



# The Power Of Resilience

*By Lyn Carman*

During the events of the last 8 months, most of us have felt, at the very least, a slight tug of the rug out from under us. And not every response has been the same – some people have dramatized it; some have totally nailed being calm and centred and some are still working out what to wear.

During this time, with coronavirus spreading around the world, loss takes many different shapes. For some people, it's a loss of loved ones or their health. For others, it's affecting their financial security, job, essential resources. It may be, as well, a sense of losing freedom and hopes for the future. And for others it can be all of that and still there is optimism and positivity with the knowledge we will thrive and be stronger for the adversity.

Have you ever wondered why some people seem to remain calm in the face of disaster while others appear to come undone at the slightest hint? People who can keep their cool have what psychologists call 'resilience', or an ability to cope with problems and setbacks.

So, what is resilience? Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors or COVID 19.

Another definition from Merriam Webster is 'the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress' – or to bounce back.

Resilience is our ability to bounce back from the stresses of life. It's not about avoiding the stress but learning to thrive within the stress. I think this expressed well by Eric Greiten in his book "Resilience: Hard-won Wisdom for Living a Better Life", when he writes:

"Life's reality is that we cannot bounce back. We cannot bounce back because we cannot go back in time to the people we used to be. The parent who loses a child never bounces back. The nineteen-year-old who sails for war is gone forever, even if he returns.

You know that there is no bouncing back. There is only moving through.  
What happens to us becomes a part of us.  
Resilient people do not bounce back from hard experiences; they find healthy ways to integrate them into their lives.

In time, people find that great calamity met with great spirit can create great strength.”

So let’s come together with great spirit, I say! It is thought we are not born with resilience, it can be learned and developed, and there is a recipe.

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade” – so the saying goes. How do we make lemonade you may well ask? Let’s look at 5 ingredients for the recipe



**Self-awareness** – Is having a clear perception of your personality, strengths and weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivations, and emotions. Allow yourself to feel and know you have choices of how to feel in any given moment. Become aware of the choices you are making.

**Mindfulness** – being aware in the moment, breathe and become present, being actively open to this moment – yesterday has gone, tomorrow hasn’t come yet, all we have is this moment.

**Self-Care** – this is unique for each of us, though it is generally the practice of taking an active role in protecting our own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress

**Positive Relationships** – are the people who support and care for us – and we care for them. One of the most profound experiences we can have in our lives is the connection we have with other human beings. Choose to be around people who support and care for us. “You are the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with” Jim Rohn

**Purpose** – a recognition that we belong to and serve something bigger than ourselves. Our purpose helps to shape the mindset and attitude we have toward others and the events we experience.

Apply equal amounts and voila we have lemonade! Though we all know its really not that simple, right? For some of us simply taking one small step in the direction we want to go and continue to head in that direction, the majority of the time. Acknowledge we are all human and there will be setbacks and we will integrate this too and become a little more resilient.

“Resilience is more available to people curious about their own line of thinking and behaving,” Brene Brown

“The only thing that is constant is change” is a famous quote by the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus.

Resilience is important for several reasons; it enables us to develop mechanisms for protection against experiences which could be overwhelming, it helps us to maintain balance in our lives during difficult or stressful periods, and can also protect us from the development of some mental health difficulties and issues.

I have gratefully used many quotes already in this article as I stand on the shoulders of giants and I leave you with one final quote.

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.” Hellen Keller

Keep well!

