

Resilience: How to Bend and Not Break

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Sometimes bad things happen to people. How is it that some people handle enormous amounts of stress while others crumble? There's a phrase floating around the internet these days, "Not my circus, not my monkeys". Sometimes after a crisis, it feels like this is your circus and these are your monkeys.

Here are a few traits that help people bend and not break in the circus of life:

1. Resilient people reach out for help. They pray. They seek out people who are on their "team" who can be counted on when there is a need for support.
2. Resilient people know that suffering is temporary and do not take on suffering as their identity.
3. Resilient people are strong yet flexible. They know there is a time to be vulnerable and a time to be tough without being rigid.
4. Resilient people know they do not have to have all of the answers.
5. Resilient people do not go habitually to mindlessness as a way of coping. Yes, TV, computer games, shopping, alcohol, food, and friends can remove the pain for a time, but eventually facing the situation soberly in silence over time, moves the event to a healing place.
6. Resilient people seek professional therapy when overwhelmed.
7. Resilient people find things that nourish the soul: faith habits, exercise, volunteering, giving aid to the needy, finding meaningful work, life-building groups, seeking God.
8. Resilient people are not afraid to disappoint others by setting good personal boundaries. Do you say no enough? Over time, you will find that disappointing others is not as bad as you feared.

Examine your day if you are seeking to become better with resilience. As you practice good traits and good boundaries, you will find the chaos in your life diminishing. As your energy returns, you may even be thankful in part for the strength you have developed from managing the circus of life.

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