



THE RESILIENCY FACTORS

HOW TO BOUNCE BACK FROM ADVERSITY

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EVER WISH you could get over a tragedy, bounce back and get on with your life? Resiliency is the ability to get through, get over, get past and thrive after a trauma, tragedy or tribulation. A person who is resilient is better able to withstand a challenge, survive it and come out triumphant. What's more, they are able to maintain happy and successful lives, despite their setbacks.

So how, exactly, do people bounce back? What can a person do now to build the skills that will be needed in the future? After a paralyzing spinal cord injury in 1998, my life, at first, seemed to be irreversibly altered. But gradually, I started to regain function and get stronger on a personal and professional level. In the process, I discovered there were many factors that affected my ability to become more resilient. They included:

Recognizing Relationships

Most critical to my success was the strength and scope of my relationships with others. I felt so connected to my husband, friends, family, colleagues and neighbors, and I leaned on them to help me grow. I recognized the value of my relationships, and I took inventory of the quantity and quality of the relationships in my life. Ultimately, I had to determine if they were strong enough to sustain me in my efforts to come back from tragedy. By surrounding myself with the right people, I was able to make headway on my goals.

Willingness to Learn

Another factor in my resiliency was my curiosity. I tried learning new ways to do things that I previously could do without even thinking. I had to learn how to get out of the wheelchair and into bed, drive a car with hand controls and dress in the wheelchair, among other difficult transitions. My curiosity and tenacity to learn anew was a key factor in my success. After seeing the results, I was driven to keep learning new things and test myself to produce the greatest outcome.

Problem-Solving Abilities

The third factor was my ability to solve problems. As I faced personal and professional dilemmas, I thought about the difficulty the situations created. Many times, my inabilities to perform were due to my limited physical strength and flexibility. In order to succeed, I had to figure out a different approach to solve a problem. For example, since I couldn't stand, I adopted an alternate option. I purchased an adapted device—a "reacher"—to get items from high places. By learning to adjust to problems and find alternate solutions, I was able to achieve my goals.

Performance Motivation

The fourth factor of resiliency is the motivation to perform. At times, the limits I faced were due to a lack of motivation, rather than a lack of skill. I kept thinking to myself, "If my life depended on doing this, could I accomplish this task?" If my answer was, "Yes, I could do this task," then I simply wasn't trying hard enough, didn't want it bad enough or wasn't pushing myself enough. By motivating myself, I was able to accomplish more, and I became far more resilient in the process.

Like a rubber ball, we each have the ability to bounce back when tragedy strikes. In my experience, the ingredients we need to bounce quicker and higher are the strength and scope of our relationships with people; a curiosity to learn; the ability to solve problems; and the motivation to perform. Gathering these ingredients takes time, practice and commitment. When combined, it ensures you can face any predicament and come out a better, stronger person. I know I did. ☺

Rosemarie (pictured above) is an internationally respected speaker, trainer, consultant and author who uses her experiences with adversity to educate global business leaders. She is also the president of Rossetti Enterprises Inc. and Fortuna Press LLC. You can contact Rosemarie at Rosemarie@RosemarieSpeaks.com.