

# RESILIENCE: THE BASICS

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Resilience refers to the ability to recover quickly from difficulties. Personal resilience is the ability to remain productive and positive when faced with stress, uncertainty and change. It is related to personality but can be learned and improved over time.

## Resilient Characteristics Include:

**Optimism:** Looking for the positive aspects of problems. For example, the idea that a problem often triggers improvements or perhaps great leaps forward.

**Tolerance for Disagreement:** Participating in arguments and political struggles without becoming overly emotional.

**Having a “Thick Skin”:** Dealing with unfairness, rejection and criticism in some reasonable way. For example, a salesperson who bounces from rejection to rejection with no loss of enthusiasm.

**Persistence:** Finding a way through a large number of problems and failures in order to achieve an objective. It is common for individuals to stop at the first obstacle encountered. As such, persistence can be a valuable talent.

**“Big Picture” Thinking:** The ability to see problems in context such that you don't worry too much about problems that seem large now but that may be meaningless to the big picture.

**Unaffectedness:** Your mood and behaviour aren't easily changed by others. This doesn't necessarily imply that you need to be cold, remote and emotionless. Rather, that you don't easily get pulled into other's negativity.

**Time Management:** Remaining productive under stress. For example, an employee who can maintain business as usual during a period of turbulent change such as a takeover.

**Tolerance for Ambiguity:** Making decisions and moving ahead in an uncertain environment.

**Being an “Agent of Change”:** Making change your own as opposed to dreading, fearing and resisting it<sup>1</sup>.

## Factors Influencing the Development of Resilience:

### Biological factors:

- ❖ **General Health:** Research suggests that resilient individuals acquire few illnesses, have a robust physique, and maintain regular sleeping and eating patterns.
- ❖ **Genetic Predisposition:** Individuals who demonstrate a limited capacity for resilience may have parents with a history of personality disorders.
- ❖ **Childhood Temperament:** Some researchers believe an infant's easy temperament may have a positive influence on their ability to develop resilience.

### External factors:

- **Home Environment:** Research suggests that an organized, clean, and structured home is an optimal setting for the development of resilience.
- **Parenting Styles:** Establishing rules and consistent expectations from an early age promotes the development of resilience<sup>2</sup>.



For a list of references and links to more information on this topic please visit <http://www.christineslabbert.co.za/Psych-Ed/psych-ed.html>

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