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An RX For Resilience

By Tara Parker-Pope [@nytimes](#)

Another factor in how you handle a stressful situation is resilience. The American Psychological Association defines resilience this way:

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences.

You can boost your resilience in a number of ways. In the book “Resilience: the Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges,” the authors, Dr. Steven M. Southwick and Dr. Charney, studied people who experienced great stressors — prisoners of war, men in the special forces, victims of trauma or survivors of catastrophic events. They found that people with the most resilience in the face of extreme challenges shared several behaviors and mind-sets. From that research, the duo identified 10 factors associated with resilience. You don’t need to practice all 10 behaviors to build resilience; just pick the two or three or four that speak to you.

- 1. Adopt a positive attitude.** Optimism is strongly related to resilience.
- 2. Reframe the situation.** Just like the stressed-out study subjects were taught to reappraise stress as their friend, people who are resilient typically reframe a negative situation as an opportunity for growth, learning or change.
- 3. Focus on core beliefs.** People with a deeply held core belief, strong faith or a commitment to altruism often show more resilience.

- 4. Find a role model.** Seeing someone else who has come through adversity can strengthen your own resilience.
- 5. Face your fears.** Confronting a challenge rather than avoiding it will help you cope and build confidence.
- 6. Fall back on religion or spirituality.** For many people, strong faith or spiritual beliefs can fuel resilience.
- 7. Seek social support.** People who reach out to friends, family and support groups fare better during stressful times.
- 8. Exercise.** It improves mood, relieves stress and makes you physically stronger.
- 9. Inoculate against stress.** Challenge yourself regularly in the areas of emotional intelligence, moral integrity and physical endurance.
- 10. Find meaning and purpose.** Having a clear purpose in life can boost your emotional strength during difficult times.