

**Resiliency:
What have we learned from traumatized people?
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“The hole in me is so wide and deep
that it may take the rest of my life to fill it back up.”
Art Daily, Out of the Canyons, p. 71

Introduction

Definition

“Resilience is the human ability to adapt
in the face of tragedy, trauma, adversity, hardship,
and on-going significant life stressors.”
APA

Marich (2009) Types of Trauma

Large T-traumas (that warrant PTSD diagnosis)

Small-t traumas (with disturbing events that life sends our way)

I Survivor Personalities

“Surviving is important. Thriving is elegant.”
Maya Angelou

Abraham Lincoln

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

“If God were to take away all his blessings—health, physical fitness, wealth,
intelligence—and leave me with but one gift, I would ask for faith.
For with faith in Him, in His goodness, mercy, love for me, and belief in eternal life, I believe I
could suffer the loss of my others and still be happy—
trustful, leaving all to his inscrutable Providence.”

Rose Kennedy quoted in Bzdek, p. 27

“Mom said that she indeed feel that she'd gotten wiser as she'd gotten into her
seventies: “[I] have more stuff stored in my brain to make conclusions with. But I also have more
scar tissue. You get more leery as you get older. I've slowed down. We've misinterpreted

Darwin. It's not the survival of the fittest. It's the survival of the most adaptable."

Cited in Henry Alford (2009) p. 39

II. Successful Coping

"Not every aspect of the experience can be relieved. They also know that we cannot spare them from death when they are dying, nor from the pain of loss. So what do they expect from us? Most often a relationship to sustain or hold them through probably one of the most distressing and most unfamiliar periods of their lives."

Danai Papadatou, *In the face of death*, (2009) p. 26

Some characteristics of resilient people:

- Ability to "bounce back" and "recover from almost anything"
- Have a "where there's a will, there's a way" attitude
- Tendency to see problems as opportunities
- Ability to "hang tough" which things are difficult
- Capacity for seeing small windows of opportunity and making the most of them
- Have a healthy social support network
- Have the wherewithal to competently handle most different kinds of situations
- Have a wide comfort zone
- Able to recover from experiences in the panic zone or of a traumatic nature
- Have deep-rooted faith in a system of meaning

Note: I do not know the source of this list but please let me know so that I can give credit.

The delicate balance Papadatou (2009)

1 A need to be accepted as *vulnerable and in search of*:

Safety
Support

Nurturance
Belonging

2 A search to be viewed as *resilient and capable of*

Exploring new and unfamiliar experiences
Learning from *those* experiences
Changing
Growing

“Experience is determined by yourself—not the circumstances of your life.”
Gita Bellin in Hayward (1984), np

Key elements:

How we interpret the trauma.

How we integrate it the trauma into our metanarrative.

Tedeschi and Calhoun’s “gifts” of *posttraumatic growth* [cited in Ryan, 32]

Improved relationships
New possibilities for our lives
A greater appreciation of life
Greater sense of personal strengths
Spiritual development

May lead to spirituality rather than religiosity!

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

“I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.”

Apostle Paul, Philippians 4: 11, 12

George Bonanno [cited in Ryan, 32]

Commitment to finding meaning in what’s happening to you.
A belief in your capacity to create a positive outcome.
The willingness to grow.
The choice to laugh and be grateful.

Bonanno’s key questions:

Q: “What could possibly be right about this?”

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’ You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Q: “What in your life or yourself can you be grateful for right now?”

“Do not be anxious about anything, but by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4: 6

Helping clients imagine and cooperate with a future

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you a future and a hope.’”

Hebrew Testament, Jeremiah 29:11

“Brains are continuously making predictions about the immediate, personal future of their owners without their owners’ awareness. . . . They are nexting.”

Daniel Gilbert (2006), p. 6

“Our brains have a unique structure that allows us to mentally transport ourselves into future circumstances and then ask ourselves how it feels to be there. Rather than calculating utilities with mathematical precision, we simply step into tomorrow’s shoes and see how well they fit.”

Daniel Gilbert (2006), p. 238

Nexting

“And so it begins. The rest of my life. Do I want to go on? Do I have the spirit, the courage, to do this? I don’t know yet, but something moves me onward. Into the pain, the loneliness, the empty days. Even in this very early time, when I am in deepest shock, there is a raw spark, a glimmer of faith that is telling me that this is what we do. That we are indomitable beings. That we are made to persist, to stay the whole course—to find out who we are.”

Art Daily (2009) p. 13

"I didn't want to be a child, to stand in that relation to the world in which I was continually vulnerable to attack, no matter how much I pretended to be fine. The way I looked was so different from the way I felt, from what I knew was inside me. . . . I didn't want to be me."

Robert Goolrick, *The End of the World*: 181

"In a life, in any life, bad things happen. Many good things happen, of course, we know what they are—joy, tenderness, success, beauty—but some bad things happen as well.

Sometimes, very bad things happen. . . . The meat of life goes bad one day and leaves us sickened."

Robert Goolrick, *The End of the World*: 202

"Unfortunately, because much of psychology's knowledge about how adults cope with loss or trauma has come from individuals who sought treatment or exhibited great distress, loss and trauma theorists have often viewed this type of resilience as either rare or pathological. . .

.that resilience in the face of loss or potential trauma is more common than is often believed, and that there are multiple and sometimes unexpected pathways to resilience."

George Bonanno, (2004), 20-28

III. Avoiding Compassion Fatigue

"Caregivers may perform a number of concrete functions, but the essential product they deliver is themselves."

C. Joinson (1992)

Taking kind care of you!

"It is well established that individuals who encounter traumatic material or who work with traumatized clients can be profoundly impacted by their experiences."

O'Hallaran and Linton (2001)

"As psychotherapists we learn to be on the one hand objective and analytical in our professional role a shepherd. We must put our personal feelings aside and objectively evaluate our clients and administer the best treatments according to best practice guidelines.

But on the other hand we cannot avoid our compassion and empathy.

They provide the tools required in the art of human service."

Charles Figley (2002) 1433

“High degree of personal satisfaction with work did not prevent secondary traumatization.
Compassion fatigue increased with the number of years in trauma work.”
Birck (2002)

“Listening to stories of human suffering can set into motion a process whereby helping
professionals begin to question their core beliefs.”
Patrick Morrissette (2004), 63

Three “danger zones” [Janoff-Bulman, 1985]

- Personal vulnerability
- The positive view of oneself
- That the world is meaningful and orderly.

M & M

Massage
Memoir

Conclusion

“If we are still breathing, it is too early to tell
the ultimate impact of any event in our lives.”
John R. Claypool, *God the ingenious alchemist*, 40

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