# Developing Resiliency

## Recovering from Life's Setbacks

Imagine the last upsetting event that you experienced. What was your reaction to it? Were you able to quickly recover from it and get back on track, or do bad experiences throw you into emotional tailspins that affect your quality of life long after they've occurred?

How quickly you are able to bounce back from setbacks is a trait called *resiliency.* People who are highly resilient tend to be happier and more successful both in their careers and in their personal lives.

## Rewriting Negative Scripts

Things like dealing with an unreasonable boss, a tight deadline, or a car breakdown can be a challenge for anyone, but the resulting stress is caused by our *reaction* to these problems, not the problems themselves.

By paying careful attention to your emotional reactions to upsetting events, you'll be able to spot unwanted and habitually negative scripts that

**Negative scripts**
"This is going to be a disaster."
"These delays are killing me."
"It's impossible."

**Positive scripts**
"I'll do the best I can with what I have."
"I'll use this extra time to get organized."
"Success might not come immediately."

play themselves out in your head, and gradually replace them with positive ones.

## Negating the Negative

Dwelling on a negative emotion, such as anger at being treated unfairly, sucks away our time, energy, and creativity and prevents us from moving forward constructively. Highly resilient people have the ability to diminish or postpone indulging on negative emotion. They aren't in denial. Instead, they refocus their attention on problem solving.

This begins by tuning out everything that falls outside of your sphere of control and influence and asking yourself, "What can I do right now to improve this situation?" Perhaps the most you can do is take a few deep breaths, calm down and organize your thoughts, but even this small action is a positive step. The idea is not to stifle negative emotion, but rather to prevent its paralyzing feedback loop.

## Planning for Success

Resilient people view obstacles and setbacks as "outcomes", "challenges", and "opportunities" to learn rather than disasters. More importantly, they anticipate success, but *expect* setbacks a natural part of any goal-oriented process. Here are the best practices for building resiliency:

**Know yourself:** Be realistic about what you are able to accomplish, and be honest about your limitations. Set your

goals accordingly, but don't be afraid to stretch to the higher rung, and then build on your successes.

**Know your partners:** Focus on the strengths, not the weaknesses of those around you. Always be looking for ways that their unique talents can complement yours or help you to accomplish your goals.

**Think strategy, planning, and action**: You are in control how you deal with a problem to produce a result. You can't predict a result, but you can act again on the result to produce a different out come, and so on. Unexpected variables show up as we reach for our goals. So measure success by *incremental advancements* toward your goals.

**Treat life as a classroom:** A helpful question to ask yourself in any challenging situation is, "What can I learn from this." Temporary failures almost always precede future success.

## Internal Focus

By relentlessly seeking to improve how you react to obstacles, you train yourself and create a new habit to act upon your environment rather than allowing yourself to be mugged by external forces beyond your control.

Develop and practice resiliency, and you'll discover a life skill the pros in any profession have mastered to achieve more.