



The Resilience Prescription

Physician: Dennis S. Charney, MD | Refills: Unlimited | Patient: You

1 Positive Attitude

- Optimism is strongly related to resilience.
 - Optimism is in part genetic, but it can be learned (cognitive behavioral therapy).
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Reward circuits, converse of learned helplessness

2 Cognitive Flexibility Through Cognitive Reappraisal

- Traumatic experiences can be re-evaluated by altering the event’s perceived value and meaningfulness.
 - One can receive a benefit from stress and trauma: one can reframe, assimilate, accept, and recover. These skills can be learned.
 - Failure is an essential ingredient for growth.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Memory Reconsolidation, Cognitive Control of Emotion, Memory Suppression

3 Embrace a Personal Moral Compass

- Develop a set of core beliefs that very few things can shatter.
 - For many, faith in conjunction with strong religious and/or spiritual beliefs is associated with resilience.
 - Altruism has been strongly related to resilience. Survivor Mission.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Neural Model of Human Morality, Altruism, and Human Evolution

4 Find a Resilient Role Model

- Role models can be found in one’s own life.
 - Imitation is a very powerful mode of learning.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Neuronal Imprinting of Human Values

5 Face Your Fears

- Fear is normal and can be used as a guide; facing your fears can increase your self-esteem.
 - Learn and practice skills necessary to move through the fear.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Extinction, Stress Inoculation

6 Develop Active Coping Skills

- Resilient individuals use active, rather than passive, coping skills.
 - Minimize appraisal of threat, create positive statements about oneself, seek support of others and act.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Functional Neuroanatomy of Fear Mechanisms

7 Establish and Nurture a Supportive Social Network

- Very few can “go it alone”; humans need a safety net during times of stress.
 - Considerable emotional strength accrues from close relationships with people and organizations.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Cognitive Neuroscience of Human Social Behavior

8 Attend to Physical Well-Being

- Physical exercise has positive effects on physical hardiness and mood, and improves self-esteem.
- Neurobiological Mechanisms:* Effects on neurogenesis, cognition, regulation of emotion, immune function, etc.

General Principles (we underestimate capacities of Mind, Brain, Body)

9 Train Regularly and Rigorously in Multiple Areas

- Change requires systematic and disciplined activity.
- Concentrate on training in multiple areas: emotional intelligence, moral integrity, physical endurance.

10 Recognize, Utilize and Foster Signature Strengths

- Learn to recognize your character strengths and engage them to deal with difficult and stressful situations.