

## **10 Ways to Build Resilience**

- 1) Make connections - good relationships with close family members, friends and mentors at work.
- 2) Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems - you can't change the fact that stressful events will occur, but you can control how you interpret and respond to them.
- 3) Accept that change is part of living -certain goals may no longer be attainable - focus on those that you can change.
- 4) Move towards your goals – develop realistic goals and do something regularly that allows you to move toward your goals.
- 5) Take decisive actions - act on adverse situations as much as you can- do not detach yourself from problems.
- 6) Look for opportunities for self discovery.
- 7) Nurture a positive view of yourself- develop confidence in your ability to solve problems and trust in your instincts.
- 8) Keep things in perspective – keep things in broader and long-term perspective.
- 9) Maintain a hopeful outlook.
- 10) Take care of yourself.

Wayne Hammond, Ph.D.  
Resiliency Canada/Initiatives

## **Resilience For Life Booklist**

He'll Be Okay, Celia Lashlie

Resiliency in Action , Nan Henderson

The Resiliency Advantage, Al Siebert

Raising Resilient Children, Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein

The Blessings of a B Minus Wendy Mogel

Raising a Son, Don Elium and Jeanne Elium

Raising Boys, Steve Biddulph

Between Mothers and Sons, The making of Vital and Loving Men., Evelyn S. Bassoff

The Wonder of Boys, Michael Gurian

Raising Cain, Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson

It's a Boy, Michael Thompson and Teresa Barker

Speaking of Boys, Michael Thompson

Why Do They Act That Way?, David Walsh

## Guideposts embedded in the mindset of parents who foster resilience in their youngsters include:

Being empathic

Communicating effectively and listening actively

Changing “negative scripts”

Loving our children in ways that help them feel special and appreciated

Accepting our children for who they are and helping them to set realistic expectations and goals

Helping our children experience success by identifying and reinforcing their “islands of competence”

Helping children recognize that mistakes are experiences from which to learn

Developing responsibility, compassion and social conscience by providing children with opportunities to contribute

Teaching our children to solve problems and make decisions

Disciplining in a way that promotes self-discipline and self-worth

From: Raising Resilient Children  
By Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein  
Contemporary Books, 2001

Learner – Judger Mindset Model  
Marilee Goldberg

Learner – Judger are parts of all of us. At any moment, we are a blend of our Learner and Judger Selves.

If we continue practicing the Learner Mindset, we will experience great success in our relationship with ourselves, with others, with our tasks and roles, and with the world in general.

<b>JUDGER Mindset</b>	<b>LEARNER Mindset</b>
Human nature	Human spirit
Reactive and automatic	Responsive and thoughtful
Know-it-already mindset	Researcher mindset
Judgemental	Accepting
Inflexible and rigid	Flexible and adaptive
Own point of view only	Multiple perspectives
Possibilities limited	Possibilities unlimited
Intolerant	Supportive
Righteous: criticizes	Inquiring; critiques
Fears differences	Values differences
Feedback seen as rejection	Feedback seen as helpful
Relationship are win-lose	Relationships seen as helpful
Debate	Relationships are win-win
Seeks to attack or defend	Dialogue
Primary mood: Protective	Seeks to resolve and create
	Primary mood: Curious
<b>JUDGER QUESTIONS</b>	<b>LEARNER QUESTIONS</b>
What's wrong?	What's right?
Whose fault is it?	What am I responsible for?
How can I stay in control?	What are my choices?
How could I lose?	What's useful about this?
How could I get hurt?	What can I learn?
Why bother?	What's possible?

The key is choosing our mindset! Be aware, explore choices, choose and act.

Judger to self: Low energy, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, pessimism, depression

Judger to others: Anger, hostility, isolation, conflict, blame

Judger results: Defensiveness, inflexibility, lose, despair, inactivity, failure

Learner results: Curiosity, learning, win-win, energy, inspiration, success

**ACCEPT JUDGER – PRACTICE LEARNER – Marilee Goldberg**

*A Resource for Teens: Clip, Copy, and Use*

## **How to Become Resilient: You've Got the Power to Help Yourself Bounce Back...from Life!**

by Jami Jones, Ph.D.

Justin was stressed. It seemed his life was falling apart. At home it was tense. Money was tight. His parents were fighting. He had failed a few tests. Friends were on his case. "All in all," thought Justin, "life these days is a real struggle."

Justin's not alone. Many teens face challenges stemming from problems with friends, school, teachers, parents, and work. Although life is difficult at times, the good news it doesn't mean you have to be overwhelmed by these struggles. You can bounce back from them and become stronger and wiser in the process.

The word for this is **resiliency**. At Dictionary.com, resiliency is defined as "an occurrence of rebounding or springing back." A growing field of psychological research is documenting that everyone has the power to spring back from difficulties. Resiliency is like a rubber band that gets stretched almost to the breaking point. Instead of snapping, it is able to spring back into shape. One teen-ager described resiliency as "bouncing back from problems and stuff with more power and more smarts."

There are many studies that document resiliency in children and teens. One of the most significant is called the Kauai Longitudinal Study, which looked at all the children born in 1954 on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. These children were studied from birth until 50 years of age. The authors of this study, psychologists Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith, identified children who were struggling with poverty, parental addictions and mental illness, divorce, health problems, and other significant issues. A lot of these children were doing well in spite of their difficulties. Most of them eventually bounced back from the negative impact of these problems.

Werner and Smith called these children resilient and they identified that resilient kids had **protective factors** that helped them handle their problems without becoming overwhelmed. These **protective factors** are available to you too.

What are these *protective factors* and how do you add them to your life?

1. **Making connections.** One of the most important *protective factors* is making connections with caring adults who will listen and help you put your problems into perspective. These important people are sometimes called mentors, and can be family members, teachers, coaches, counselors, ministers, neighbors—any adult you know who cares about kids.

It will be up to you to find a mentor. Tell this special person that you need him to help you with the challenges in your life. Keep in mind that a mentor will never ask you to do anything that is illegal or makes you feel uncomfortable. If this ever happens, tell another adult immediately!

2. **Reading.** Some teens think that the only kind of reading that counts is what you do in class. Wrong! The most important benefit of reading is to learn about things that are important to you. Reading is a skill that improves with practice and reading will most certainly help you get ahead in life. Read anything—books, websites, and magazines!

3. **Problem-solving and goal setting skills.** Some research shows that one factor that separates the resilient teens from the not-so-resilient ones is the ability to solve problems and set goals. Dr. Gregory J. Williams, a professor at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, developed a four-step technique called “I CAN” to help teens do this.
  - I Identify the problem. You need to understand the problem and its causes before a solution is possible. To determine the cause of the problem, ask “who, what, where, when, and how” questions. Ask your friends or mentor to help you.
  - C Can you name some solutions? Begin by brainstorming as many solutions as possible – no matter how far-fetched, silly, or wild they seem to you. At this step it is the number of solutions that counts, not quality!
  - A Analyze the solutions. How will they work? Now is the time to analyze solutions and discard the ones you think will not work.
  - N Now, pick one and use it! If it works, great! If not, try another one.
4. **Social skills.** When life seems to be falling apart it is important to have trusted friends to count on. Teens with good social skills are more likely to enlist the help of friends and adults during difficult times. To have friends, it is important to be a friend. Do you know the five most desirable qualities in a friend? Kids want to be friends with other kids who express a sense of humor, friendliness, helpfulness, frequent compliments, and offers to get together. Likewise, the qualities that are real turn-offs are verbal aggression, anger, dishonesty, being critical, and bossiness. Volunteering is one way to broaden your network of friends. The simple act of helping others lets you to put your problems into perspective, makes your community stronger, and is a great way to meet people and develop new interests. Go to the Do Something website at [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org) to learn more.
5. **Hobbies and interests.** The research is clear that resilient teens have hobbies and interests they enjoy. It could be playing a sport or musical instrument, painting, reading, or writing poetry. Perhaps the greatest benefit is that when the going gets tough, hobbies/interests can help you forget for a time your problems and stress.

Life can often be difficult. The good news is that you are able to control how you respond to difficulties adding *protective factors* today so you will be more resilient tomorrow. Start now by *putting together your resiliency plan that includes these protective factors.*

- Make connections and find at least one mentor. Know when to ask for help.
- Use “I CAN” to solve problems and set goals.
- Read so you can make good decisions.
- Be a friend. Help someone whose problems are more serious than yours.
- Enrich your life with a hobby or interest.

Researchers Werner and Smith developed a simple way to define a resilient person. They say that a resilient person *loves well, works well, plays well, and expects well.* What they mean is that resilient people have some loving/caring relationships in their lives, are successfully working on a job or in school, have fun (play) utilizing hobbies and positive leisure-time interests, and expect a positive future for their lives. You can increase your resiliency by using the suggestions in this article. You can also learn more by going to [www.resiliency.com](http://www.resiliency.com).

*Jami L. Jones, Ph.D., is assistant professor in the Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. After the death of her son's girlfriend, Dr. Jones became interested in studying the response of adults within her profession to strengthen and promote resiliency within youth. She is the author of Bouncing Back: Dealing with the Stuff Life Throws at You, a book for teens published in 2006. She also authored Helping Teens Cope: Resources for School Library Media Specialists and Other Youth Workers and can be contacted through her web site at [www.askdrjami.org](http://www.askdrjami.org).*

# The Resiliency Quiz

by Nan Henderson, M.S.W.

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## PART ONE:

Do you have the conditions in your life that research shows help people to be resilient?

People bounce back from tragedy, trauma, risks, and stress by having the following conditions in their lives. The more times you answer yes (below), the greater the chances you can bounce back from your life's problems "with more power and more smarts."

And doing that is one of the surest ways to increase your self-esteem.

Answer yes or no to the following. Then celebrate your "yes" answers and decide how you can change your "no" answers to "yes."

## The Resiliency Wheel



Adapted from the book *Resiliency in Schools: Making it Happen for Students and Educators* by Nan Henderson and Mike Milstein, published by Corvin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA (1996)

### 1. Caring and Support

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have several people in my life who give me unconditional love, nonjudgmental listening, and who I know are "there for me."
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am involved in a school, work, faith, or other group where I feel cared for and valued.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I treat myself with kindness and compassion, and take time to nurture myself (including eating right and getting enough sleep and exercise).

### 2. High Expectations for Success

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have several people in my life who let me know they believe in my ability to succeed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I get the message "You can succeed," at my work or school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I believe in myself most of the time, and generally give myself positive messages about my ability to accomplish my goals—even when I encounter difficulties.

### 3. Opportunities for Meaningful Participation

- \_\_\_\_\_ My voice (opinion) and choice (what I want) is heard and valued in my close personal relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My opinions and ideas are listened to and respected at my work or school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I provide service through volunteering to help others or a cause in my community, faith organization, or school.

#### 4. Positive Bonds

- \_\_\_\_\_ I am involved in one or more positive after-work or after-school hobbies or activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ I participate in one or more groups (such as a club, faith community, or sports team) outside of work or school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I feel "close to" most people at my work or school.

#### 5. Clear and Consistent Boundaries

- \_\_\_\_\_ Most of my relationships with friends and family members have clear, healthy boundaries (which include mutual respect, personal autonomy, and each person in the relationship both giving and receiving).
- \_\_\_\_\_ I experience clear, consistent expectations and rules at my work or in my school
- \_\_\_\_\_ I set and maintain healthy boundaries for myself by standing up for myself, not letting others take advantage of me, and saying "no" when I need to.

#### 6. Life Skills

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have (and use) good listening, honest communication, and healthy conflict resolution skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the training and skills I need to do my job well, or all the skills I need to do well in school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to set a goal and take the steps to achieve it.

### **PART TWO:**

People also successfully overcome life difficulties by drawing upon internal qualities that research has shown are particularly helpful when encountering a crisis, major stressor, or trauma.

The following list can be thought of as a "personal resiliency builder" menu. No one has everything on this list. When "the going gets tough" you probably have three or four of these qualities that you use most naturally and most often.

It is helpful to know which are your primary resiliency builders; how have you used them in the past; and how can you use them to overcome the present challenges in your life.

You can also decide to add one or two of these to your "resiliency-builder" menu, if you think they would be useful for you.



## **PERSONAL RESILIENCY BUILDERS**

### **Individual Qualities that Facilitate Resiliency**

Put a + by the top three or four resiliency builders you use most often. Ask yourself how you have used these in the past or currently use them. Think of how you can best apply these resiliency builders to current life problems, crisis, or stressors.

*(Optional) You can then put a check by one or two resiliency builders you think you should add to your personal repertoire.*

- Relationships - Sociability/ability to be a friend/ability to form positive relationships
- Humour - Has a good sense of humour
- Inner Direction - Bases choices/decisions on internal evaluation (internal locus of control)
- Perceptiveness - Insightful understanding of people and situations
- Independence - "Adaptive" distancing from unhealthy people and situations/autonomy
- Positive View of Personal Future - Optimism, expects a positive future
- Flexibility - Can adjust to change; can bend as necessary to positively cope with situations
- Love of Learning - Capacity for and connection to learning
- Self-motivation - Internal initiative and positive motivation from within
- Competence - Is "good at something"/personal competence
- Self-Worth - Feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
- Spirituality - Personal faith in something greater
- Perseverance - Keeps on despite difficulty; doesn't give up
- Creativity - Expresses self through artistic endeavour

### **You Can Best Help Yourself or Someone Else Be More Resilient by...**

1. Communicating the Resiliency Attitude: "What is right with you is more powerful than anything that is wrong with you."
2. Focusing on the person's strengths more than problems and weaknesses, and asking "How can these strengths be used to overcome problems?" One way to do this is to help yourself or another identify and best utilize top personal resiliency builders listed in The Resiliency Quiz Part Two.
3. Providing for yourself or another the conditions listed in The Resiliency Quiz Part One.
4. Having patience... successfully bouncing back from a significant trauma or crisis takes time.

Nan Henderson, M.S.W., is an international trainer on how to help yourself, your children, or others you care about become more resilient. She speaks to educators, parent and community groups, and to youth on a variety of topics connected to resiliency. She is also the President of Resiliency In Action, Inc., and the author/editor of five books on the topic of fostering resiliency. She can be contacted at [nhenderson@resiliency.com](mailto:nhenderson@resiliency.com)

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## When Children Turn Into Cats

By: Adair Lara

This article first appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle,

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(Slightly abridged)

I just realized that while children are dogs, loyal and affectionate, teenagers are cats. It's so easy to be the owner of a dog. You feed it, train it, boss it around, and it puts its head on your knee and gazes at you as if you were a Rembrandt painting. It follows you around, chews the dust covers off the Great Literature series if you stay too long at the party, and bounds inside with enthusiasm when you call it in from the yard.

Then, one day around age 14, your adoring little puppy turns into a big old cat. When you tell it to come inside, it looks amazed, as if wondering who died and made you emperor. Instead of dogging your footsteps, it disappears. You won't see it again until it gets hungry, when it pauses on its sprint through the kitchen long enough to turn its nose up at whatever you're serving. When you reach out to ruffle its head, in that old affectionate gesture, it twists away from you, then gives you a blank stare, as if trying to remember where it has seen you before.

It sometimes conks out right after breakfast. It might steal itself to the communication necessary to get the back door opened or the car keys handed to it, but even that amount of dependence is disagreeable to it now.

Stunned, more than a little hurt, you have two choices. The first – and the one chosen by many parents – is that you can continue to behave like a dog owner. After all, your heart still swells with pride when you look at your pet, you still want its company, and naturally when you tell it to stop digging up the rose bushes, you still expect it to obey you, pronto.

But it pays no attention now, of course, being a cat. So you toss it onto the back porch, telling it, it can stay there and think about things, mister, and it glares at you, not deigning to reply. It wants you to recognize that it has a new nature now, and it must feel independent or it will die.

You, not realizing that the dog is now a cat, think something must be desperately wrong with it. It seems so anti-social, so distant, so sort of depressed. It won't even go on family outings anymore.

Since you're the one who raised it, taught it to fetch and stay and sit on command, naturally you assume that whatever is wrong with it is something you did, or left undone. Flooded with guilt and fear, you redouble your efforts to make your pet behave.

Only now, you're dealing with a cat, so everything that worked before now produces exactly the opposite of the desired result. Call it, and it runs away. Tell it to sit, and it

jumps on the counter. The more you go toward it, wringing your hands, the more it moves away.

Your second choice is to do the necessary reading, and learn to behave like a cat owner. Put a dish of food near the door, and let it come to you. If you must issue commands, find out what it wants to do, and command it to do that.

But remember that a cat too needs affection, and your help. Sit still, and it will come, seeking that warm, comforting lap it has not entirely forgotten. Be there to open the door. Realize that all dog owners go through this, and few find it easy. My glance used to travel from my cat, looking regal and aloof on the fence, to a foolish German shepherd on the sidewalk across the street, jumping for joy simply because he was getting to go outside. Now I miss the little boy who insisted I watch "Full House" with him, and who has now sealed himself into a bedroom with a stereo and TV; the little guy who wrote me sweet notes and is now peeling rubber on the driveway.

The only consolation is that if you do it right, let them go, be cool as a cat yourself, one day he will walk into the kitchen and give you a big kiss and say, you've been on your feet all day, let me get those dishes for you – and you'll realize he's a dog again.