up, even if things seem hopeless.	
I can think clearly and logically under pressure.	
I see the humour in situations, even under stress.	
I am self-confident and feel strong as a person.	
I believe things happen for a reason.	
I can handle uncertainty or unpleasant feelings.	
I know where to turn for help.	
I like challenges and feel comfortable taking the lead.	

Credits: Based on the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), Connor K.M., Davidson J.R. ©2003. Adapted by Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research with permission.

Do you have few check marks or many? Think about the ones that you left blank. You may want to focus on developing resilience skills in those areas.

Tips to Improve Your Resilience

Don't worry if you didn't have as many check marks as you'd hoped or expected. It's not too late to nurture resilience in yourself.

- 1. Get connected.** Build strong, positive relationships with family and friends, who can listen to your concerns and offer support. Volunteer or get involved in your community.
- 2. Use humour and laughter.** Remaining positive or finding humour in distressing or stressful situations doesn't mean you're in denial. Humour is a helpful coping mechanism. If you simply can't find humour in your situation, turn to other sources for a laugh, such as a funny book or movie.
- 3. Learn from your experiences.** Recall how you've coped with hardships in the past, either in healthy or unhealthy ways. Build on what helped you through those rough times and don't repeat actions that didn't help.
- 4. Remain hopeful and optimistic.** While you can't change events, look toward the future, even if it's just a glimmer of how things might improve. Find something in each day that signals a change for the better. Expect good results.
- 5. Take care of yourself.** Tend to your own needs and feelings, both physically and emotionally. This includes participating in activities and hobbies you enjoy, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, and eating well.
- 6. Accept and anticipate change.** Be flexible. Try not to be so rigid that even minor changes upset you or that you become anxious in the face of uncertainty. Expecting changes to occur makes it easier to adapt to them, tolerate them and even welcome them.
- 7. Work toward goals.** Do something every day that gives you a sense of accomplishment. Even small, everyday goals are important. Having goals helps direct you toward the future.

Tips to Improve Your Resilience

Don't worry if you didn't have as many check marks as you'd hoped or expected. It's not too late to nurture resilience in yourself.

8. Take action. Don't just wish your problems would go away or try to ignore them. Instead, figure out what needs to be done, make a plan to do it, and then take action.

9. Learn new things about yourself. Review past experiences and think about how you've changed as a result. You may have gained a new appreciation for life. If you feel worse as a result of your experiences, think about what changes could help. Explore new interests, such as taking a cooking class or visiting a museum.

10. Think better of yourself. Be proud of yourself. Trust yourself to solve problems and make sound decisions. Nurture your self-confidence and self-esteem so that you feel strong, capable and self-reliant. This will give you a sense of control over events and situations in your life.

11. Maintain perspective. Don't compare your situation to that of somebody you think may be worse off. You'll probably feel guilty for being down about your own problems. Rather, look at your situation in the larger context of your own life, and of the world. Keep a longterm perspective and know that your situation can improve if you actively work at it.

Becoming resilient is an individual experience. Adapt these tips for your own situation, keeping in mind what has and has not worked for you in the past. If you don't feel you're making the kind of progress you'd like or you just don't know where to start, consider talking to a mental health professional about developing resilience. You don't have to have a specific mental disorder to talk to a mental health professional. With their guidance, you can promote positive mental well-being.