

Inculcating resilience will help you turn adversity into opportunity.

On a recent trip to a remote fishing village in Odisha, I witnessed an amazing display of persistence and strength. On a cold morning I watched two men set out for their daily fishing in the rough seas. Every time the men pushed forward, the sea refused to accept their little boat and tossed it back. The men were cold and wet and I thought they would give up. But they waited for a big wave to ride on, and inched forward on the merciless waves. Every time they were thrown overboard, they swam and climbed back. There was perfect coordination. Finally, the sea accepted the men and their boat, and I watched them in awe and admiration until they became a faint dot on the horizon.

It is amazing what you can learn from simple acts of persistence. One of the important



factors that help us plod through life's challenges without giving up is what behavioral scientists call resilience.

It is an attribute that helps us navigate life's choppy waters and maintain one's mental tenacity and stability. In recent years, much work is being done to identify personal attributes and environmental factors that enhance resilience. While we are born with some, here are qualities that enhance resilience.



An Internal Locus of Control

This is a tendency to feel and act as if one is influential. For example, taking decisions, staying confident, having an attitude that you can change your life in any way you want, whatever the circumstances.

People with an internal locus of control do not spend too much time blaming their circumstances. They try to make the best of any situation.

Viewing adversity as a challenge, not roadblock.

In my research with women facing partner violence, I found that resilient women focused on what they could change about the situation and strived towards an attainable goal for themselves and the children. They viewed life as being changeable and adversity as opportunity for growth. While initially many of these women had given up, over time they developed the quality of Cognitive Reappraisal, which is an outlook of looking at a situation through a neutral lens and not labeling it as good or bad, easy or difficult. So the next time you are in a tough situation, try not to label it. Once you label a situation, it takes on a life of its own and that influences your emotional reaction. Not labeling, simply accepting and moving on is one of the ways to maintain your mental health and find viable solutions.

Benefit Finding

It is what our grandmothers taught us—about finding a silver lining around every cloud! This quality is

Take decisions, stay confident, know that you can change your life the way you want.

about the ability to make sense of adversity and focus on personal growth following the adversity.

Thriving

The final frontier of resilience that I have witnessed in people who have faced extreme adversity. A mother who loses her family in an air crash, focuses on an art form that acts as catharsis and a profession; a child's disability enables parents to look beyond themselves and help the entire society; a job lay-off allows a young man to do something more meaningful he may not have otherwise attempted. Thriving is when a person not only makes sense of adversity, but is able to enhance one's skills and confidence following the adverse situation, often for the benefit of both oneself and others.



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND NEURO SCIENCES**

NIMHANS CENTRE FOR WELLBEING

1/B, 9th main, 1st phase, 1st stage, BTM
Layout, Bangalore-76

Phone– 080 26685948/ 9480829670

Email– nimhans.wellbeing@gmail.com

Enabling Resilience

