

THE SCIENCE OF RESILIENCE

How to build more resilience within ourselves

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Resources section

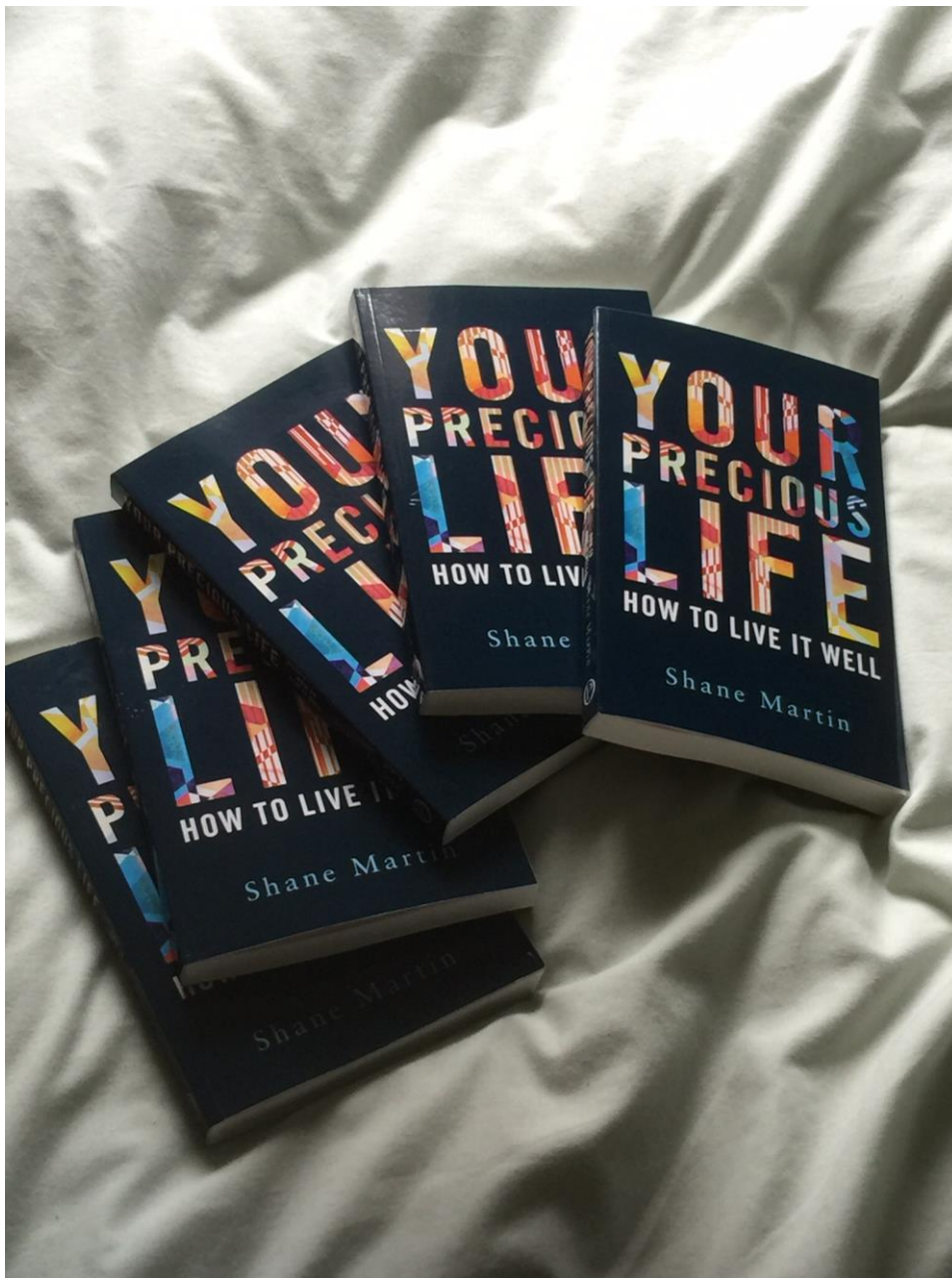


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Three realities

- We are all vulnerable
- We will face challenges and crises
- We underestimate our potential to ‘bounce back’ and have the best possible life despite setbacks and misfortune

Three promises

- Evidence-based
- Will cost you nothing
- Can be implemented immediately

Lost in the 'noise'

- No time to think
- Rushing and fussing
- Connecting with yourself, others and your world
- Being openminded, being openhearted

What we all need

- A toolbox for coping in crisis
- How not to take a hit lessons in school
- The science of the survivor
- How to thrive despite adversity

What is resilience?

“Resilience is the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances”

(Master, Best & Garmezy, 1990)

What is resilience?

“More than education, more than experience, more than training, a person’s level of resilience will determine who succeeds and who fails. That’s true in the cancer ward, it’s true in the Olympics, and its true in the boardroom.”

Dean Becker, Harvard Business Review

GREAT NEWS

- It can be learned
- New research
- New interventions (particularly for children)
- Same interventions improve resilience in adults

GREAT NEWS

- Doesn't mean that you have to become as hard as nails
- We underestimate our potential to cope better through crisis and grow stronger
- It's the best option! - to cope and grow stronger

Resilience

- A unique journey
- Unique for each person
- Certain factors are consistently shown to be important

10 Tips for greater resilience



1. EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

The ability to identify your feelings and express your emotions, and when necessary, the ability to control your feelings (Reivich & Shatte, 2002)

- *Gender differences?*
- *Not being governed by your emotions*
- *Comfortable with your feelings and expressing them*
- *Allowing for your emotional state*
- *Not becoming 'stuck' in your emotions*
- *There is a separation between who you are at your core and what you are going through*
- *Not being consumed by crisis*

2. PRESSING THE 'PAUSE' BUTTON (AVOIDING PANIC)

Highly resilient people are able to tolerate ambiguity so they don't rush to make decisions. They sit back and look at things in a thoughtful way before acting

- *The need for rational thinking – thinking straight*
- *Being objective, neutral and fair-minded*
- *Being openminded*
- *Opening yourself up to advice*

The Role of Thinking within Stress

- Bias thinking
- Irrational thinking
- Private thinking
- Powerful thinking

INTERNAL DIALOGUE AUTOMATIC SELF-TALK

- Our private world of thoughts, our interpretation of past and present, our predictions for the future are very powerful influences on mood

- Is there another way of making sense of this?
- Am I right to be as annoyed as I am?
- Would this annoy you as much as it's annoying me?
- Does it really matter?
- Have I got good advice or am I making conclusions on my own?
- Am I my own best or worst coach?

Consulting / Practical advice and solutions

Watch out for KNOW-ALL-ISM

The power of questions

Doing your own thinking

Not to be governed by panic

3. EMPATHY

The ability to read and understand the emotions of others

- Understand how your situation affects others
- Seeing others, supporting others
- A compassionate heart is a compassionate heart at all times
- Enhancing our sense of family/ team
- Building relationships

Cultivating a compassionate response

- You share imperfection with your fellow beings
- We're all stressed
- We all make mistakes
- Worse things have happened others
- You need to 'mind' yourself not 'hammer' yourself

4. MINDING YOURSELF

- Running health protective strategies while in crisis
- Doing what is good for us whether we feel like it or not
- Boxing cleverly

5. CULTIVATING OPTIMISM

- Not yet!
- The concept of stumbling
- Unlearning helplessness
- Optimism which facilitates problem-solving
- ‘wed to reality’
 - *Engaging with the optimist*
 - *Contemplating the optimistic view*

6. UNLEARNING HELPLESSNESS

- Becoming more mindful of our innate potential to surprise ourselves with how brilliantly we can cope
- Failures are temporary setbacks!
- Never underestimate your own potential
- Doing different things, doing things differently
- Change (even forced change) can produce opportunities

7. SITUATION ANALYSIS - The Helicopter View

This means the ability to think comprehensively about the problems /challenges you confront.

Looking at problems from many perspectives, considering many factors and consulting with others

- Seeking the best possible advice
- Adhering to that advice

8. SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

- People need people
- Remaining social/keeping friends
- The powerful resource of family
- The crucial role of the 'significant other'
- Keeping good company / leaning on resilient people
- Taking all the help you can get
- Sustaining team/family
- Counselling

- Psychologists have shown that social ties and increased contact with family and friends are associated with a lower risk of illness
- What's more, a 2010 meta-analysis of 148 studies showed that social connection doesn't just help us survive health problems but the lack of it causes them (Williams, 2011)

9. PRAYER/FAITH

- Spirituality/religiousness
- Sense of purpose
- It's not all about me!
- Life as a journey
- Silence
- The benefits of prayer
- Investing in our spirituality:
- MINDFULNESS

- Scientific studies have established that there may be psychological and physiological benefits in prayer.
- The frequency with which subjects prayed was closely correlated with having fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety. (Maltby et al, 1999)
- Religion associated with better recovery from physical illness, including better health and longer survival after heart transplant and reduced mortality following other cardiac surgeries (Oxman, Freeman and Manheimer, 1995).
- Hundreds of studies confirm a positive correlation between religious practice and improved health outcomes. Religion tends to promote a general lifestyle that fosters a better quality of life

10. LAUGHTER

- The gift of humour
- Humour therapy
- Hanging around with good humoured people

“Laughing one hundred times amounts to the same exercise as riding a stationary bike for fifteen minutes. Five minutes of intense laughter can double the heart rate. Three minutes of laughter is equivalent to three minutes on a rowing machine. Laughter stimulates circulation, tones muscles, energises lungs and stimulates endorphins in the immune system.”

Dr William Fry (Stanford University)



- Not an exhaustive list
- Don't need to score high in them all to be given the 'stamp of resilience'
- Major progress occurs by even considering which of the factors we are strong at and playing to these strengths as much as possible
- Every factor can be worked on

