

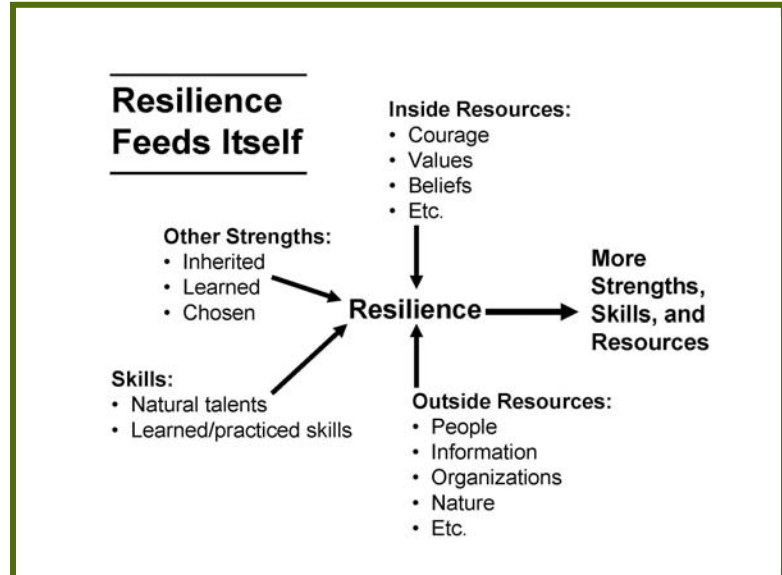


Finding Balance

2. Resilience

One common definition of “resilience” is the ability to meet challenges and bounce back or re-balance during or after difficult experiences. Resilience may not be the best word for it, but it’s the best word we have so far. If you’re not sure how resilience is different from strengths, skills, or resources, don’t worry. It’s more important to have it than to know exactly what to call it. This diagram shows how it relates to a variety of strengths:

Everybody has resilience. We all have strengths, skills, and resources in many areas of life—body, brain, thoughts, feelings, family, friends, values, beliefs, education, training, work, finances, sports, creativity, spirituality, even goofing off. These all add to our resilience, and the fact that we have resilience—that we’re able to live through difficult things and learn from them—helps build our strengths, skills, and resources even more. Resilience feeds itself.



Some people have an easy time finding and believing in their resilience, and others have it harder. This can sometimes be traced back to people’s experience, but often it can’t. Two people can lead very similar lives, but one ends up feeling strong and confident and the other has a lot of self-doubt. Is it genetics? Is it free choice? Something somebody said or did to them when they were young? Divine intervention? Who knows? It’s different from person to person.

On a scale of 0 to 10, how easy is it for you to think of ways in which you might be resilient? (0 = very hard, 10 = very easy)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 0 to 10, how easy is it for you to **believe** in your own resilience? (0 = very hard, 10 = very easy)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What are some ways in which you already think of yourself as resilient?

People who don't know their own resilience often have just as much of it as people who are aware of their resilience. They tend to discount the courage they show every day. In tough times, just getting out of bed, stepping through the door, and showing up for a difficult task can be a sign of great strength and courage.

When your stress system is out of balance, you have more challenges to manage and overcome—on many levels of life—and you might have less confidence in your resilience. The changes in your stress system have probably ramped up the chemicals that mess with your confidence and tamped down the chemicals that would otherwise add to your confidence. (More about the chemicals in Section 5.)

Resilience Traits and Skills

You might think of resilience as including a number of traits (things about you and who you are) and skills that keep you in balance and make it possible for you to meet challenges and bounce back, and to return to balance after difficult times. The Armed Forces have been focusing a lot on resilience, both for service members and for families. You might have heard a lot of different ways of defining resilience. You can always pick the one that works best for you. Or if you're tired of that word, you can substitute a different word that works better for you.

Throughout *Finding Balance* you'll find descriptions of what we call "resilience skills." These aren't the only skills that build resilience. They're just a few of the many skills that can help you and your loved one balance your stress systems and work on developing even more resilience.

Tool: Examples of Resilience Traits and Skills

This page and the next give you a few examples of resilience traits and skills, and a chance to look at these and other traits and skills in your life. To make it convenient for people who have been using the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program for soldiers, family members, and DA civilians, these strengths are organized in the same five dimensions of strength (physical, emotional, social, family, and spiritual).

Beyond this tool, you might want to start and keep a Resilience Journal. That could be as simple as a pocket-sized notebook that you carry with you. Then, whenever you think of it, you can write down resilience traits or skills you've noticed in yourself, or things you've said or done that have shown strength and/or resilience.

What are some resilience traits and skills that you have?	Are these things you've always had? How have you worked on them?	How do you know you have these resilience traits and skills?
Physical: <input type="checkbox"/> Physical strength <input type="checkbox"/> Physical flexibility <input type="checkbox"/> Stamina <input type="checkbox"/> Speed <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to rest and relax <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Emotional: <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity <input type="checkbox"/> Courage to face your fears <input type="checkbox"/> Insight into yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Intuition about people, events <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy for others' pain <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

What are some resilience traits and skills that you have?	Are these things you've always had? How have you worked on them?	How do you know you have these resilience traits and skills?
<p>Social:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Having friends you trust <input type="checkbox"/> People who are there for you <input type="checkbox"/> Being there for others <input type="checkbox"/> Being at ease with people <input type="checkbox"/> Putting others at ease <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Accepting family members <input type="checkbox"/> Being considerate of family <input type="checkbox"/> Being comfortable with family <input type="checkbox"/> Working through problems <input type="checkbox"/> Having fun together <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Spiritual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of mission/purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Selfless service <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty, integrity, honor <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness (self and others) <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual faith and discipline <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>