

4 TIPS

TO BUILD YOUR RESILIENCE

Psychological resilience is the ability to adapt and maintain well-being in the face of adversity or stress. Resilience helps you navigate difficulties while preserving purpose and connection. The good news? Resilience is a set of skills you can develop through repetition. These practices can help you to build your internal resources and manage stress during difficult times.

Mather Institute, in partnership with Northwestern University, conducted a study on resilience with employees, based on these four principles. The study found that regularly practicing these skills was associated with reduced stress and greater life satisfaction.

1 FEELING GRATITUDE

Gratitude means noticing and appreciating things that support or bring meaning to your life, big or small. Regularly practicing gratitude can help with stress, improve positive feelings like happiness and optimism, and strengthen relationships.

APPLY THE PRACTICE

Think back over the past week and identify two or three things you're thankful for. For each, reflect on: Why are you grateful for it? How does it positively impact your life?

2 CULTIVATING POSITIVITY

Noticing positive experiences can improve your mood and help you build emotional reserves. You can amplify these benefits through savoring, which is intentionally increasing your enjoyment of an event. Savoring makes positive feelings last longer and helps you recover from stress more quickly.

APPLY THE PRACTICE

Make a list of three or four activities that bring you joy. For each, identify what makes it enjoyable. Then choose one of the activities to do this week with intentional savoring, following these tips.

Before: Anticipate and look forward to it

During: Slow down, notice details, avoid distractions

After: Reflect on what you enjoyed or share the experience

3

RECOGNIZING PERSONAL STRENGTHS

Everyone has personal strengths or positive qualities that are unique to you. During times of stress, we often focus on what's going wrong. Recognizing your strengths reminds you that you have resources to overcome difficulties.

APPLY THE PRACTICE

Identify two or three of your personal strengths. (Prompts: What comes relatively easily to you? What do others come to you for help with? Some examples include generosity, resourcefulness, or tenacity). Consider: How could you apply this strength today in a new way? How might it help with a current challenge?

4

DOING KIND ACTS FOR OTHERS

Doing something thoughtful for others without expecting anything in return can boost your mood and sense of purpose. Acts of kindness strengthen social connections and remind you of the positive impact you can have on others.

APPLY THE PRACTICE

Think of one specific act of kindness you could do in the next few days. This could be sending an encouraging text, helping a friend (or a stranger), or thanking someone whose actions go unnoticed. Write down:

- 1) What will you do?
- 2) For whom?
- 3) When?

After completing it, reflect: How did the person respond? How did it make you feel?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Start with one skill that feels most accessible to you and set a specific time to start practicing. Notice what happens when you engage regularly with these skills. Remember that building resilience isn't about eliminating all stress, but rather developing resources that help you navigate it more effectively.

Mather Institute, an area of service of Mather, developed these tips based on a review of academic research. Mather is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating Ways to Age Well.SM Staffed by nationally recognized researchers, the Institute is an award-winning resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living, and successful aging service innovations.