

Building Resilience:

Resilience is a skill you build,
not a trait you either have or don't.

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Building Resilience

Using this Workbook

Pressure and challenge are a part of modern life,
not a sign that something has gone wrong.

When multiple pressures converge, resources run out and
the unexpected lands, the experience of stress is common.

What matters most may not be avoiding stress altogether,
but how reliably you're able to recover from it.

This lesson works through the processes, actions and habits
that build that capacity.

These are my reflections

.....

on ___ /___ /_____

Resilience

Resilience is described, professionally, as the process of adjusting well in the face of stress. It's not a fixed trait you either have or don't.

It is a skill set that can be learned.

> *Resilience isn't being unaffected by pressure, it's how well you adapt and recover when stress hits.*

What Strengthens Resilience?

A handful of actions, taken deliberately, can genuinely strengthen your sense of resilience. None require you to feel resilient first.
They allow you to build your capacity from the outside in.

- **Find something you can control or influence positively.**

For many of us, a symptom of stress is that feeling of not being in control, nothing we do matters or makes a difference.

A simple way to break this cycle is to find something small, simple, meaningful to you, something you can control:

- a simple task at work, one email, one conversation,
- tidying your desk, clearing a shelf, making your bed
- preparing a simple meal
- choosing the times you start and finish working...

- **Focus on something that is good or going well.**

When we're feeling stressed we become super-sensitive to the things that seem to prove we're not coping well.

Buck the trend. Be the person who finds the good, the silver lining.
Notice the beauty around you. Respond to the generous gesture.
Don't force "toxic positivity", but remind yourself that some things still work.

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And there's more...

- **Reach out, find the right support or engage community**

What is it that you need?

- A twenty minute reset, alone?
- Permission to enjoy the view?
- A cup of tea with friends?
- Ask for support with a task or advice on a plan



- **Challenge your negative thoughts**

When life gets tough it's easy to feel that the things that happen or have happened will be catastrophic, they will affect everything in our lives and last for ever. Really? We need to remind ourselves that not every thought is true, not every thought is helpful, choose where you focus.

- **Distraction or Focus?**

When there's a particular situation that keeps coming back, it fills your thoughts and you can't seem to shake it off, two strategies that can work well, seem opposites, which will work for you?

Focus on a task or activity: Displace that negative thought with a deliberate focus on something different, better, more helpful.

Yes, you will likely find yourself thinking about "it" again, so simply notice and choose to turn your thoughts, again, to your better focus.

Schedule a time to focus on worry: Give yourself permission to focus fully on that worry - but only for a limited time.

Set an appointment in your diary, lasting 15 to 30 minutes... and when that appointment arrives, indulge yourself.

When your appointment is over, leave those thoughts and get on with your life!

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Completing the Stress Cycle

Stress is a physiological cycle, not just a mental state — and it needs a physical ending, not only a mental resolution.

Emily and Amelia Nagoski's work on burnout describes this well: dealing with the source of your stress (the stressor) doesn't automatically deal with the stress response itself (the stress).

Your body needs a signal that the danger has passed.

Movement is one of the most reliable ways to send that signal.

Give yourself permission to take a walk, go for a swim, visit the gym, dance around the kitchen or in the privacy of your room or office...

Do something that lets your body physically register “You're safe now.”.



> Sorting it is step one.
> Letting your body know it's sorted is step two.

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Choosing Your Focus Intentionally

Where you place your attention shapes how pressure feels, even when the pressure itself hasn't changed.

If you focus on the problems and the pain, it will mostly likely feel worse. This doesn't mean you ignore the problem or pretend it doesn't exist, you simply chose to acknowledge the difficulty and look for solutions.

What's the problem? → What's one step forward?
Who's to blame? → Who can help?
What's wrong here? → What do I actually need right now?
How bad is it? → What's already working, even a little?
Whose fault is this? → What's within my control here?

Being more mindful

A practice of mindful meditation works for some people - if it helps, use it. Meditation doesn't need to be the answer for you specifically.

What definitely helps is finding a way to choose your focus on purpose, rather than letting it default to whatever is loudest.

Make a conscious decision to be present in the moment.

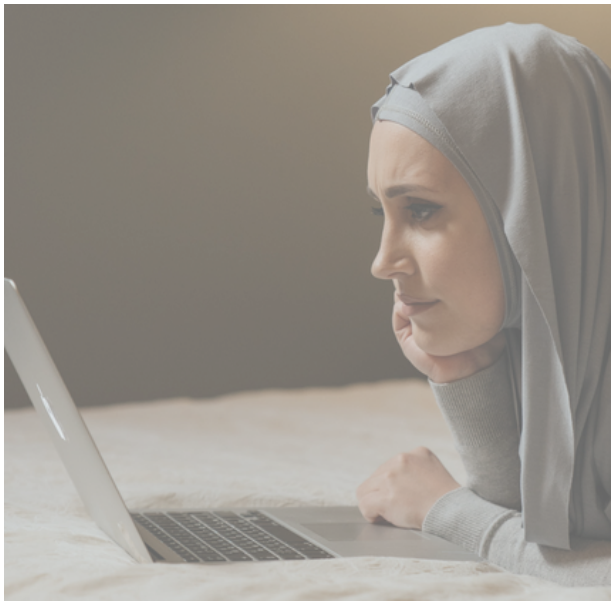
Whatever you are doing be aware.

Be intentional,

Do it with purpose.

A mindful walk, cup of tea or engagement with a learning resource can transform your outcomes...

Do it.



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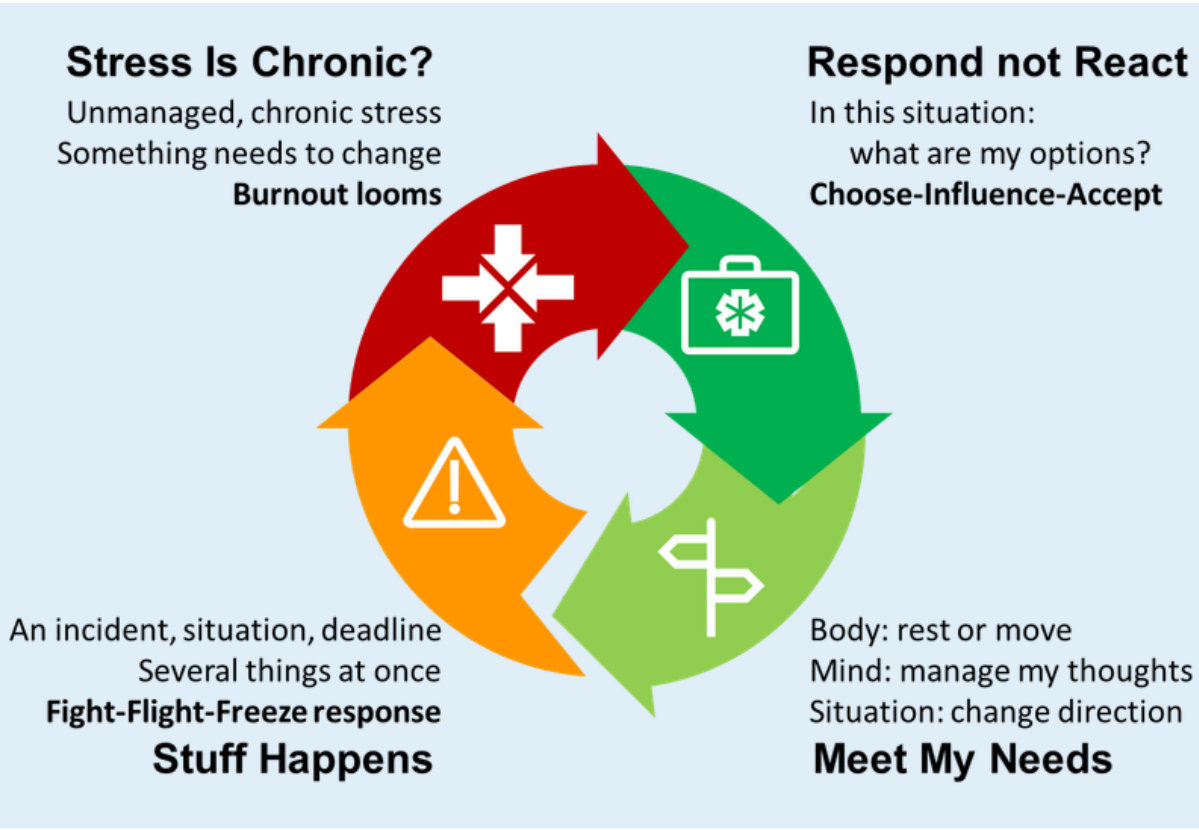
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Build Your Resilience Toolkit

Take a moment to review the suggested activities in this workbook.

- Which of these do you already do, even occasionally?
- Are there some you don't do but might be tempted to try?

Remember, resilience is not about never feeling stressed, it's having a set of practices you can use to bring yourself back from the edge, to ground you, resource you for positive engagement or protect you from future harm.



Further Reading and Resources

If you'd like to go deeper into the ideas in this lesson:

- Burnout: The Secret to Solving the Stress Cycle. Emily Nagoski, Amelia Nagoski
- The Upside of Stress, by Dr Kelly McGonigal
- How to Make Stress Your Friend, Kelly McGonigal's TED talk: ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend
- The Mindful Body: Thinking Our Way to Lasting Health, by Prof Ellen Langer
- The Power of Mindful Learning, by Professor Ellen Langer

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Reflections

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WANT MORE?



Resilience isn't about never being knocked down or feeling stressed. It's about how reliably you get back up, and building the patterns that make that easier each time it happens.

The habit becomes:

Fall down → Get up

Life will continue to present opportunities to perfect this practice.

That doesn't mean you're doing it wrong, you're developing mastery.

I hope this content has been useful.

If you know you need more, do reach out.

I'd love to hear from you.

You can always explore the other resources on my website.

MargaretCollins.com/

Resources

Let me know how you get on!

Margaret

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