

BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT LAWYER

WORK YOUR
RESILIENCY
MUSCLE:
10 TIPS TO
BECOMING
MORE
RESILIENT



JEENA CHO
201 SPEAR STREET, SUITE 1100
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
HELLO@JEENACHO.COM
WWW.JEENACHO.COM

BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT LAWYER

WORK YOUR RESILIENCY MUSCLE: 10 TIPS TO BECOMING MORE RESILIENT

What is resiliency?

Stress and its impact on resiliency

Yerkes-Dotson curve

Two continuum of resiliency

How to better manage stress

10 Tips

1. Understand the stress response
2. Diffuse the stress response
3. Meditation & mindfulness
4. Increase self-awareness
5. Thinking errors and cognitive distortions
6. STAY WELL
7. Interpersonal skills
8. Managing difficult conversations
9. Defining common missions, values and goals
10. Increase diversity

What is Resiliency?



"[t]he stress-response can become more damaging than the stressor itself, especially when the stress is purely psychological. This is a critical concept, because it underlies the emergence of much stress-related disease."

Robert M. Sapolsky, *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*, Third Edition (2004)

Short definition: The ability to **survive** adversities and **thrive** in life.

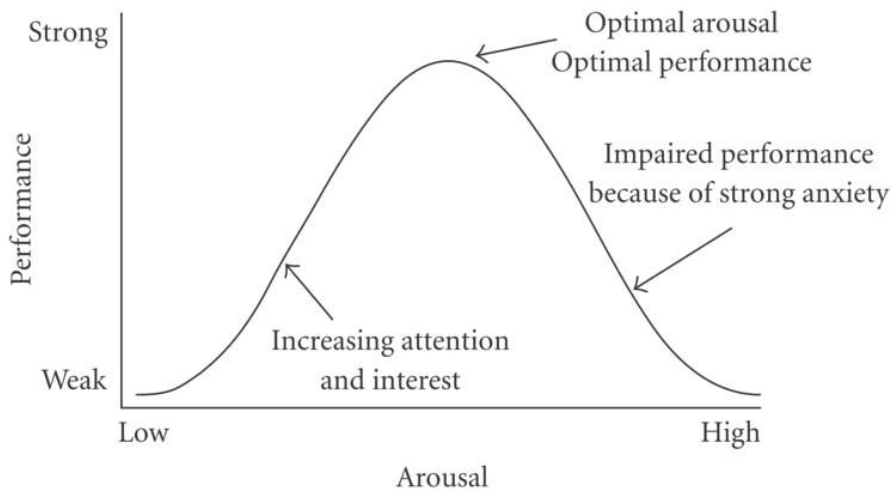
Surviving: Developing the capacity, ability, skill set, routines, etc. to bounce back from adversity.

Thriving: Doing what matters most — enhancing, optimizing your well being. Engaging in intentional practices, routines and habits that optimize how you feel. The more one can live a reflected life and make it satisfying, fulfilling and meaningful, the more resilient he or she will become. This allows a person to stay more in homeostatic balance and get the most out of life.

STRESS RESPONSE

Can Stress Be Good For You?

Research indicates moderate amount of stress is good for you.



YERKES-DOTSON CURVE

People typically perform poorly under no stress. Complete lack of stress can create lack of motivation and make people less caring about the outcome.

Humans perform best under **moderate** but **manageable** levels of stress. The middle portion of the bell curve.

What we want to avoid is too much stress or prolonged "chronic stress." This disrupts our ability to think clearly and perform.

IMPACT OF CHRONIC STRESS

According to the American Psychological Association:

"Unlike everyday stressors, which can be managed with healthy stress management behaviors, untreated chronic stress can result in serious health conditions including anxiety, insomnia, muscle pain, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system.

Research shows that stress can contribute to the development of major illnesses, such as heart disease, depression and obesity. Some studies have even suggested that unhealthy chronic stress management, such as overeating "comfort" foods, has contributed to the growing obesity epidemic. Yet, despite its connection to illness, APA's Stress in America survey revealed that 33 percent of Americans never discuss ways to manage stress with their healthcare provider."

According to Occupational Health and Safety news and the National Council on compensation of insurance, up to 90% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related complaints.



DID YOU KNOW?

How we handle stress and what we do with it determines our resilience and overall well-being.

Resilience

What are the elements for increasing resiliency? What does the research teach us about creating and sustaining resiliency skills?



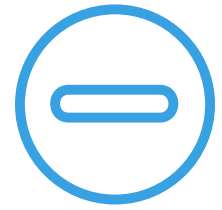
Resilience: Two continuum

1. What am I doing to manage stress?
2. What am I doing to optimize my quality of life and well being?

Ann Masten from the University of Minnesota, foremost expert in the concept of resilience, defines resilience as "ordinary magic."

Research indicates:

- Resilience isn't something you are born with or gained by genetic endowment
- Not about luck, not random occurrence
- Ordinary magic means resilience can be **learned**, and **cultivated** through engaging in intentional practices.
- Intentional practices: being open to learning, applying, and integrating good lifestyle choices, habits, and routines
- Resilience is about what we do, regularly and consistently. In other words, it's all about practice!

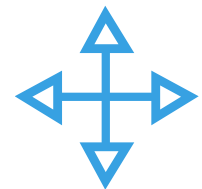


Negative Confirmation Bias

Seeing others or situations through a negative lens, and failing to pay attention to the positive.



Ability to pay attention to the positive - can be learned and practiced. Research indicates people who pay attention to the positive have a more satisfying life.



Defining Your Own Success

Is your life satisfying, enjoyable, and fulfilling?

How to get Better at Stress

Research indicates you can use stress as an ally.



According to researcher Kelly McGonigal, we can reduce the negative impact of stress on the body by changing the way we think about the body's stress response. In a Harvard University research, subjects were "taught to rethink their stress response as helpful. That pounding heart is preparing you for action. If you're breathing faster, it's no problem. It's getting more oxygen to your brain. And participants who learned to view the stress response as **helpful** for their performance they were less stressed out, less anxious, more confident."

More interestingly, the participant's physical stress response also changed. In a typical stress response, your heart rate increases, blood vessels constricts.

"[i]n the study, when participants viewed their stress response as helpful, their blood vessels stayed relaxed... Their heart was still pounding, but this is a much healthier cardiovascular profile. It actually looks a lot like what happens in moments of joy and courage. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90s. And this is really what the new science of stress reveals, that how you think about stress matters."

How do we help lawyers manage their stress better—help them survive but perhaps more importantly, thrive?



DID YOU KNOW?

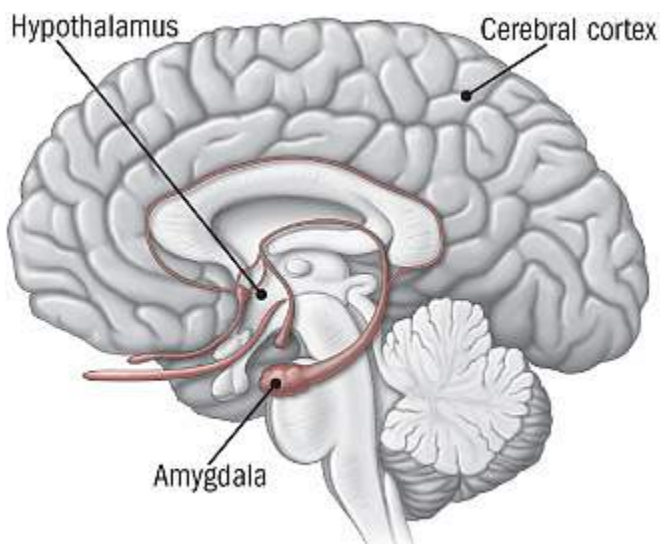
We have the ability to reduce the negative impact of stress on our body?

Tip 1: Understand the Stress Response

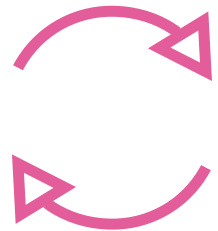
What happens to the body and mind when faced with a stressful situation or event?



The stress response begins in the brain. When someone confronts an oncoming car or other danger, the eyes or ears (or both) send the information to the amygdala, an area of the brain that contributes to emotional processing. The amygdala interprets the images and sounds. When it perceives danger, it instantly sends a distress signal to the hypothalamus.



When someone experiences a stressful event, the amygdala, an area of the brain that contributes to emotional processing, sends a distress signal to the hypothalamus. This area of the brain functions like a command center, communicating with the rest of the body through the nervous system so that the person has the energy to **fight or flee**.

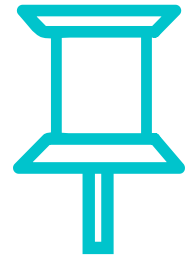


Research suggests that prolonged stress contributes to high blood pressure, promotes the formation of artery-clogging deposits, and causes brain changes that may contribute to anxiety, depression, and addiction.

Source: Harvard Health Publications

Tip 2: Diffusing the Stress Response

Remember: STOP



What you practice gets stronger. Practice the STOP technique on a regular basis.

Practice STOP before...

1. Picking up the phone
3. Responding to an emotionally charged email
4. Opening the refrigerator door
5. Going into a meeting
6. Speaking

STOP

Stop: When you notice your stress level increasing or your fight-or-flight response has been activated, remind yourself to **stop**.

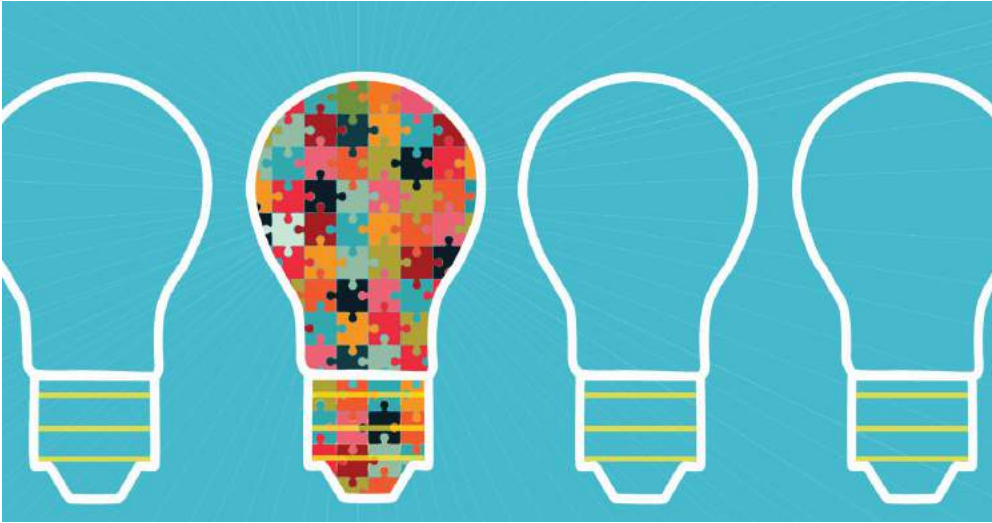
Take a breath: Take a moment to reconnect with your breath. Breathe in through the nose and extend the breath all the way down to the belly, engaging the diaphragm.

Observe: Observe your physical, emotional and psychological state. Engage all of your senses.

Proceed: Once you are back to homeostatic balance, proceed mindfully.

Tip 3: Mindfulness

Meditation: Tool for training the brain.



Benefits of Mindfulness Practice

1. SELF-REGULATION

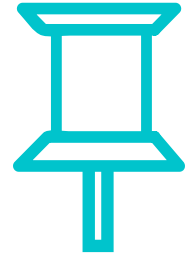
As lawyers, we must be able to regulate and moderate our own reactions to highly stressful situations and stay cool under pressure. The ability to be in the present moment — so when you're writing your Motion for Summary Judgment, you can fully pay attention to that instead of replaying an unpleasant conversation from earlier on — is an obvious super skill for a lawyer.

2. ABILITY TO REDUCE “KNEE-JERK” REACTIONS

Mindfulness creates that moment of pause between the stimulus and your reaction. That pause then creates a space so you can **respond** rather than **react**.

3. INCREASED SELF-DISCIPLINE

Creating a daily habit of meditation has a huge ripple effect on the rest of your life. I've found that committing to the daily habit of meditation has given me the ability to form other habits. For example, eating breakfast every morning instead of just drinking a cup of black coffee (something I've done since college!). It also helped me to regularly practice yoga and exercise.



Sharon Salzberg, author and meditation teacher, defines mindfulness as follows:

Mindfulness isn't just about knowing that you're hearing something, seeing something, or even observing that you're having a particular feeling. It's about doing so in a certain way — with balance and equanimity, and without judgment. Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention in a way that creates space for insight.

Tip 4: Increasing Self-Awareness

Taking inventory of your life - clarifying your values and committing to what is truly important.

Becoming a Resilient Person BULLS EYE ACTIVITY

step 1
what are
your values?

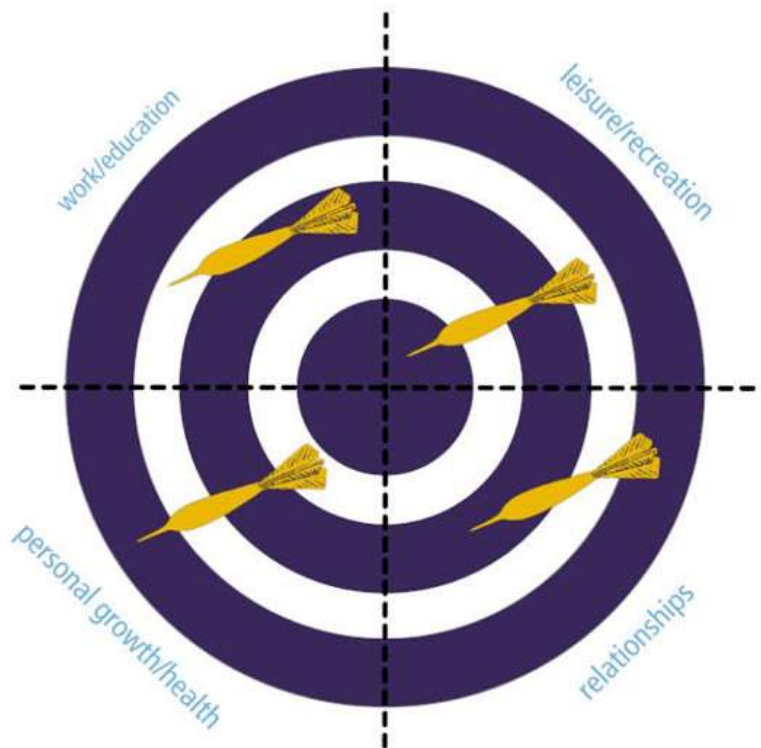
work/education
relationships
personal growth/health
leisure/recreation

step 3
what's getting
in the way?

identify and overcome
barriers that get
in the way

step 2
where are
you on the
dartboard?

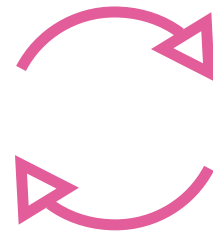
step 4
what actions
can I take to
live consistent
with my
values?



- When we clarify our values and strive to live consistently with them, we are able to enhance our resilience.
- Russ Harris, Australian psychologist, expert in acceptance and commitment therapy said "Commitment isn't about being perfect, always following through, or never going astray. Commitment means that when you inevitably stumble or get off track, you pick yourself up, find your bearings, and carry on in the most meaningful direction possible."
- Values: Being the person you want to be, doing what matters most to you in life.
- When people commit to living consistent with their values, they reflect on their lives as being more meaningful, purposeful, and, ultimately, more fulfilled.

• Source: Becoming a Resilient Person: The Science of Stress Management and Promoting Wellbeing

Tip 5: Recognizing Thinking Errors



Cognitive Restructuring: Don't Believe Your Thoughts.

Cognitive restructuring is a set of procedures that allow you to directly attack your dysfunctional thinking by systematically analyzing the things you are saying to yourself when anxious. Cognitive structuring does not mean that you take out the bad thoughts and replace them with good thoughts. It is not just blindly thinking positive thoughts, either. Cognitive restructuring techniques teach you to question your beliefs, assumptions, and expectations to see if they really make sense or are helpful.

We can begin to work with our thoughts by looking for **thinking errors**.

- **All-or-Nothing Thinking:** You view a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum.
- **Fortune Telling:** You predict that something negative is going to happen in the future, as if you were gazing into a crystal ball. In the extreme form of Fortune Telling, known as **Catastrophizing**, you tell yourself that the very worst is happening or is going to happen, without considering other possibilities that may be more likely and/or less negative.
- **Disqualifying the Positive:** You unreasonably tell yourself that positive experiences, deeds, or qualities do not count.
- **Emotional Reasoning:** You think something must be true because you “feel” (actually, believe) it so strongly, ignoring or discounting evidence to the contrary.
- **Labeling:** You put a fixed, global label on yourself or others without considering that the evidence might more reasonably lead to a less disastrous conclusion.
- **Mind Reading:** You believe you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely, possibilities, and you make no effort to test the truth.
- **“Should” Statements:** You have a precise, fixed idea of how you or others should behave and you overestimate how bad it is that these expectations are not met.
- **Unproductive and Unhelpful Thoughts:** Problematic thoughts that do not contain logical thinking errors. These thoughts may be true or value statements that are neither true or false. However, dwelling on them makes you feel more anxious and may interfere with your performance.

- (Source: Managing Social Anxiety Workbook, pg., 34)

Tip 6: STAY WELL

Meditation: Tool for training the brain.



Sleep: 6-8 hours p/night

Take breaks: give your mind and body a rest!

Allies: spend time w/ people who love you

Yoga: Yoga, mindfulness, deep breathing

Well-balanced meals

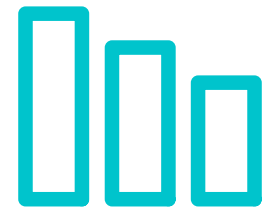
Exercise: 20~30 minutes p/day

Let go

Laugh

Making A New Habit Stick

1. **Make it Daily** – Consistency is critical. If you want to start exercising, go to the gym every day for your first thirty days. Going a couple times a week will make it harder to form the habit.



2. **Start Simple** – Don't try to completely change your life in one day.

3. **Remind Yourself** – Place reminders to execute your habit each day or you might miss a few days.

4. **Get a Buddy**

5. **Form a Trigger** – A trigger is a ritual you use right before executing your habit. If you wanted to wake up earlier, this could mean waking up in exactly the same way each morning.

6. **Replace Lost Needs** – If you are giving up something in your habit (for example, smoking) make sure you are adequately replacing any needs you've lost.

7. **Be Imperfect** – Try your best, but expect a few bumps along the way.

10. **Use "But"** – When you start to think negative thoughts, use the word "but" to interrupt it. "I'm no good at this, but, if I work at it I will improve."

Adopted from: Lifehack - 18 Tricks to Make New Habits Stick

Tip 7: Interpersonal Skills

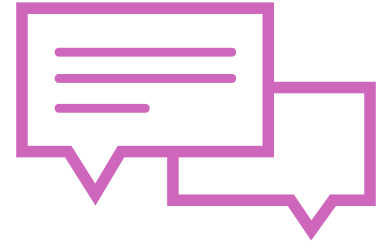
Strong, positive connections with others increase resiliency



Put down your iPhone!

We might expect that the widespread availability of mobile phones boosts interpersonal connections by allowing people to stay in touch constantly. But a recent set of studies by Andrew K. Przybylski and Netta Weinstein of the University of Essex showed that our phones can hurt our close relationships. Amazingly, they found that simply having a phone nearby, without even checking it, can be detrimental to our attempts at interpersonal connection.

Scientific American, How Your Cell Phone Hurts Your Relationships, By Helen Lee Lin on September 4, 2012



Make connections. Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

- American Psychological Association

Tip 8: Managing Difficult Conversations

Difficult conversations can lead to crisis or harmony



Support and understanding are two of the most important universal needs, but we often sweep them under the rug, telling ourselves that we don't have time for that nonsense, especially in a fast-paced workplace. But the sense that "I matter, you matter, we matter," gives rise to high-functioning work groups that improve relationships, build team spirit, and contribute to the growth of the organization. Steve Bates, a writer for HR magazine, says, "...study after study indicates that employee emotions are fundamentally related to-and actually drive-bottom-line success in a company." Emotions are directly connected to whether our needs are met or unmet.

Martha Lasley

www.NonviolentCommunication.com



Authentic Communication

The Authentic Communication process, adapted from Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication, is a powerful way to turn conflict into a productive force that leads to creativity and new ideas. In this process, instead of speaking in ways that alienate others, we connect by sharing our observations and reactions and by becoming aware of each other's needs. Rather than becoming attached to particular positions, we explore the underlying needs we hope to satisfy. From this shared awareness, we can request strategies that work for everyone.

The process for Authentic Communication:

1. Observation: When you _____ (state your observation)
2. Feeling: are you feeling _____ (guess the emotion)
3. Need: because you need _____ (guess the need)?
4. Request: Would you like (me, him, her, them) to (specific action) _____?

Tip 9: Defining Common Missions, Values and Goals

Core values are the principles and standards at the very center of our character, and from which we will not budge or stray.

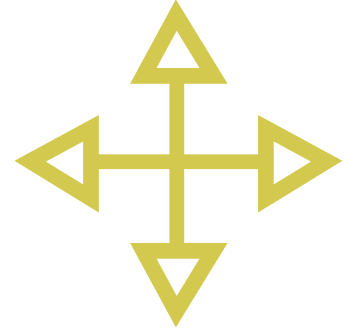


Defining Organizational Mission, Values and Goals

A study by Bain and Company indicated that organizations that have clearly defined Vision and Mission statements that are aligned with a strategic plan, outperform those who do not.

Defining Personal Mission, Values and Goals

When we clarify our values and strive to **live consistent** with them, **we are able to enhance our resilience.**



By developing a sense of purpose and meaning in life, we can overcome adversity, pick ourselves up after a setback, and continue to pursue what matters most in life.

Difference Between Values and Goals

Values represent a chosen life path or a life compass. It points you in the direction you want to go. A goal is something that you achieve along the way as you're pointed in that direction.

Tip 10: Increase Diversity

Diversity in the workplace increases team resiliency



“Research has shown that social diversity in a group can cause discomfort, rougher interactions, a lack of trust, greater perceived interpersonal conflict, lower communication, less cohesion, more concern about disrespect, and other problems.”

However, these difficulties are precisely the thing that makes a team more resilient.

“Diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel information and perspectives, leading to better decision making and problem solving. Diversity can improve the bottom line of companies and lead to unfettered discoveries and breakthrough innovations. Even simply being exposed to diversity can change the way you think.”



Scott Page, Professor of Complex Systems at the University of Michigan, has been researching the diversity of thought for years. He highlighted much of his research in his book *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*. It turns out diversity of thought is even more important than all other types of diversity. His research discovered groups that display a range of perspectives outperform groups of like-minded experts. Diversity in a team yields superior outcomes and collective wisdom exceeds the sum of its parts.

Scientific American, How Diversity Makes Us Smarter
By Katherine W. Phillips on October 1, 2014