

Building Resilience

Before you read the article, use vocabulary.com to find the definition and part of speech for each word listed below.

Respond to the following prompts in complete sentences. Consider what you know about

Adversity

Catalyst

Lobby (v)

Contraption

Impoverished

Dismantle

Monetize

Capable

Catastrophic

Cultivate

yourself + others as well as what you've learned in the past.

1. **What makes a person resilient? Give specific examples.**
2. **Would you define yourself as a resilient person? Why? Why not?**

3. In your opinion, can resilience be taught? Justify your answer.

4. How can resilience vary based on situations?

5. Ishmael Beah, the author of the award winning memoir **A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier**, said: "...children have the resilience to outlive their sufferings, if given a chance." First, explain what the quote means. Next, discuss why Ishmael made sure to specifically say "children." What is the difference **between childhood resilience and adult resilience?**

Resilience: A Learned Art

1 What makes some people crumble after hardship, and others rebuild an even stronger foundation? People who are *resilient* are able to bounce back from these hardships rather than letting the issues hold them back. Resiliency can be defined as the ability to adapt well after facing struggles, stress, adversity, threats, or life generally not going as planned. Being resilient does not mean that you will not face difficulty in your life, it simply means that you



do not dwell on the negative aspects of difficulty, but rather use it as a catalyst to grow stronger. Although some people hold firm to the idea that resiliency is something a person is either born with or not, that's not necessarily true. There are some ways to cultivate resilience and ultimately become a more flexible, reflective person who excels after trials rather than quitting altogether.

There are various factors that may contribute to how resilient a person is. Typically, research studies show that relationships play a huge role in determining a person's level of resilience. Having

2 supportive relationships both inside and outside of the family can help a person feel heard and cared for. Ultimately, these positive relationships bolster a person's confidence and make him or her feel like they are more capable of handling obstacles with a positive reaction. Other components that may lead to a more resilient outlook in life include:

- Self Control: The ability to recognize and appropriately manage emotions and impulses
- Commitment: The ability to persevere and "stick" with a plan, even when things aren't going well, the ability to make, acknowledge, and track realistic goals, the ability to commit to relationships, religion, plans, etc.
- Positivity: The ability to remain optimistic even in the face of adversity, the ability to see yourself as a fighter rather than a failure
- Welcoming of Challenges: The ability to see a problem as something to be overcome and conquered rather than viewing it with fear and negativity, The ability to welcome learning opportunities and growth areas as a means to better oneself

Developing resilience can be a journey paved with tribulations, uncertainty, and overall

3 growth. People react to stress quite differently, making everyone's road to resilience unique. Even though everyone's strategies for building this valuable quality may be different, there are a few ways in which most people find success in cultivating a more flexible approach to life. First, nurturing positive connections with others will lead to greater success in bouncing back from trials. 1 Having someone to listen to you and help you to feel supported in your trials will ultimately

3 produce a more positive attitude. You may also feel that helping other people helps you to become a better listener, a better decision maker, and a better, more confident person. Confidence is a major component of our resilience - if we believe in ourselves, then giving up is not an option.

Also, we cannot change that catastrophic events happen, yet we can change how we react to

4 difficulty. The key component of self-control plays into how well we handle the curveballs that life throws at us. Along with self-control comes the important notion of "thought awareness". The next time that you feel yourself starting to develop a negative mindset, ask yourself these questions:

- How am I talking to myself? Could I turn my thoughts around the focus on a positive aspect of how I reacted?
- How can I encourage myself to take control and shift from "victim" to "victor"?
- What am I thinking is permanent? Is there any part of the "equation" that I can alter or "fix"?
- What can this teach me about myself that I can use to make my life better?

5 When we turn our negative thoughts into powerful learning experiences, we can actually use the past to create a better future. By visualizing what we DO want, our brains are "tricked" into forgetting to worry about what we may fear. Many people find comfort in practicing this activity by journaling. The process of writing fosters a sense of reflection which, in turn, pushes us to learn something about ourselves. Building a resiliency journal is simple - it can be in any format that is comfortable for you.



Many psychologists recommend focusing on three components to build resiliency while journaling: What happened, How you reacted, and What you learned from that reaction. Use objective language to "capture" the event - record it just as if you were an unbiased bystander. Then, try to think about your emotions, your thought patterns, and your overall reactions to the event. If we think about what we liked and didn't like about a reaction, we can learn how to grow and become more resilient in the future as we work through

complicated relationships, face obstacles, and handle conflict.

Although many people believe that resiliency is not a growable skill, they couldn't be more wrong. Resiliency depends not only on the person, but also on the situation. Practicing resilience by fostering strong, positive connections, setting reasonable goals, and even practicing reflective journaling can all lead to a better capability to "bounce back" after challenges.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Exercise

After reading the article, complete the questions below. Select the best answer choice for each question.

- Which statement introduces a counterclaim to the author's point?
 - "Practicing resilience by fostering strong, positive connections, setting reasonable goals, and even practicing reflective journaling can all lead to a better capability to "bounce back" after challenges."
 - "Although some people hold firm to the idea that resiliency is something a person is either born with or not, that's not necessarily true."
 - "Also, we cannot change that catastrophic events happen, yet we can change how we react to difficulty."
 - "Resiliency depends not only on the person, but also on the situation."
- How does the text structure reinforce the central claim?
 - After raising a preconceived notion in the 1st paragraph, the author uses the following paragraphs to weaken that notion's argument.
 - After addressing a complaint in the 1st paragraph, the author offers ways to remediate the issue in the following paragraphs.
 - The first part of the article discusses a specific cause for a problem while the second half of the article details ways in which people have solved the issue that could be beneficial for others.
 - The chronological breakdown of the topic reinforces the author's purpose of educating the audience.
- How does the author's repetition of the word "grow" help to refine the main idea?
 - It punctuates the idea that as we grow older, we always develop a better understanding of how to react to obstacles.
 - It reinforces the claim that children are more resilient than adults.
 - It helps the reader to see resilience as a skill that can be strengthened with work.
 - It pushes the reader to notice how resilience is something that is passed down genetically, leaving us very little control.

4. Which word could replace the word “cultivate” and hold the same meaning? There are some ways to cultivate resilience and ultimately become a more flexible, reflective person who excels after trials rather than quitting altogether.
- Diminish
 - Divulge
 - Fulfill
 - Foster
5. Read the following statements from the beginning of paragraph 3. How does the author’s use of figurative language enhance the meaning of the article as a whole? “Developing resilience can be a journey paved with tribulations, uncertainty, and overall growth. People react to stress quite differently, making everyone’s road to resilience unique.”
- The simile increases empathetic feelings toward those who have struggled with a road of trials in their own lives.
 - The personification highlights the author’s frustration with those who do not practice resilient reactions when faced with hardships.
 - The metaphorical language leads readers to see resilience as fluid rather than fixed.
 - The oxymoron shows readers that they must face uncertainty in order to grow as a person.
6. How does the author’s word choice contribute to her purpose?
- The author uses motivational phrases with positive connotations such as, “will lead to greater success” and “excels after trials” to inform readers about how to grow resilience in their own lives.
 - The author uses negative language such as, “victim”, “tricked”, and “fear” to encourage readers to worry about how their mindset is actually affecting others.
 - The author uses words with opposite connotations closely together such as, “victor” and “victim” in order to persuade the audience into a specific way of thinking.
 - The author uses unclear phrases such as, “our brains are “tricked” into forgetting” to make the audience question their own mindset.
7. Read the following statement from paragraph 2: “Ultimately, these positive relationships bolster a person’s confidence and make him or her feel like they are more capable of handling obstacles with a positive reaction.” Which word could replace “bolster” and mean nearly the same thing?
- Respite
 - Reinforce
 - Regress
 - Reverberate
8. How does the author achieve her purpose?
- The author utilizes a tone of frustration and forcefulness in order to persuade the audience into adapting her mindset about resilience.

Name: _____

Date: _____