RESILIENCE: HOW TO GROW IT & BEAT BURNOUT
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Resilience:
- Our ability to return to our normal state after a difficult/stressful/traumatic experience and the ability to continue facing challenges (Reivich, Seligman & McBride, 2011).
- “Mastering the art of resilience does much more than restore you to who you once thought you were. Rather, you emerge from the experience transformed into a truer expression of who you were really meant to be” (Orsborn, 1997).
- Self-transformation and self-actualization are the real prizes garnered from practicing resilience.

4 BEHAVIORS OF RESILIENT PEOPLE (Bonanno, 2004)

1. Repressive Coping
   a) “Emotion-focused mechanism, such as emotional dissociation [e.g. practicing mindfulness]...appears to foster adaptation to extreme adversity” (Bonanno, 2004, p. 26).
   b) Repressive copers tend to focus away from negative emotions and take a stance of:
      i. Goal-directed behavior,
      ii. Act positively
      iii. Have positive self-esteem (Coifman, Bonanno, Ray, Gross, 2007).
   c) Mindfulness
      i. “Paying attention, in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).
      ii. It is a private, inner experience that helps you live more fully and more peacefully with intention, even in the midst of chaos.
   d) Mindlessness
      i. The opposite of mindfulness—running on autopilot

2. Expressing Positive Emotion
   a) It reduces levels of distress following stressful events by
      i. Quieting us;
      ii. Undoing negative emotion;
      iii. Increasing continued contact with and support from important people in our environment (Bonanno, 2004).
   b) Encouragement. Identifying the strengths in others contributes to building strong relationships and the view that challenges can be overcome (Reivich, Seligman and McBride, 2011).
   c) Optimism. “People who are confident about eventual success continue trying, even when the going is hard. [On the other hand] People who are doubtful try to escape the adversity by wishful thinking, they are drawn into temporary distractions that don’t help solve the problem, and they sometimes even stop trying” (Carver, Scheier & Segerstrom, 2010, p. 882). Optimists engage in more effective problem solving and they have larger social networks (Carver, et al., 2010).

3. Hardiness
   a) “Consists of three dimensions: being committed to finding meaningful purpose in life, the belief that one can influence one’s surroundings and the outcome of events, and the belief that one can learn and grow from both positive and negative life experiences” (Bonanno, 2004, p. 25).
   b) “A pattern of attitudes and skills that provide the courage and strategies to turn stressful circumstances from potential disasters into growth opportunities instead” (Maddi, 2007, p. 61).
   c) Hardy managers at the Illinois Bell Telephone Company.
      i. Faced challenges;
      ii. Struggled to turn potential disasters into opportunities;
iii. Were more involved in building patterns of interaction with significant others such as mutual assistance and encouragement rather than being undermining, competitive or overprotective; they deepened these relationships. (Maddi, 2007).

d) 3C's of Hardy People (Maddi, 2002)

**Commitment**

i. Committed to many areas of life (Eschleman, Bowling & Alarcon, 2010).

ii. Strong commitment to themselves (Kobasa, 1979 as cited in Eschleman, Bowling and Alarcon, 2010, p. 278).

iii. Committed to finding purpose in their lives (Bonanno, 2004)

iv. “High-commitment people scan their environment to find something that piques their curiosity and [is] meaningful [to them]” (Maddi, 1990 as cited in Eschleman, Bowling & Alarcon, 2010, p. 278).

**Control (aka: Influence)**

i. “Those high in control believed that it is always best to struggle to have an influence on outcomes, even if it is problematic. They felt it was a waste of time and talent to just sink into passivity and powerlessness.” (Maddi, 2007, p. 62).

**Challenge**

i. Challenge positive people were found to be “more flexible and able to adapt to potentially stressful situations (Eschleman, et al. 2010).


iii. Challenge positive people believe change is normal and they learn from positive and negative experiences and believe that it’s naïve to wish for things to be easy. (Maddi, 2007)

4. Self-Enhancement

   a) “Self-enhancement consists of having unrealistic or overly positive biases in favor of [one’s] self” (Bonanno, 2004, p. 25).

   b) “Self-enhancement can be adaptive and promote well-being” (Bonanno, 2004, p. 25).

   c) “Self-enhancer’s perceptions of how others view them tends to be exaggerated in a self-serving direction” (Goorin & Bonanno, 2009, p. 172).

   d) “Lingering social liabilities that self-enhancers engender, suggest that non-self-enhancers should not necessarily strive to imitate their coping habits (Bonanno, 2005 as cited in Goorin & Bonanno, 2009, p. 173).

   e) “Self-enhancers tend to be charismatic and popular, but also... their failure to accurately perceive how others react to them may contribute to social problems” (Goorin & Bonanno, 2009, p.173).

   f) Use it sparingly and with caution as self-enhancers can be perceived negatively.

   g) If you see someone self-enhance during an aversive situation, try to be tolerant and this is what may be helping them keep their composure and carry on.

5. Self-Compassion

   a) Is often mistaken for: self pity, self-indulgence, a way to avoid responsibility, a diversion from pursuing professional excellence. But it isn’t any of these things.

   b) Has 3 components: “being kind toward oneself in instances of pain or failure; perceiving one’s experience as part of the larger human experience; and holding painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness [through mindfulness]” (Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 908).

   c) Is negatively associated with self-criticism, depression, anxiety, rumination, thought suppression, and neurotic perfectionism, while being positively associated with life satisfaction and social connectedness” (Neff, 2003a as cited in Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 909).

   d) Those high in self-compassion tend to have high self-esteem (Neff, 2003a).

   e) Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick (2007) found that self-compassion was strongly associated with happiness and optimism and that it was significantly related to curiosity, exploration and conscientiousness.

   f) Significant positive correlation between self-compassion and agreeableness (Neff, Rude & Kirkpatrick, 2006).
g) Associated with keeping negative experiences in perspective, less extreme behavior inclinations, less catastrophizing and personalization. Self-compassion positive subjects were more likely to assume personal responsibility and they appeared to have a realistic perspective of themselves—the same that others had of them. Also, self-compassion doesn’t involve hubris, narcissism or self-enhancement behaviours which tend to alienate others (Leary, Tate, Adams, Allen & Hancock, 2007).

h) “Suggest not only that self-compassion buffers people against the psychological impact of negative events but also that it more generally attenuate reactions to both positive and negative events” (Leary et al., 2007, p. 896).

i) High self-compassion helps buffer against anxiety when faced with an ego-threat, but high self-esteem doesn’t (Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007).

j) Self-compassion was found to be positively associated with motivation to improve one’s skills, emotion-focused coping, growth, and curiosity...[and] negatively correlated with avoidance-oriented coping, defensiv[eness] and the need to enhance one’s self-worth (Neff, Hsieh & Dejitterat, 2005).

6. Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)
   a. 3rd generation behavioural therapy model—mindfulness-based therapy that is focused on value-guided action. Developed by Steven Hayes, Kelly Wilson and Kirk Strosahl in the 1980’s.
   b. “The aim is not to reduce...symptoms but to fundamentally change [the] relationship with symptoms so they no longer hold [us] back from valued living” (Harris, 2009, p. 4).
   c. Resisting and struggling with our emotions and thoughts tends to only work in the short-term (Forsyth & Eifert, 2007).
   d. ACT teaches us to bring acceptance and compassion to our difficult feelings and memories and this weakens their power (Forsyth & Eifert, 2007).
      i. Accept: Mindfully be aware and accept your difficult emotions and thoughts; hold them gently. “Acceptance helps make [them] just a part of our larger life” (Forsyth & Eifert, 2007, p. 13), not our whole life.
      ii. Choose: Choose a direction for your life and the values you want your life to stand for.
      iii. Take Action: Take steps toward living according to your chosen values. “The goal is to foster your willingness to take your emotional discomfort along with you in the service of your life goals and dreams” (Forsyth & Eifert, 2007, p. 14).
References


