

Top Ten Traits Of Emotional Resilient People

1. Know their boundaries. Resilient people understand that there is a separation between who they are at their core and the cause of their *temporary* suffering. The stress/trauma might play a part in their story but it does not overtake their permanent identity.

2. Keep good company. Resilient people tend to seek out and surround themselves with other resilient people, whether just for fun or when there's a need for support. Supportive people give us the space to grieve and work through our emotions. They know how to listen and when to offer just enough encouragement without trying to solve all of our problems with their advice. Good supporters know how to *just be* with adversity—calming us rather than frustrating us.

3. Cultivate self-awareness. Being 'blissfully unaware' can get us through a bad day but it's not a very wise long-term strategy. Self-awareness helps us get in touch with our psychological/physiological needs—knowing what we need, what we don't need, and when it's time to reach out for some extra help. The self-aware are good at listening to the subtle cues their body and their mood are sending.

On the other hand, a prideful stubbornness without emotional flexibility or self-awareness can make us emotional glaciers: Always trying to be strong in order to stay afloat, yet prone to massive stress fractures when we experience an unexpected change in our environment.

4. Practice acceptance. Pain is painful, stress is stressful, and healing takes time. When we're in it, we want the pain to go away. When we're outside it, we want to take away the pain of those who we see suffering. Yet resilient people understand that stress/pain is a part of living that ebbs and flows. As hard as it is in the moment, it's better to come to terms with the truth of the pain than to ignore it, repress it, or deny it. Acceptance is not about giving up and letting the stress take over, it's about *leaning in* to experience the full range of emotions and trusting that we will bounce back.

5. Willing to sit in silence. We are masters of distraction: T.V, overeating, abusing drugs, risky behaviour, gossip, etc. We all react differently to stress and trauma. Some of us shut down and some of us ramp up. Somewhere in the middle there is mindfulness-- being in the

presence of the moment without judgment or avoidance. It takes practice, but it's one of the purest and most ancient forms of healing and resilience-building.

6. Don't have to have all the answers. The psyche has its own built-in protective mechanisms that help us regulate stress. When we try hard to find the answers to difficult questions in the face of traumatic events, that *trying too hard* can block the answers from arising naturally in their own due time. We can find strength in knowing that it's okay to not have it all figured out right now and trusting that we will gradually find peace and *knowing* when our mind-body-soul is ready.

7. Have a menu of self-care habits. They have a mental list (perhaps even a physical list) of good habits that support them when they need it most. We can all become self-care spotters in our life— noticing those things that recharge our batteries and fill our cup.

8. Enlist their team. The most resilient among us know how to reach out for help. They know who will serve as a listening ear and, let's be honest, who won't! Our team of supporters helps us reflect back what they see when we're too immersed in overwhelm to witness our own coping. We can all learn how to be better supporters on other people's team. It is useful to develop a strategy for effectively supporting others and proactively seeking the support we need for ourselves. Remember, it's okay to communicate to our supporters what is and isn't helpful feedback/support for our needs.

9. Consider the possibilities. We can train ourselves to ask which parts of our current story are permanent and which can possibly change. *Can this situation be looked at in a different way that I haven't been considering?* This helps us maintain a realistic understanding that the present situation is being coloured by our current interpretation. Our interpretations of our stories will always change as we grow and mature. Knowing that today's interpretation can and will change, gives us the faith and hope that things can feel better tomorrow.

10. Get out of their head. When we're in the midst of stress and overwhelm, our thoughts can swirl with dizzying speed and disconnectedness. We can find reprieve by getting the thoughts out of our head and onto our paper. As Dr. James Pennebaker wrote in his book *Writing to Heal*, "People who engage in expressive writing report feeling happier and less negative than before writing. Similarly, reports of depressive symptoms, rumination, and general anxiety tend to drop in the weeks and months after writing about emotional upheavals."