



THE SET FREE LIFE

Bouncing Back in 5 Easy Steps

re-sil-i-ence (*noun*):[ri-zil-yuhns]

1. the power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.
2. the ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like; buoyancy.

When it happens, we can scarcely describe our emotions. We're told our position is being terminated, or the company is closing down. We find out our child has been seriously injured, a loved one has been diagnosed with a terrible malady, or our spouse just walked away without so much as a wave goodbye after a decades-long marriage. We're stunned by news that the organization has been embezzled to the tune of millions or floods took out the entire neighborhood.

We've all been touched by destructive experiences. One person's may seem worse than another's, but who's to say your bad news is less painful than mine? It still hurts, we're still flattened, and even though we're supposed to know there will be a light at the end of the tunnel, we just didn't expect to be going through *this* mountain on *this* train.

So how do we do the resilience thing? I was a bit facetious in my title; there aren't any "easy" steps. But resilience does have some process to it, and knowing how to manage yours is important.

1. There's no shame in grieving, so allow yourself a wake.

Resilience doesn't mean you ignore what's happened; in fact, don't try to dismiss or sugarcoat what you're going through. Loss, whether of a person, a dream, a position, a relationship, or a carefully constructed illusion, is something that must be mourned, so hold a wake for your departed situation and feel it deeply. You may not have a lot of time for this because there are urgencies at hand, but even if you just go to that memorial service in a quiet part of your heart before falling asleep at night, mourn your loss. The world has changed, perhaps forever, maybe just for now, but nothing is what it was and that's worth honoring.

2. Call in the troops.

No one escapes the suddenness of bad news, and when the bell tolls for you, you'd better have some friends and family who are willing and able to carry you when you can barely stand, and the more the better. Call upon those you know who can support you in some way, *any* way, from providing a shoulder to cry on unendingly to allowing you to stay in the basement until you're on your feet again. You know you would do the same for them. Time to receive instead of give, so receive gratefully.

3. Set your eyes on a prize.

It doesn't have to be as big as the Scarlett O'Hara Prize ("As God is my witness, I will never be hungry again"), but it has to be *something*. Create small goals and congratulate yourself when you hit them. Adopt the one-day-at-a-time philosophy (and getting through each day may be the goal for a while), as well as the Reinhold Niebuhr prayer embraced by 12-Steppers: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." You can do what you never thought you would have to, one step at a time.

4. Remind yourself that perspective is everything.

I'm not suggesting you minimize what you are going through, but certainly you know that since the beginning of time, people have survived situations far worse than yours and gone on to rebuild, grow, and thrive. I've told audiences that when I was going through my personal Year from Hell at work, I often thought of the men on the Bataan Death March (look it up if you've never heard of it, young grasshopper). I reminded myself frequently that human beings survive the horrific and unbelievable. It helped me take a deep breath and keep on moving.

5. Don't allow despair to overtake you.

Look, it's unavoidable in tragedy and other fearful circumstances, so don't think I'm insisting you become some kind of super hero. Despair can become a constant companion. The key, though, is to do what's necessary to prevent it from becoming your ruler. Call on those friends and family, especially the ones with a sense of humor. Don't be afraid of laughter in the midst of pain. They don't call it "gallows humor" for nothing: laughter has a weird and wonderful quality of taking us out of ourselves, if only for a moment.

Little by little, we find that a bit of positive news or even just a beautiful day has us grateful we can feel good, and we start to expect good things again. Some difficulties are worth the character they produce. Don't give up. You'll make it through. You'll find you're resilient, because you're exceptional. 🙌



Sue Thompson is a personality expert, etiquette trainer, and an instructor in life lessons. Her work on recognizing and developing talent, identifying personalities and working effectively with the people who possess them, responding appropriately to difficult experiences, treating others with respect, and behaving like a professional have caused companies and business organizations throughout the country to value her consulting skills. She trains those entering the workforce how to present themselves with style and authority; new employees in the importance of respecting one's work and the workplace; managers in the value of understanding employees' talent and temperament; and everyone in the timeless rules of behavior that will always bespeak excellence.

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Teddy Bear Says...



Dogs can't help the way they view the world because of their breed. Great Danes are going to see humans almost at eye level while Chihuahuas will have a superior view of the feet. If you want to understand your pet better, you need to consider how it sees things.

The same is true of people. They come from different places, where things are not done at all the same where you had your years as a pup. It's interesting, though, how we all simply assume that everyone does

things and sees the world as we do, when if we would only consider how others have been trained, we might adjust our behavior.

One of the things that almost universally shocks foreign visitors to this country is how much information Americans so freely provide, without being asked and without thought as to whether anyone is interested in that information. It's true of anyone, actually. I've heard humans complain of coworkers who routinely share their medical conditions, family troubles, or sexual exploits, as though it perhaps makes them more interesting, or . . . something. They seem to have no filters. They also seem to have no ability to read the stunned looks on listener's faces, or maybe they misread the looks as a desire to know more.

Teddy Bear is of the opinion that Americans in general, and Americans with specific personality styles in particular, believe that offering such information makes them refreshingly accessible. They think everyone will want to make a connection in just this way.

But ask yourself: is this the way *you* would like to make others' acquaintance? If you were in a foreign country, working in a new job, would you want to make friends of the man who regularly shared stories of his bunion surgeries? Of the woman who incessantly detailed her adulterous husband's liaisons and invited you into her speculations?

I hope not! So think of how much you open the door to others, and consider that for some, that door might be open just a bit too wide. Be careful of how much you reveal, particularly to those you don't know well. You may think you're speaking to a Great Dane, but it's a Chihuahua before you—and it doesn't care for the sight of your ugly shoes. 🐕

Quotable

Someone was hurt before you, wronged before you, hungry before you, frightened before you, beaten before you, humiliated before you . . . yet, someone survived. You can do anything you choose to do.

Maya Angelou

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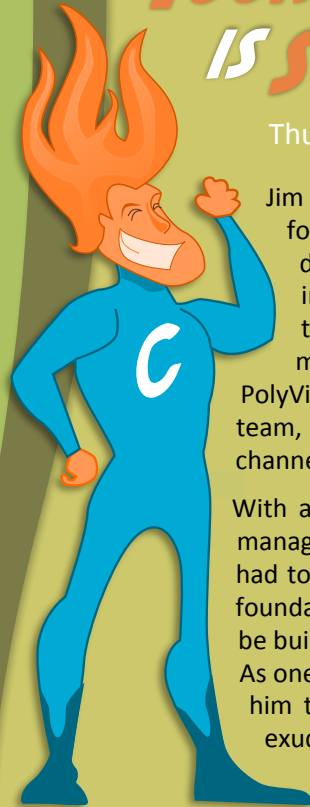
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YOUR CHARACTER IS SHOWING

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Jim Dedrick is Director of Sales-U.S. Government for Jupiter Systems, the industry leader in display wall processors. (Think the big displays in the NASA control room, or the screens in the White House "situation room"). Before moving to Jupiter, he was the sales director of PolyVision South where he grew the field sales team, managed partnerships, and created new channels of distribution.

With a couple of decades of sales and sales management experience under his belt, Jim has had to decide how he will deal with clients, the foundation upon which his client connections will be built, and the reputation he wants to maintain. As one of his former clients, I have always found him to be thoughtful, practical, and simply exuding common sense!

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with the chance to ask questions

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