

Becoming Resilient

resilient: the ability to recover quickly from a difficult situation



Saplings snap back into position after being bent; they are flexible but strong. They are resilient.

Life is always a mixture of good times and bad times. Some good times are quick and silly, such as giggling uncontrollably with your friends. Others are deep and long lasting. They might be friendships with people you love, or achieving a personal goal.

Our bad times also vary. Some need only a few moments and a kind word to fade away. Others can be so painful that they are remembered for a lifetime, and might even change your life forever.

To be happy, we need to find ways to deal with difficult times. One way of doing this is to become more personally **resilient**. In bad times, a resilient person would probably say, "This is tough, but I have to move on. Let's think of how to solve this problem."

A resilient person:

- * Recognizes that difficult times can be painful, without ignoring the pain.
- * Approaches the difficulty as a challenge, not a problem.
- * Remains positive and works on ways to overcome the difficulty.
- * Asks, "What lesson can I learn from this experience?"
- * Being resilient can be difficult sometimes, and needs to be practised in order to feel more familiar. Work on making it a new habit!

Setbacks and Bounces

When you wrote your "bad times" story, could you feel the anger, pain, or sadness of that time? When it happened, did you want to curl up under the covers and never come out?

That's a natural reaction. Setbacks aren't easy.

But setbacks also challenge us to find ways to bounce back. Rather than thinking that what has happened is a disaster, you need to find ways of thinking positively. Resilient people believe that they can solve problems. They see setbacks as temporary, not permanent.

Some setbacks are easily resolved. A quick, honest chat can clear up an argument with a friend. Bigger setbacks, such as the separation



Taking some time alone to reflect on what has happened can help you overcome a setback.

of your parents, will probably take much more work. All of these setbacks can be overcome if you approach them positively.

You need to express your feelings, of course. Feel sad, angry, or hurt; cry, or even yell! Sometimes this sort of reaction can help release some of the tensions caused by the setback. But don't let these feelings take over your life. Focus on what you can do to move forward.

Dealing with Difficulties: A Few Tips

Take notice. If you spend lots of time curled up in bed, or don't want to do anything, you may still be dealing with a setback. Do something!

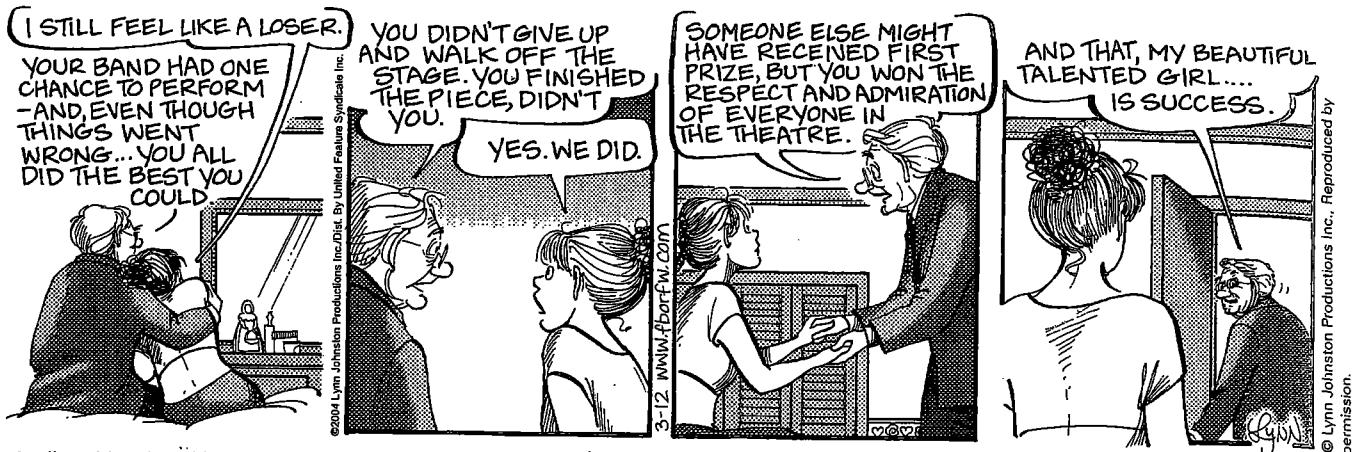
Stay calm. Put the problem—even when it is a big problem—in perspective. Think about it in relation to your whole life.

Take action. Don't say, "I'll do something tomorrow." Do something positive immediately.

Ask for help. Talk to someone. For instance, if you have lost a loved one, talk to a counsellor. Resilient people are flexible enough to know when they need support.

Remind yourself of your life goals. Work to make these become real; don't let temporary setbacks push you off track.

Remain positive. Ask, "What can I learn from this setback?" Each time you solve a problem, you become a better problem-solver.



April and her band have had a disastrous first performance. What do you think April can learn from her setback?

Selena's Challenge

Selena has an important Math quiz this morning, and she has missed the bus!

Possible Solutions

Go back to bed, miss school, and fail the quiz.

Walk to school, arrive late, and beg to take the quiz at lunch.

Use her allowance to take a cab, and get to school on time.

Ask her mom to phone in and say she is sick.

Selena's Choice

Use her allowance to take a cab, and get to school on time.

Over to You

Take a look at how Selena dealt with her problem.

1. Why do you think she rejected the other possible solutions?
2. What would you have done? Why?
3. Draw a decision-making diagram like the one Selena used. Then show how you would deal with the following difficulties:
 - a) Your brother accidentally takes your lunch bag. You now have no lunch and you're going on an all-day field trip.
 - b) You fail a school quiz. This is the first quiz you've failed and you know your parents will be very disappointed.
 - c) You stayed out late and didn't tell anybody where you were. Now you are grounded for three weekends.

