

Developing Extraordinary Resilience

We're all beset with difficulties, obstacles, pain, tiredness, and a thousand other setbacks, small and large.

What determines whether we take these setbacks in stride, or let them bring us down, is something that psychologists call "resilience." It's an ability to come back from setbacks, adapt, learn, but not be dragged down by these setbacks.

I've found resilience to be an important factor in my own journey, from struggling through finances and health changes over the years, to navigating the scary and uncertain waters of running my own business.

Resilience has allowed me to:

- Run several marathons and an ultramarathon (among other physical challenges) despite injuries and other training setbacks.
- Write numerous books and courses, even in the middle of personal challenges, fears, delays due to procrastination, and more.
- Face challenges such as debt or declining income with a positive attitude, and deal with the challenges as they come.
- Raise six kids (with perhaps a little help from my wife) no matter what difficulties they face, or what personal baggage I'm bringing as a father.
- Deal with deaths in the family with an open heart, not only finding compassion for my own grief but helping my family members in the midst of theirs.

None of this is to brag, but it's to show the power of simple resilience. I'm not greater than any other human, but resilience has helped me deal with these difficulties, as I'm sure it has for many of you.

It's such a powerful thing, resilience ... but how do you develop it? Because make no mistake: it's a set of skills, a set of capacities, that can be developed over time. Some people might be born with greater tendencies toward resiliency, but we can all get better at it.

I'm going to offer a set of practices that you can work on, if you want to develop extraordinary resiliency. I hope you find them useful.

The Resiliency Practices

Whenever you face stress, difficulty, grief, pain, struggle, setbacks, failure, disappointment, frustration, anger, uncertainty (big ones or little ones, throughout the day) ... see it as an

opportunity to practice.

Here are some practices you can try:

1. **Notice what you're not seeing.** When you're frustrated, disappointed, bored, etc. ... it's because you're only seeing the lack. Or the "bad" side of things. That means you're blinding yourself to the whole picture — in this moment of someone being rude to you, do you notice that they are in pain, that they have a tender and loving heart inside of them, that they are in fact a gift? Do you notice your own aliveness, the sunlight around you, the wonderful sounds of the day that surround you? In each moment, there are amazing things to notice, and when we're focused only on the parts we don't like, we're stuck in tunnel vision, and therefore missing out on the greatness of life. What is the amazingness you're not seeing?
2. **Tap into something bigger than yourself.** As a father, it's amazing what I'll go through to help my kids. I'll put myself through incredible discomfort, if it means protecting them, helping them somehow — and it doesn't even feel like a sacrifice. Anyone who serves others knows this feeling: when you are doing something for others, the discomfort is just an afterthought. So when you're facing difficulty, if you can connect your task to the something bigger than yourself, serving others and not just yourself ... the difficulty becomes much more insignificant. In this way, every difficulty can be seen as "no big deal."
3. **Practice compassion (for yourself & others).** When you're in pain, just notice that. Wish yourself peace and happiness, as you would wish peace from the pain for a loved one. If someone in front of you is angry, irritated ... wish them peace from the anger as well. Every difficult interaction is an opportunity to practice this key skill.
4. **See it as a part of growth.** When you face a setback, it's not the end of the road ... it's a part of it. No journey worth traveling is free of discomfort and setbacks. If we want to grow, we have to go through challenges. So each challenge you face — instead of thinking negatively about it, see the beauty of it being a part of your personal growth.
5. **Practice flexibility & adapting.** Rigidity only brings about frustration. If we can learn to be flexible, and adapt to any changing situation, we'll not only be happier, we'll be more successful at whatever we're trying to do. So when you're in the middle of a challenging situation, ask yourself how you can practice being more flexible. When you've been hit with a failure, ask yourself how you can adapt and get better so that you're more likely to succeed in the next attempt. See it as an opportunity to get better, to become more flexible in your thinking, to be ever-adaptable and never-extinguishable.
6. **Find the deliciousness, delight, joy.** Every uncertain situation, every discomfort and difficulty ... contains within it some kind of wonder, some kind of deliciousness, some kind of delight and joy. We just need to find it. Open our hearts up to it. Stop trying to reject it, and instead see it for the first time, as a small child might, and see the wonder

that is this moment in life.

7. **See everything as a teacher.** Every single thing that comes before you is your teacher. You can reject the lesson and see it as something you don't want, or you can open your mind to it and figure out how this situation, this person, this setback, is your teacher. Which of the above lessons is it teaching you? Which of the above practices is it giving you a opportunity to get better at? Figure that out, and you've unlocked a chance to get better at resilience.

In each moment, you have a choice. Do you want to succumb to your difficulties, or wish they would all evaporate ... or do you want to be made stronger by them, learn from them, open up to their brilliant lessons and delightful experiences?

In each moment, you have the opportunity to practice. It's not easy. But it's the path of resilience and love.