Tips for strengthening the seven most important factors for resilience

Many people appear to be born with the ability to overcome adversity with relative ease. The experts describe this characteristic as endurance, or resilience. How we react to stressful situations depends on a couple of personality traits. While these traits are expressed distinctively in each individual, they can nevertheless be developed and practiced.

We can learn to handle crises better by understanding and strengthening the seven most important factors for resilience. Make use of small, daily crises to practice and develop your strategies for self-empowerment in order to also have more self-confidence later on with bigger problems.

Emotional control:

Your thoughts influence how you feel and act. A positive basic attitude will make you much more resilient.

- When facing difficult situations, try to deliberately see the positive instead of concentrating only on the negative factors.
- Keep in mind that many of the problems that you encounter in your life are temporary in nature, and remind yourself of how you overcame setbacks in the past.
- Avoid slipping into worst-case scenario thinking. To do that, it is helpful to write down the worst possible situation and to ponder the reasons why it is improbable for that situation to come about.
- Do not become upset about things that cannot be changed.
- Discuss situations that frighten you with a good friend to gain another perspective.
- Keep your sense of humor even in difficult times. Laughter reduces stress and helps you keep things well in hand.

Impulse control

When you control your impulses instead of letting them run free, you allow yourself to concentrate on your tasks and goals, which leads to success and satisfaction. You can train yourself to keep your own impulses under control.

- Clear away any possible temptations. Therefore, for starters don't buy any ice cream or chocolate, turn off programs that distract you (e.g. Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp etc.)
- Plan to train your self-control and try not to accomplish everything all at once. It makes little sense to try to stop smoking at the same time as dieting. Set up a schedule for when you would like to train for which behavior pattern.

Empathy

Those who show empathy and tolerance towards their fellow human beings can understand their counterpart better. Your own life will be more relaxed if you are more tolerant of other people.

- Inquire if you do not understand the behavior of other people: "Why do you do it this way?" - "Why do you care?" - "How do you make your decisions?" Be careful not to sound harsh or reproachful, but curious. If you know your fellow human beings better, you will find it much easier to put yourself in their position.
- Avoid getting angry about a person's weaknesses, but look for the positive qualities.
- The greater the variety of people you know, the easier it will be for you to be more open. Deliberately expand your own horizon.
- Try to put yourself in another person's place and understand his or her point of view instead of judging immediately. Your own perspective will broaden by digging deeper rather than rejecting a thought in advance. Ask, for example, " So far I haven't seen things this way, how do you get to this train of thought?

Causal analysis

Analyze difficult situations or incidents to learn from them and to avoid committed errors in the future.

- Try to analyze why a situation has occurred and whether you yourself would have had the opportunity to influence it.
- Concentrate on the positive lessons that you can learn from a negative experience.
- Do not fall into the role of a victim, but ask yourself instead what you can do differently the next time to reach a better result.

Realistic optimism

A realistic but positive attitude open doors, allowing us to move on, to stand up again, try once more, to trust in our abilities and to remain curious. Realistic optimism emboldens, while pessimism is discouraging.

- Pessimism is contagious. If you surround yourself with grumblers and people who look for excuses, you will quickly become one of them.
- There are situations that simply cannot be changed for the moment. If you get stuck in a traffic jam, for example, there are two possible ways of reacting to this: Getting upset and pounding the steering wheel, or relaxing and using time meaningfully. For example, listen to a podcast or really crank up your favorite song! You alone can decide on how you will handle an annoying situation.
- In crises and difficult times, it is also helpful to see the opportunities and the prospects. Someone who loses their job also has the opportunity for a new start. Perhaps the time has now come for you to finally exert your strengths and find your calling.

- Appreciate the many small, positive things in life with greater awareness and, every evening, write down what made you happy that day.

Self-efficacy

If you don't believe in yourself, then you won't even try something in the first place! This statement is a sweet and short summary of self-efficacy.

- Approach challenges with a positive, self-confident attitude by preparing yourself well and by considering solutions to issues or obstacles in advance.
- Avoid if-then formulations: Instead of saying to yourself, "If I study a lot then I will pass the test," think in self-efficacy patterns about how, "I will study a lot and then pass the test." A small detail – but the effect on inner conviction and faith in one's own abilities make a difference.
- Positive experiences emerging from difficulties that you have overcome strengthen your faith in yourself sustainably. Always think about what you have already achieved – even the small steps are significant here.
- Fear of a task often also triggers associated bodily reactions such as palpitations, sweating, hand trembling, shivering, nausea, etc. But you can work on these physical stress reactions with targeted relaxation or stress management techniques.

Setting goals

Setting goals for yourself is the basis for career coaching and personal development. The focus thereby is on realistic goals. A goal that is too challenging and too distant can dissolve like a mirage. Only by managing to achieve planned goals will you gain a feeling of success.

- For purposes of planning, it is important to select a suitable goal that is achievable and specific, and that agrees with our own personality.
- Set the goal to be achieved yourself whenever possible, or try to at least influence the final goal.
- Set intermediate goals (milestones) on the way to the final goal. For example, if you wish to save money for a new car, subdivide the total amount into intermediate amounts. Reaching these intermediate goals repeatedly will already give you a taste of success before reaching the final goal, and that will keep the motivation level high.
- Setting daily goals for yourself will focus your thoughts. It trains you to look forward and not to ponder the past. The periodic formulation of short-term goals additionally helps you to identify medium and long-term goals. Over time, you will see what is really important, what makes you happy and what strengthens your resilience.
- Start with small goals and work towards more difficult goals, little by little.