



AWAKENING THE POWER WITHIN YOU (Enjoy Your Everyday Resilient Life)

Self-Enrichment and Inspirational series ...

The modern world is characterized by change. Every day we hear of shifts in political orders, developments in economic relationships and new technological advancements. These changes feed off each other and they are global. As a result, we have to become more responsive. In order to keep our place in these ever-changing economies, we need to be much more resilient in life.

Psychological resilience is defined as an individual's ability to properly adapt to stress and adversity. Stress and adversity can come in the shape of family or relationship problems, health problems, or workplace and financial stressors, among others. Individuals demonstrate resilience when they can face difficult experiences and rise above them with ease.

Resilience is *not a rare ability*; in reality, it is found in the average individual and it can be learned and developed by virtually anyone. *Resilience should be considered a **process***, rather than a trait to be had. There is a common misconception that people who are resilient experience no negative emotions or thoughts and display optimism in all situations. Contrary to this misconception, the reality remains that resiliency is demonstrated within individuals who can effectively and relatively easily navigate their way around crises and utilize effective methods of coping. In other words, people who demonstrate resilience are people with **positive emotionality**; they are keen to effectively balance negative emotions with positive ones.

Resilience is composed of particular factors attributed to an individual. There are numerous factors, which cumulatively contribute to a person's resilience. The primary factor in resilience is having positive relationships inside or outside one's family. It is the single most critical means of handling both ordinary and extraordinary levels of stress.

These positive relationships include traits such as mutual, reciprocal support and caring. Such relationships aid in bolstering a person's resilience. Studies show that there are several other factors which develop and sustain a person's resilience:

1. The ability to make realistic plans and being capable of taking the steps necessary to follow through with them.
2. A positive self-concept and confidence in one's strengths and abilities.
3. Communication and problem-solving skills.
4. The ability to manage strong impulses and feelings.

These factors are not necessarily inherited; they can be developed in any individual and they promote resiliency.

The central process involved in building resilience is the training and development of **adaptive coping skills**. The basic flow model (called the transactional model) of stress and coping is: A stressor (i.e. a potential source of stress) occurs and cognitive appraisal takes place (deciding whether or not the stressor represents something that can be readily dealt with or is a source of stress because it may be beyond one's coping resources).

If a stressor is considered to be a danger, coping responses are triggered. Coping strategies are generally either be outwardly focused on the problem (problem-solving), inwardly focused on emotions (emotion-focused) or socially focused, such as emotional support from others.



In humanistic psychology, *resilience refers to an individual's capacity to thrive and fulfill potential despite or perhaps even because of such stressors*. Resilient individuals and communities are more inclined to see problems as opportunities for growth. In other words, resilient individuals seem not only to cope well with unusual strains and stressors but actually to experience such challenges as learning and development opportunities.

Whilst some individuals may seem to prove themselves to be more resilient than others, it should be recognized that resilience is a dynamic quality, not a permanent capacity. In other words, resilient individuals demonstrate *dynamic self-renewal*, whereas less resilient individuals find themselves worn down and negatively impacted by life stressors.

Characteristics of Resilient People:

- Ability to "bounce back" and "recover from most setbacks"
- Have a "where there's a will, there's a way" attitude
- Tendency to see problems as opportunities
- Ability to "hang tough" when things are difficult
- Capacity for seeing small windows of opportunity and making the most of them
- Have a healthy social support network
- Has the wherewithal to competently handle most different kinds of situations
- Has a wide comfort zone
- Able to recover from experiences in the panic zone or of a traumatic nature

What is Resiliency Quotient?

Resiliency Quotient is the process by which people adapt to changes, and accept that change is a vital part of life. Resiliency Quotient is the factor to help us bounce back to our glorious status and success; and to come back stronger and better.

Resiliency is a skill to creating a more enriching life for yourself and people around you. *Resilience is a mind-set that enables you to seek out new experiences and to view your life as living in progress*. It confers the confidence to take on new responsibilities, to seek experiences that will challenge you to learn more about yourself and connect more deeply with others.

Scientific research has demonstrated that the number one roadblock to resilience is not genetics, not childhood experiences, not a lack of opportunity or wealth. *The principal obstacle to tapping into our inner strength lies with our cognitive style*, which we will refer to simply as *thinking style* – ways of looking at the world and interpreting events. Humans are not passive recipients of sensory data from the world around them. We actively process information, simplifying and organizing it in idiosyncratic ways. When adversity strikes, we use mental shortcuts to figure out its causes and implications so that we can quickly make sense of the abundance of information that barrages us. At times these shortcuts help us manage the information overload; at other times they lead us astray. As we navigate our way through the world, we assume that we are responding to a direct readout of that world, one that is comprehensive and accurate. But we are not. Our thinking styles bias and color our viewpoint, leading us to develop patterns of behaviors that are often self-defeating. For example, some people have a thinking style that leads them to see problems as insurmountable, so they give up even in the situations in which they do have control.

How can you increase your resilience? By learning to understand your thinking styles and developing skills to circumvent them so that you can see the true causes of adversity and its effect on your life. Let's embark a voyage of self-discovery and enjoy the process of growth that you can use to maximize your performance at work, improve your significant relationships, boost your health, and find the courage to embrace new experiences.



Systems Thinking

From an early age, we are taught to break apart problems to make complex tasks and subjects easier to deal with. But this creates a bigger problem; we lose the ability to see the consequences of our actions, and we lose a sense of connection to a larger whole. Systems thinking helps us see patterns and learn to reinforce or change them effectively to gain and sustain competitive advantage. Systems thinking is a framework for seeing patterns and interrelationships. It is especially important to see the world as a whole as it grows more and more complex. Complexity can overwhelm and undermine. Systems thinking makes these realities more manageable; it is the antidote for feelings of helplessness. By seeing patterns that lie behind events and details, we can actually simplify life and take initiative to solve problems.

Here's a definition from Barry Richmond, who coined the term in 1987: **Systems Thinking** is the art and science of making reliable inferences about behavior by developing an increasingly deep understanding of underlying structure.

Systems thinking has been defined as an approach to problem solving, by viewing "problems" as parts of an overall system, rather than reacting to specific parts, outcomes or events, and thereby potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences. Systems thinking is not one thing but a set of habits or practices within a framework that is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Systems thinking focuses on **cyclical** rather than linear cause and effect.

Difficulties in solving problems often stem from the fact that **problems do not occur in isolation**, but in relation to each other – for example, young people may join violent gangs and we may try to solve that issue by putting more police on the streets. However, the problem of youngsters joining gangs is often related to family dysfunction in the homes of those youngsters. And the family issues may be related to unemployment, and so on. *Systems Thinking* can help us see that what may seem an isolated problem is actually part of an interconnected network of related issues.

Systems thinking is a powerful approach for understanding the nature of why situations are the way they are, and how to go about improving results. *Systems thinking* is not an easy approach for it requires a substantial investment of effort, and thought, though the results can be more than worth the investment.

Systems thinking revolves around a handful of concepts that anyone who is determined to learn can master, with study and practice. The key concepts are:

1. **All systems are composed of inter-connected parts.** The connections cause behavior of one part to affect another. All parts are connected. A change to any part or connection affects the entire system.
2. **The structure of a system determines its behavior.** Structure is the pattern of part connections. To understand a system's gross behavior, understand its structure. To change a system's gross behavior, change its structure.
3. **Complex social systems exhibit counter intuitive behavior. The problems of such systems therefore cannot be solved** using intuition and our everyday problem solving methods. The use of intuitive methods to solve difficult complex social system problems is a common trap, so common the entire environmental movement has fallen into it. Only analytical methods using tools that fit the problem will solve difficult complex social system problems. The first such tool to adopt is true systems thinking. The second one is a process that fits the problem. The third one, unless it is an easy problem, is system dynamics.



Let's Celebrate – Daily!

"Every day, make it a point to celebrate your successes, no matter how small they may seem to you. In doing this, you tell the Universe that you are in tune with the flow of life. Life is great! Celebrate it daily."
Eugene Holden

We all spend a good part of our days and years getting stuff done. But what is it that preoccupies our mind? It's the stuff that we don't get done!

As a result, we rarely follow the excellent advice given in our quote – to take time to celebrate our successes. Like the White Rabbit in the "Alice in Wonderland" story, we immediately rush off to work on the next thing on our list. When you do that, you create an atmosphere of thought in your mind that says that you're not good enough, because the memories you're creating are about fear and stress.

On the other hand, if you take time after each task to reward yourself by remembering the challenges you faced, the problems you solved, and the fact that you got it done, you'll be building self-esteem and self-confidence! Even if it was a small, simple, project. You've earned the right to feel good about yourself. So go ahead and do it – Let's Celebrate Being You!

All setbacks and unexpected obstacles will always present life's lessons to be learned. Although you may be doing everything right, you cannot avoid the challenges. Once you have begun to grow from life's challenges, you understand how they have helped you to mold you into what you have become.

You cannot stop the world from upsetting you at times, but you can learn how to use every upset or setback to bring you back to the wisdom and potential of your true self. You can learn to use every negative experience to strengthen and empower you. *Every challenging experience can assist you in discovering your inner gifts and powers. Life will never be free of challenges but our ability to meet these challenges will continue to grow.* This important recognition frees you to **shift your focus from what is wrong to what you can learn.** *All success hinges on our ability to self-correct and not to continue repeating behaviors or attitudes that do not work or self-sabotaging.*

To achieve success in life, we must feel worthy. Without self-love and a sense of worthiness, we can never let our potentials out and becoming much more productive. In the process of overcoming, learning, and growing, we are becoming much more resilient in life!

Your Success is My Greatest Reward!

Your Favorite Author & Speaker – Peter Ng

Resiliency Quotient – The Workshop

A new program has been launched at Singapore National Employers Federation titled "Resiliency Quotient for Leaders". In this workshop, you will embark into an exciting journey of self-discovering of becoming a much more resilient and productive leader. Contact Ms Shirlin Lee at www.sgemployers.com.