

Building resilience: Strategies for overcoming adversity

Our life as humans on planet Earth is filled with challenges and adversities. No matter how small or big, setbacks are part and parcel of life. Hence, it is essential to not fall apart after life throws lemons at us. In order to rebound, we all require an incredible quality named resilience. Below, we discuss resilience and how you can build this excellent quality in your personality.

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity, struggle, trauma, tragedy, and significant sources of stress. Resilience helps you better deal with challenges and navigate life more easily, although it does not solve all problems or eliminate adversities.

Steps to build resilience

Foster connections

Friends, family members, and loved ones can provide immense support and kindness during your moments of vulnerability. Maintain good relationships with people close to you and seek them out for support and guidance. Seek friendship with people who are kind, empathetic, understanding, and compassionate. In order to find like-minded people, join volunteer organisations and support groups online and in person.

Prioritise self-care

Self-care is crucial but often overlooked. Self-care is not limited to junk food cheat days, scented candles, and bubble baths. Self-care should include having a nutrition-dense balanced diet, moderate physical activity, and ample amounts of regular sleep. Indulge in your hobbies and interests, practice stress management, and try to avoid procrastination to avoid excessive stress and anxiety in the near future. Doing regular chores on time and not letting things pile up goes a long way to improving your mental and physical health, even if it does not come with an instant dopamine reward.

Practice mindfulness

When stressed and overwhelmed, people tend to regret and reflect on things of the past and worry about things that may go wrong in the future. Past cannot be changed and the future is uncertain,



but we can control the present and that is the focus of mindfulness. Practising mindfulness brings us more and more into the present, and it offers techniques for dealing with negative emotions when they arise. That way, instead of getting carried away into fear, anger, or despair, we can work through them more deliberately. Daily meditation, prayers, breathing exercises, and mindful journaling can calm our nerves and improve our focus.

Two popular mindfulness practices are mindful breathing and raising meditation. In mindful breathing, bring attention to the physical sensations of breathing — air entering the nostrils, the expansion of the chest, and the movement of the stomach. Raising meditation involves focusing all your attention on raisins or any other food you are consuming. Pay attention to its aroma, texture look, mouth feel, and taste. Consume slowly and mindfully, while revelling in its characteristics. These exercises, when practiced every day can help you be calmer and focused on the future.

Be kind and empathetic to yourself

Many of us are our harshest critics. Fears and adversities make us feel lonely and

we tend to blame ourselves for our sufferings. However, the truth is many of us feel similar emotions of stress, anxiety, hopelessness and despair, our triggers that lead us to such emotions are different.

In such circumstances, it is important to remind ourselves that everyone suffers and to be compassionate to ourselves. Self-compassion includes confronting our own suffering with warmth, and kindness without harsh judgements. One way to practice self-compassion is to compare your response to your own struggles with that of your friend or loved one's struggles. Often this will unearth that we might have been a little too harsh with ourselves.

Remain hopeful and optimistic

Life can wear you down at times and in those moments, it becomes hard to hold onto hope. But even then, it is crucial to have hope and work towards that hope. Trying to remain optimistic, and working to find the silver lining in things will make you better equipped at handling problems.

Be proactive towards your goals

While it is helpful to acknowledge and accept dire situations and the emotions

it brings about, it is also important to develop realistic goals and work for them. Set realistic expectations and goals which are achievable and smart. Break down large tasks into smaller actional steps. Try to do at least one thing, and take at least one step towards your goal(s) to generate a sense of fulfilment and accomplishment every day. These emotions go a long way to help you heal.

Don't be afraid to seek professional help if and when needed

Our society attaches a lot of stigmas surrounding mental health and accessing resources to better our health mentally. Rising above it is a battle in itself, but it is important to remind ourselves that our mental health deserves just as much attention as our physical health. A licensed mental health professional can help develop a strategy to navigate your life, trauma, and emotional wounds. Remember, that not all therapists are going to be a good fit so it is absolutely okay to shop around to find someone with whom you can open up comfortably.

By Maliha Arosha Hasan
Photo: Collected

How you can tackle body odour this summer

With the heat and humidity rising every day, there are days when we often end up spraying ourselves with ample amounts of body sprays or colognes, as a quick fix for body odour. Little do we realise how much it worsens the situation. Here are some quick and easy steps to curb the sweat and stench this summer.

Using roll-ons

Instead of dousing yourself in perfumes or deodorants, you can choose antiperspirants i.e. roll-ons which are made of aluminium-

based compounds. These temporarily block sweat pores, thus reducing the amount of sweat that reaches your skin.

Prickly heat powder

Many of us experience rashes from being exposed to severe heat. Instead of alcohol-based perfumes, choose prickly heat powders which give off a cooling sensation and provide relief from the heat. Prickly heat powders also kill germs that might cause skin problems and also protect

your body from heat-induced bacterial infections. The best part is it absorbs the sweat while emitting a pleasant smell.

Skin-friendly clothing

Ditch materials like silk or cord and opt for comfy fabrics such as cotton and linen. In case you are working out, choose synthetic fabrics developed to keep the moisture away from your skin.

Changing your diet

Try to bring your caffeine and spicy food

intake to a minimum in this scorcher.

Beverages like tea and coffee or foods like onions, garlic, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and red meat may increase your sweating and body odour that's stronger than usual. Among other things that contribute to sweat and stench are monosodium glutamate (MSG), curry spice, cumin, as well as hot sauce.

By Rubab Nayeem Khan