

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Building Resiliency in Your Life

Being passed over for a promotion, failing a professional exam, breaking up with the person you were certain was "the one". Just when you think you're on track to achieving your goals, life can throw you for a loop and turn your dreams upside down.

These "loops" can come in many forms: rejection, change and yes, even success, can leave you questioning the meaning of it all and wondering if you'll ever recover.

While some people are naturally inclined to be more resilient than others, the good news is that resiliency, or the ability to "bounce back" from life's hurdles, can be learned. Start by:

Embracing change. Maintaining the status quo and doing things the same way all the time can certainly become comfortable. So when a big change comes your way, it can knock you out of your comfort zone. But while change can present challenges, it can also reveal opportunities you might never have discovered otherwise. Instead of concentrating on the disruptive aspects, take a flexible approach and focus on the exciting "element of the unknown" that change can bring to your life.

Accepting what's out of your control. Fighting against that which you have no control over will leave you feeling frustrated and exhausted. There are certain circumstances or decisions that are not in your power to control. Let go of them. Doing so will help you move on and focus your energy more positively. Remember: though you may not be able to change these realities, you can change how you respond to them.

Acknowledging setbacks. Whether you're devastated because you were overlooked for a promotion, or are stressed out about a job transfer, share these feelings openly. Talking about setbacks honestly—whether with your boss, a friend or a family member can help you face your worst fears. You may find they aren’t that realistic or frightening after all, and it can reduce their impact on your confidence and life.

Staying focused on the big picture. It's easy to get so wrapped up in the negative impact a personal or professional setback has that you blow it out of proportion. Avoid "catastrophizing" and focus in on the real impact this hurdle will have. Will you remember it in a few days? Months? Years? At the end of your life? Looking at it from a broader perspective can help you more accurately assess its importance.

Remembering that failure is part of learning. Thomas Edison conducted thousands of experiments before perfecting the light bulb because he accepted that failure was as much a part of the process as success. Failure helps you learn, can force you to adapt and grow and, most importantly, helps you appreciate success even more when it's attained.

Welcoming support. While your image of a "resilient" individual may be a stoic, private person who never reveals his or her true emotions, this is far from reality. Strong, open, relationships are usually the foundation on which resilience is built. After all, it's much easier to bounce back from a trying situation when you've got a soft, supportive place to fall. Whether it's seeking advice from colleagues, family, a spiritual organization, or a professional, connections can provide you with the emotional help and outside perspective you need to recover from a setback.

Building resiliency takes time, experience and effort to attain. But once you take on a more flexible, resilient mindset, you'll unlock a world where you'll discover that setbacks are really just new

opportunities in disguise.

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