

CULTIVATING SELF-CARE THROUGH RESILIENCE

By Pierre Zimmerman

All of us can feel the impact of these uncertain times in our hearts and central nervous systems. While there are several parts of our current crises that we cannot control, it doesn't mean we are powerless. Resilience is the key to dealing with crises and navigating life in times of upheaval and divisions. With mindfulness and compassion, we can become more resilient and carve out new pathways in our brain with greater clarity and courage through practice. There are several steps to face difficult emotions, re-center, and find calm in the midst of a storm.

With meditation, we welcome and acknowledge our emotions, we don't ignore or suppress them. They have a limited time span, maybe thirty to ninety seconds. "We name them to tame them," with an attitude of kindness and curiosity. This allows the body to physiologically calm down, and puts the brakes on reactivity, regulating the nervous system, and allowing us to see clearly. All emotions have a signature in the body.

Instead of judging, shaming and criticizing ourselves, remember that this will pass over time, becoming more manageable. Self-judgment shuts down the learning centers in the brain and inhibits our ability to heal, change and grow. The willingness to face our suffering takes courage, and with self-compassion, we grow from our struggles and sorrow. Recognizing our shared humanity, we realize that we are all in this together.

In addition, we can recall and practice the following suggestions:

- Develop a core set of beliefs that nothing and no one can shake.
- Try to find meaning in whatever stressful phenomena has surfaced in your life.
- Try to maintain a wholesome vision and focus on what brings vividness and aliveness.
- Reach for support from strong and grounded beings when things go haywire.
- Don't run from things that scare you; face them and explore ways to replace them.
- Learn new things as often as you can.
- Be aware of what makes you uniquely strong & special and own it.

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