



BREAK OR BOUNCE?

By developing mental toughness and an all-round positive approach in your life, you can learn to “bounce back” from adversity.

WORDS Geoff Edwards

When faced with adversity, do you break or bounce back? I am sure many of you reading this article have set resolutions or goals in the past and, just when you were about to take the first step to realising them, something came along to throw you off course. But if you accept that “life is uncertain” and through uncertainty you will grow as an individual, you are off to a great start in building your resilience. Then by developing mental toughness and an all-round positive approach in your life, you can “bounce back” just like a rubber ball. This article shares tips and techniques to develop a new level of resilience.



“THE GREATEST GLORY IN LIVING LIES NOT IN NEVER FALLING, BUT IN RISING EVERY TIME WE FALL.”

Nelson Mandela

How resilient are you?

Resilience is that quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their reserves, they find a way to rise from the ashes. Psychologists have identified some of the factors that make someone resilient; among them a positive attitude, optimism, the ability to regulate emotions, and the ability to see failure as a form of helpful feedback. Even after misfortune, resilient people are blessed with such an outlook that they are able to change course and soldier on.

If you take time out to reflect on your life so far, what would you consider is your level of resilience? Is it above or below 50 per cent? What adversities have you faced and how have you handled them? It is good to recognise the great things you have done and then consider the areas you could improve upon.

Failure and Resilience

Failure and how we handle it determines our resilience. However, many of us give ourselves a hard time when we fail. How many of you can relate to the following statements after a failure: “I should have done it this way,” or “I should have approached

it like this.” Sound familiar? Instead, try asking: “What could I have done differently?” A coaching conversation with ourselves, in which we ask challenging questions, can bring out new insights and help build new approaches to success.

Sir Richard Branson has indicated in many of his books that how people deal with failure is what sets apart the successful from everyone else. “Failure is one of the secrets to success, since some of the best ideas arise from the ashes of a shuttered business,” he explains. The strongest entrepreneurs and leaders are ones that have experienced failures and have proven their resilience in the face of adversity. “Resilience is one of the hallmarks of an entrepreneur who can stay in business in the long term,” Branson argues.

Be Inspired by Others

There are numerous examples of individuals who are an inspiration to us for building resilience. Louis Zamperini was a World War II prisoner of war, an Olympic athlete and writer. He was born in January 1917, in Olean, New York. Raised in California, Zamperini joined the track team in high school. Excelling at long-distance events, Zamperini competed in the 1936 Berlin Olympics and was set to compete again in the 1940 Games in Tokyo, which were cancelled when World War II broke out. A bombardier in the Army Air Corps, Zamperini was in a plane that went down, and when he arrived on shore in Japan 47 days later, he was taken as a POW and tortured for two years. After his release, Zamperini became an inspirational figure, and his life served as the basis for the 2014 biography *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption*.

Another example of how extreme resilience is built in individuals is Australia's Special Air Services Regiment (SASR). The regiment was established after World War II out of a need for smaller teams to work outside normal military operations. The characteristics of the SAS soldier remain unchanged: emotional and physical resilience and mental toughness. But what sets them apart is their extreme



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BUILD YOUR RESILIENCE

- Develop an optimistic view of the world
- Learn from the best about models of resilience
- Consider that there is not one single path to success
- Take time to think about all that you have learned from a mistake or a failure
- Understand how well you handle adversity and uncertainty
- Going back to basics, test yourself emotionally and physically to build your capability
- Ensure a well rounded approach to life

psychological resilience and their unique cognitive ability.

SASR soldiers - men and women - are subjected to what is thought to be the toughest, most gruelling selection process known. By using techniques such as sleep deprivation and food deprivation you can really strip back a person and see their levels of resilience and levels of cognitive ability. The specifics aren't something that can be disclosed. However, the end result is a hand-picked, highly homogenous group of soldiers trained to handle the most gruelling and complex military operations.

By using these inspiring examples, you can build your own capability and resilience to adversity using a combination of physical and mental techniques.

Overall, what I have discovered in working with individuals is that by looking at all aspects of their lives, resilience can be developed in an exciting new way. I welcome any feedback on my articles, or suggestions for future topics. In addition, if you would like to share any successes that you feel excited about, please let me know. **MMH**

Geoff Edwards is an internationally accredited Life Coach with over 25 years of coaching experience who can support you on your journey to success with results that last. He can be contacted via geoffedwards@bigpond.com through his website www.geoffedwards.net

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