



Partnering With You At Midlife To Create The Life You Choose

Personal Resiliency – A Benefit in Moving Through a Midlife Transition

When your life is disrupted, how do you respond? Do you find yourself getting angry? Are you asking yourself why did this have to happen to me? Or, do you find yourself assessing what has happened and taking it in stride? Do you look for the opportunity in the change that has happened? How you do respond depends on how much Personal Resiliency you have built up within you as you have gone through your life's journey. Possessing resilience has always been a requirement for living a happy life. Today's world is no different where changes occur constantly and the impact of those changes is known quicker than ever before. Being resilient is a critical life skill, particularly when going through a major life transition. Being resilient is the capacity to remain both flexible and strong in the midst of ambiguity and change.

Resilient people tend to have many of the following characteristics:

- They remain realistic about their expectations of life.
- They realize that your attitude is more important to you than the luck you have or your genes.
- They exercise patience.
- They maintain hope.
- They know what is in their control, and more importantly, what is out of their control.
- They practice relaxing
- They take care and responsibility for themselves.
- They avoid living in the past.
- They refuse to obsess.
- They focus on what they can do as opposed to what they cannot do.
- They learn to forgive
- They find strength in spirituality.
- They live one day at a time.
- They enjoy laughing, and look for opportunities to bring laughter into their life.

Knowing what to do and actually doing it are of course two different things. So, how does one go about building up their resiliency? Making a commitment to shift their emotions and attitudes to a different mindset is a start. Taking the time to getting to know one's self better by opening themselves up to introspection of what their thinking and feeling deep inside themselves is another. However, change does not happen by accident. It happens because you are committed to making it happen in your life. Let's examine more deeply some of the characteristics highlighted above.

How many of them are ones do you identify with NOT being a part of your life? The more of them that you indicate are not practices you incorporate into your life in turn it is likely you find yourself either feeling like a victim or frequently in a state of anger. Those living as a victim blame themselves for the things which go wrong in their life. They live with guilt continually and if their feelings continue long enough ultimately become apathetic about life itself.

Those who find themselves frequently angry are constantly in conflict with their life situations and those around them. Blame of others or even themselves is a major characteristic of their day to day existence. People displaying this emotion are usually heavily rooted in the past and look to change the behavior of others, (something not easy to do, since it is not in their immediate control).

Even those individuals who do display many of the characteristics of resilient people can quickly find their energy being sapped away from them if they live their life opposite any of the characteristics above. That quickly points out the impact of negative emotions and attitudes on us. When we allow them to become part of our thought patterns and actions they impact our ability to move forward energetically in our lives.

Awareness of the need to keep up one's personal resiliency is an essential component of any midlife transition. Transition takes time. It takes a commitment of the energy levels you have stored up inside of you. It is fluid in nature, never settling into an absolute state, but instead taking us from point to point as we continue on our life's journey. Instead of acting as a victim or with anger at the change occurring around you, here are some other approaches you will want to consider.

If you find it difficult to shake anger and blame in your situation at least begin to rationalize your situation with the ultimate intent of repairing what has felt wrong or damaged in your life. Realize that you are in control of your own destiny and not others. Realize we have a free will to make our lives what we want to make them and always look to move forward. Do not keep yourself stuck in the past.

Becoming better at rationalizing those things which have held you back, the tendency is that you become freer to begin focusing your concern on helping others. Those parts of you that are caring, passionate and nurturing tend to emerge from inside you. Things are viewed more objectively and you are happy of being of service to others. Those that transition to roles in which they volunteer their time or look for charitable opportunities to help non-profit related organizations, begin to build up their resiliency by incorporating these types of emotions into their life.

With more of the negative feelings melting away, there is additional ability to look at the opportunities in every life situation that occurs. Your viewpoint becomes more of looking at "what's right" with a situation as opposed to "what's wrong". The statement "What's the problem?" starts moving from your life, and is replaced with "What's the solution?" to each new situation you face. With this type of hold on your emotions your leadership skills tend to emerge more fully as you want the best for all that are involved in any activity with which you are involved.

Rationalizing, concern for others, and looking for opportunities are all wonderful ways to build up resiliency that both keep your emotions upbeat and lead you toward an outcome which is in the direction you want to head. Beyond that, full feeling of strengthening your resiliency further comes when you move toward your enjoyment of the experiences themselves and less tied to the outcome. Your energy becomes more creative and proactive. You remain calm, unflappable and non-judgmental. Being right or wrong is no longer your focus. Instead, you look to fully enjoy the experience of every activity of which you partake. While this may seem difficult or even impossible for many to fathom, it is possible if one is truly committed to enjoying their life to the fullest. Yes it is difficult to incorporate this thought process into every aspect of your life. However if you take some time to think of an area in your life where you do live closer to this each and every day, you will find many of the characteristics of personal resilience present in those activities.

What are some next steps that you can do to increase your personal resiliency and increase the positive energy and experiences of how you view your life? Keep a little notebook with you and keep track of the 3 most positive things that happen to you each day. You may want to start the journal early in the morning and note such items as having a refreshing shower or a good breakfast. As the day goes on when an experience better than your current top 3 for the day occurs, put it on the list and remove one of the other experiences that are there. At the end of the day look back and savor the enjoyment for the good things that happened to you that day.

If relaxation is something which is difficult for you to achieve, you may want to make a commitment to yourself to allow yourself some quiet time each day, even if it is only for a few minutes. If there is a particular time of the day that gets very hectic, make sure to schedule your period shortly before or after that time. Relaxation can be something as sophisticated as meditating. Or it can be something as easy as closing your eyes and just resting for a few minutes. The point is to clear your mind of thoughts troubling you, get your focus back on the positive way you are going to go forward with your day and allow yourself to refocus yourself. You may also be a person who finds your time to gain perspective is

from taking a walk. Not only can you be free to prioritize your thoughts, but the exercise will help refresh you also.

It may ultimately help you to talk things out with a trusted confidant. Whether that person is a family member, friend, clergy person or a paid professional, as long as they are a good listener and allow you to express yourself without providing judgment on your thoughts, you are headed in the right direction. A good listener is someone who does not listen to your issues and tells you what they would do. They're someone instead who when in conversation with you is asking you open ended questions to expand on what you mean. They don't interrupt what you are saying and allow you to fully express your thoughts. Most often, they allow you to hear your innermost thoughts so that you yourself realize what may be causing you angst so you can be aware of what you need to address in your life.

Above all remember the focus is on the present. The past has happened, and cannot be changed. The future is unknown as to what may happen. And, even if in the present you make the best plan possible, circumstances could occur that may alter the outcome you expected. If your focus is on the here and now and working with what you can influence at this time, you will find yourself living a life that by its very nature will help to make you a more resilient person.

Yes, personal resiliency at times may appear difficult to achieve. However, if you are aware of the level of it in how you live your life and are committed to living your life in a resilient way, it is possible to achieve. Remember, while you may not be able to control the outcomes in your life, you do have the choice in how you experience the journey.