

# Resilience

# Self-Coaching Guide

## *How can I deal with tough times better?*

It's inevitable all of us will encounter tough times in life. Being unrealistic about the possibility of life's unexpected obstacles, challenging events, and adverse circumstances can make our struggles even worse. Also, trying to shield ourselves from such times can result in a boring life. It's better to accept that tough times are a natural part of being human, so we can enjoy and be grateful for the good times.

We can feel overwhelmed when tough times present us with challenges greater than our capacity to deal with them. Resilience is the ability to deal with these tough times and recover (or bounce back) from them. It involves us working to reduce the (perceived) challenges and increase our capacity. Resilience, like any other skill, is something we can develop through preparation, training and practice.

## Developing Resilience

There are many resilience-building strategies which, when applied and combined, help us to develop our resilience and make us stronger, benefiting us both physically and psychologically. Here are some:

- **Selfcare.** Resilient people are mindful of their wellbeing which better prepares them for tough times. Wellbeing includes diet, exercise, sleep, relationships. [See SGC – 'How can I improve my wellbeing?']
- **Perspective.** Resilient people look at negative situations realistically, explore small ways they can improve the situations, and make changes that will help. Thinking about challenges in a more positive and optimistic way, instead of getting stuck with negative emotions, can create ways to grow and develop new coping skills. Considering the *worst-case*, *best-case* and *most likely* outcomes helps to reduce catastrophising a situation and be more optimistic. (See **Realistic Optimism** exercise overleaf.)
- **Action.** Resilient people focus on the things they can control, instead of becoming overwhelmed by the things they cannot control and wishing they could change them. (See **The Serenity Prayer** overleaf). Even in the worst situations there is often something that can be done to improve matters. Resilient people take realistic steps, no matter how small, to improve the situation and their sense of control.
- **Strengths.** Resilient people play to their strengths which increases their capacity to handle tough times by making the best use of their innate abilities. [See SGC – 'How can I play to my strengths?']
- **Support.** Resilient people seek support from others, like family and close friends. They recognise that talking with others about situations doesn't make them go away, but sharing them helps to process the emotions. Also, others can provide fresh insights and perspectives on a situation that could help to manage a tough situation better. Working with a coach or therapist may be needed to help someone gain a healthier perspective on the situation and encourage them to take the appropriate action.

Resilience is an important skill that can help us all face life's challenges. By practicing some resilience-building skills daily we can get better at it with time. Also, surviving tough times, and learning and growing from these experiences, enables us, in turn, to support those who may go through similar situations in the future. Offering this type of support will benefit both us and them.

*"Resilience is all about being able to overcome the unexpected.  
Sustainability is about survival. The goal of resilience is to thrive." Jamais Cascio*

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## More Information

M +44 (0)7711 856804 E [hello@paulhollywell.com](mailto:hello@paulhollywell.com) L [www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell](http://www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell) W [www.paulhollywell.com](http://www.paulhollywell.com)

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## *Realistic Optimism Exercise*

To help to reduce catastrophising a situation and be more optimistic, consider the *worst-case*, *best-case* and *most-likely* outcomes by answering the following questions:

- What's the worst that can happen here?
- What's the best that can happen here?
- What's most likely to happen here?

These three questions rebalance our perspective and improve our resilience by helping us make the *best-case* more likely and the *worst-case* less so.

## *The Serenity Prayer*

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

This version of *The Serenity Prayer* (first written by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr in 1932) has been adopted by [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) as part of their 12-step recovery programme.

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**M** +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** [hello@paulhollywell.com](mailto:hello@paulhollywell.com) **L** [www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell](http://www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell) **W** [www.paulhollywell.com](http://www.paulhollywell.com)