

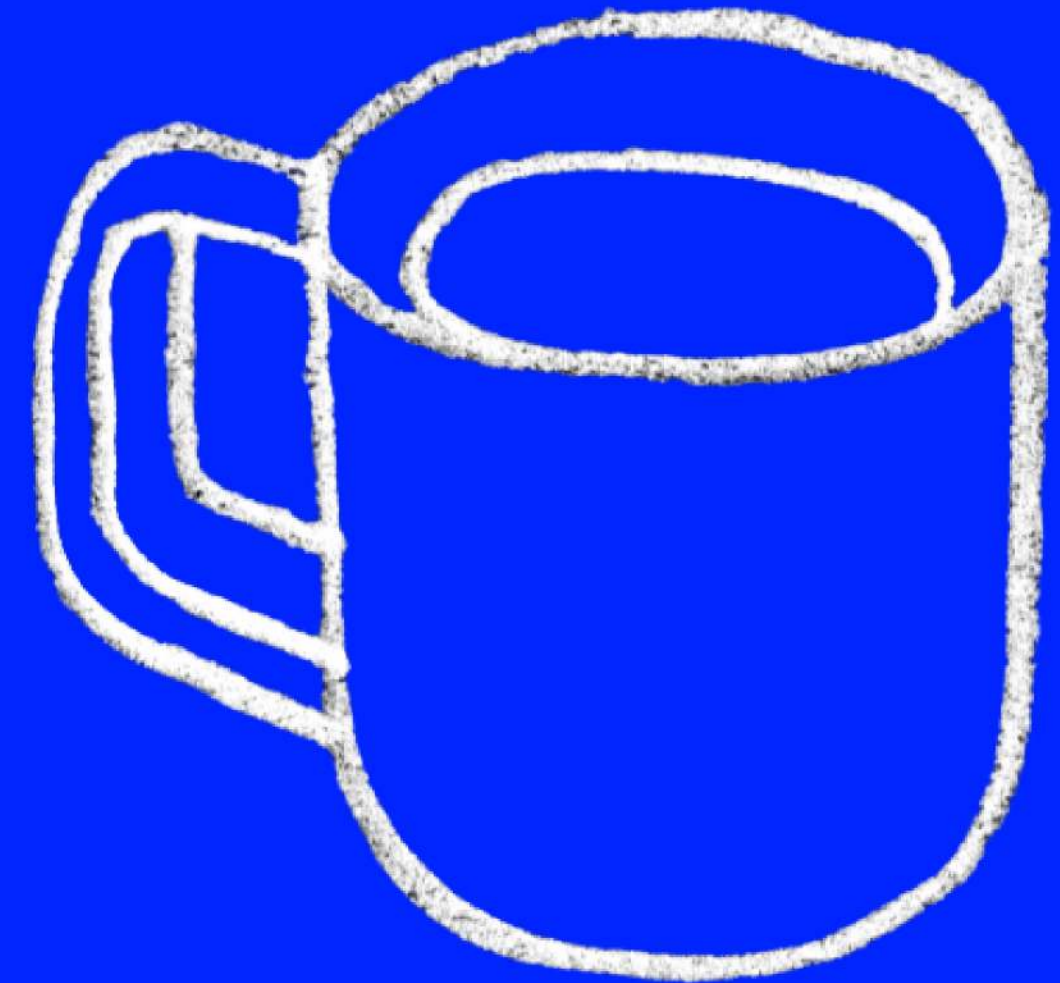
Practices for Building Resilience



Activities and experiences to help you build resilience. Designed to fit into your day-to-day.

UP TO A DAY

Quick bursts, from 20 minutes to multiple hours. Meant to be completed one time in under a day.



Seasons of Life

Duration: 60 - 90 minutes



A guided reflection for navigating through seasons with intentionality

There is a season for everything under the sun. Each season comes with its own joys, challenges, and life lessons. Summer brings lovely flowers and sometimes unbearable heat. Winter can bring memories of festivities, warm cups, and blankets.

- How would you describe the season of life you are currently in? Did you notice when the season shift started?
- How would you describe the most recent season you came out of? What did you learn from that season?
- How would you describe the season you would like to transition into? What do you want to optimize for in that season?

Sit with the emotions of the seasons as you write. Capture the textures and nuances of your memory and imagination. Your reflections can be holistic, considering your personal, professional, health, and spiritual experiences. These questions also make for powerful prompts for meaningful conversations with friends, strangers, and family if you'd like to process outloud with another person.

When One Door Closes...

Duration: 1 hour



Oh, you know the saying...

Life is constantly changing and evolving. This means that from time to time, things just stop existing. Losing a job, ending a marriage, or moving to another place are examples of changes that many people have experienced. Another way of expressing this feeling of loss is that a door is being closed. However, the end of one thing is always the beginning of something new. We have the option to stay focused on what is not here anymore (the doors that have been closed) or become aware of the new avenues that unfold. Optimism is about the latter option. It is about also seeing the doors that are being opened. It is about holding a favorable view of the future, taking closing doors into consideration, and turning them into something beneficial.

Think about a time in your life when someone rejected you or you missed out on something important or when a big plan collapsed. These would be points in your life where a “door closed”. Jot each one of these on its own sticky note as a headline.

Now think about what happened after: what doors opened? What would have never happened if the first door didn't close? Jot these down on new sticky notes and place them next to the “door closed” note they correspond with.

Pick the door closed door open situations that you feel most impacted by and reflect upon your experiences.

Letter to a Future You

Duration: 20 - 30 minutes



Send a note to a version of yourself you don't yet know

Sometimes it's difficult to see more than what is right in front of us. As if the issues and challenges we're facing now have always been. However, if you've ever reread an old journal, you've likely found that most of your problems have been resolved after varying lengths of time.

Take a moment to think about what is weighing heavily on your mind, both professionally and personally. And using this website write an open letter to yourself expressing those challenges and considering what you hope the outcomes will be.

Set the letter to be sent back to you at your chosen duration of time. You can choose if you want it to be public or private.

Mapping your Support

Duration: 40 minutes



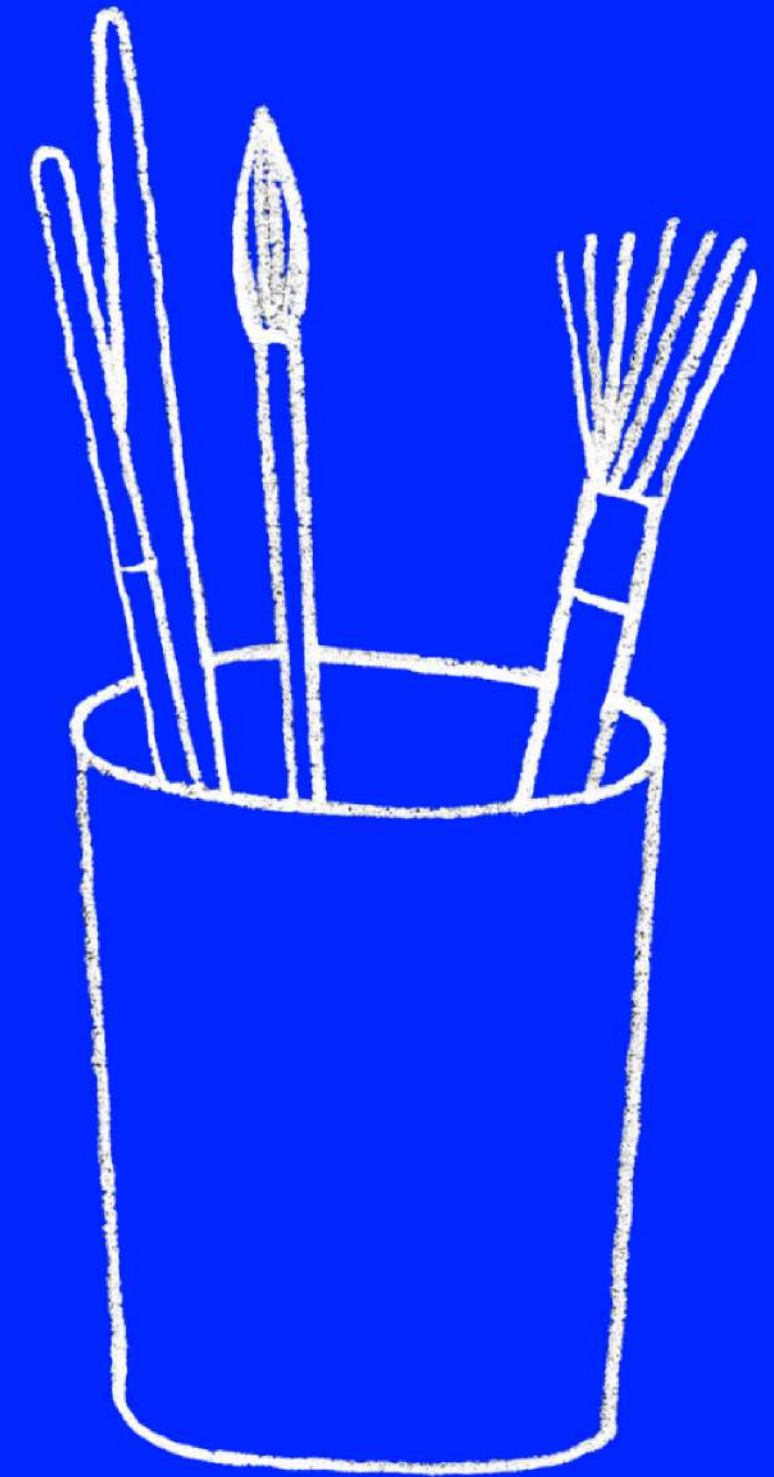
Remind yourself of the support you have around you and, perhaps, identify areas to increase your social support network.

The American Psychological Association wrote in its resilience report: “Many studies show that the primary factor in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family.” This exercise will help you notice the support you do have and, perhaps, identify areas where you could strengthen that support.

You can do this exercise with a pen and paper or on a cork board with pushpins. Start with yourself in the middle. Think of various areas that provide social support such as your family, your current place of work, or other endeavors. In each group, think of 2-4 people that you can rely on. Write their name. Draw a line between you and them. Along the line, write what you can rely on them for. Once you’ve finished, consider how these folks might support you in your current situation. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. And, if you notice an area where you don’t have as much support, consider how you might strengthen that area

UP TO A WEEK

Daily tasks, or multiple short bursts over a week, these are multi-day experiences meant to be completed over a week or less.



Try Something New

Duration: 1 / week



Build new neural pathways and shake up your routine

What's something you've always wanted to try but haven't? It doesn't have to be something HUGE like going on a solo trip to Italy or skydiving over the Grand Canyon. Instead, it could be a new skill you want to learn like trying out a boxing class, or a fear you want to conquer like reading a poem at an open mic night. Identify what that thing is for you, and this week – go do it.

After, call a friend you know will root for you. Share your celebration with them and discuss how doing that new thing made you feel. Extra “points” for taking a photo to document your bravery.

Just Say “No”

Duration: 5/min day + 30-min reflection



Take note of what you’re agreeing to and practice purposefully saying no

We have so many competing priorities. Many of us prioritize others’ needs before considering our own. While our intentions may be good, accommodating others before ourselves can lead to feelings of overwhelm, guilt, and even resentment. It’s important to be able to say no in a way that maintains relationships. If done right, saying no can even strengthen relationships because it can demonstrate honesty, vulnerability, and clarity.

Make a list of three main priorities for the week. When someone asks something of you, check the request against your priorities. If it doesn’t match them, say no. Be clear, confident, and concise. If you’re not sure, ask for some time to think it through. Keep a list of what you’ve agreed to and what you’ve said no to.

At the end of the week, assess how you felt about saying “no”. How and when did it give you more energy? How and when did it zap your energy? What impact did it have on your priorities? In your relationships? On your mood?

Wisdom Tree

Duration: 1 week

Our communities are brimming with untapped wisdom

We often forget about the wisdom that is embedded within our communities. Take a week to ask those in your family, your community, your social circles about the important life lessons that they have learned. It's important to recognize that their wisdom was learned through experience. In other words, give each lesson the consideration and respect it deserves. Interview at least 10 people in your life throughout the course of a week.

After you have finished conducting these interviews, surface themes and insights as well as pieces of advice that serve this next chapter of your life. For a different approach, try building a collage of words, magazine clippings, and sketches to represent what you learned.

Self-Ethnography

Duration: 1 week



What does it look like for us to ...

Find a space and block off 30 minutes to do some free-writing. Start with a blank sheet of paper and try to answer the following questions: Who were you in the second grade? Who are you now? What words do you describe what you do? When did you start feeling burnt out? What hobbies have gone by the wayside? What are moments in the past year that you have felt excitement?

Choose 3 individuals in your life and ask them to get curious about who they think you are. We recommend choosing a family member, a professional colleague and someone from the distant past. Ask them the following questions: What did I enjoy doing growing up? How did I enjoy this? What did you notice?

Bring these two exercises together and build a picture of who you are in your eyes and who you are in the eyes of others. Compare this to who you hope to be.

ONGOING AND HABIT BUILDING

Habit-forming tasks that are meant to last far beyond the summer.



Circles of Support (PT 1)

Duration: 30-45min to start, then ongoing adjustments and actions over time



Draw on your own resources to build a personal resilience plan

Resilient people work through life challenges using personal resources. After this exercise, you'll be able to use your resilience plan to address future challenges.

Step 1: Think about a time recently when you overcame a challenge. Perhaps an injury, negative feedback at work, an argument with a friend or family member. Feel free to jot notes, to keep it top of mind.

Step 2: Draw four circles on a piece of paper. Give yourself plenty of room to write in them.

Step 3: People: What supportive people in your life have you been able to call upon in challenging life chapters? Write those names in the first circle.

Step 4: Strategies: What 'strategies' did you use to help yourself cope with any negative thoughts and feelings that showed up in response to the difficulty from step 2? Write these down in the second circle.

Step 5: Sagacity: What sagacity helped you bounce back? Sagacity is the wisdom and insight that you hold onto. It can come from song lyrics, novels, your own experiences, etc. Record these in the third circle

Circles of Support (PT 2)

Duration: 30-45min to start, then ongoing adjustments and actions over time

Step 6: Behaviors: What solution-seeking behaviors did you display to help you actively deal with the problem? Write these down in the fourth circle.

Step 7: Plan: Is there a current challenge you're trying to work through? If so, read through your four circles of support –what can you employ or tweak to support you now? Consider your resilience plan for this specific issue. Or select the supports you want to have at the ready next time something does come up.

Step 8: Action: Consider the order in which to use your different supports: which resource is most feasible to start with? Often the most feasible resource is the smallest step that you can take, such as calling your partner. In your four circles, place the number 1 next to the first resource you will use. Then, continue to number.

Step 9: Reflect: Once you've enacted some of your resilience strategies, spend some time reflecting on how it went. Consider questions like: How was it for you to carry out your resilience plan? Did it help you bounce back from this difficulty? What resources (specific skills/supports/strategies/sagacity) were most helpful to you?

Step 10: Continue to adjust your circles as support as you identify more or determine that some don't work for you. It's important to note that different situations may call for different solutions and to have patience with yourself.

Nature Wander

Duration: 20 - 60min/day



Take in the natural world – at your own pace

Spend time in nature without any music, podcasts, conversation, etc. Just you. No expectations of the time. Just show up with some water and move your body. Take in what you see. Try to be present or let your mind wander, whatever feels good to you.

As you walk, try to notice as many positive things around you as you can. These can be sights, sounds, smells, or other sensations. For example, you could focus on the breathtaking height of a tree you never really noticed before, the intricate architecture of a building on your block, the dance of sunshine off a window or puddle, the smell of grass or flowers, or the way other people look out for each other as they navigate crowded streets. As you notice each of these positive things, acknowledge each one in your mind—don't just let them slip past you. Pause for a moment as you hear or see each thing and make sure it registers with your conscious awareness, really take it in.

Gratitude Exercise

Duration: 5min/day

Take note of what you are grateful for at the start of each day

Gratitude is a practice that you can intentionally build each day. Start your day with gratitude. When your eyes open in the morning, take a moment to bring your awareness to your body and answer the question: “What are 3 things I’m grateful for today?”

If it supports your reflection and gratitude practice, you may choose to write these down.

Share your Building Resilience experience!

We'd love to hear how you're using these exercises.

Scan the QR code.

Or head to bit.ly/29thGiftofResilience to tell us all about it.

