

9 Ways to Increase Your Mental Resiliency

by Jan Carley

Are you feeling mentally drained? Building the critical skill of mental resiliency will help you restore, reboot and flourish during these challenging times. I like to think of Resiliency as a Bank Account – our RBA (Resiliency Bank Account). In a proactive way we must ensure we make deposits to our RBA on an ongoing basis. That way, it will always have a healthy balance and we can make a withdrawal whenever we need to. Here are 9 of my favourite ways to fill my RBA.

1/ CREATE SILENT SPACE DAILY

Take 5, 10, 15 minutes – whatever you can manage - to gather yourself in silence. It's a way of giving yourself the restorative gift of "presence" – of simply being. Perhaps the only place you can do that is in your morning shower. Ok! Or maybe it is while in the car by yourself – turn off the radio/music and enjoy the silence.

PRO-TIP: Use Deepak Chopra's STOP acronym for a simple way to help you get fully present- right here, right now.

S - Stop

T - Take a few deep breaths

O - Observe Your Body and Emotions

P - Proceed with Love and Kindness

2/ HARNESS THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

Being grateful is potentially the easiest and quickest way you can add to your RBA. Gratitude boosts production of the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin which help your neurons travel more easily to the feel-good centers of the brain. Gratitude expands - the more gratitude you have, the more you have to be grateful for. Notice the small things in your life and bless them daily. Look around you to enjoy the wonder of your environment, the smile of your grandchild, the laughter of your friends, the colors of the sunset.

PRO-TIPS: Do a Nightly Gratitude "Sign-Off" – Write down 5 things that you are grateful for last thing before you turn off your lights for the night. Those thoughts will amplify overnight and help kick-start your next day.

Gratitude Wake-Up: Upon waking, take 30 seconds to think about what you are grateful for. Perhaps that you are alive! Begin the day in gratitude.

3/ FLIP YOUR FOCUS

Though we may not be able to change the circumstances, we can choose how to think about the situation and where to put our mental focus. We can shift our thought defaults from crippling paralyzers to ones that serve us by remembering 2 words: *Flip It!* When you are stuck in scarcity thinking, focused on a problem, a negative, or a worry - simply flip your focus to what you DO want – your desired state – what you want to think and feel. Your brain then starts firing on the possibilities of how to get there. FLIP IT and you will instantly shift from a reactive to creative state, from stuck to possibility.

4/ EMBRACE POSITIVITY

A practice of positive thinking will lead you to positive generative action. Positive thinking is not about pretending everything is all sugar and roses. It's about looking at the present situation and life objectively and then, making the choice to focus on what you can do to create positive change in your life rather than dwelling on the negative or on things outside your control.

PRO-TIP: Create conversational and social media boundaries. What are the positive influences in your life? What makes you feel good to read about, talk about, think about? It may be time to step away from the search bar... Or perhaps step away from conversations that are not serving you. You can control what you pay attention to.

5/ ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR DAILY SMALL COMFORTS

Give yourself some daily consistency that is immovable - something you can count on for sure. Whether it's a morning ritual of corn flakes and milk or an evening ritual of a bubble bath, having some routine 'small comforts' give you a sense of structure and control and add to your RBA. Acknowledge your Daily Small comforts and embrace them as powerful tools to strengthen your mental resiliency.

6/ PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

This is a big one – make self-compassion an integral and non-negotiable part of your life. What might happen if you gave yourself the same kindness, and compassion you give to those around you? If a friend called you up and said "Hey, I am struggling right now" – what would you say and do? Support yourself in the same caring way you support your friends and loved ones.

7/ CREATE SMALL CONTROL PROJECTS

Add to your RBA by taking control for a moment. Intentionally choose one small thing – perhaps something mundane - that has a clear start and finish and shows result. (e.g., / clean out a junk cupboard, file a stack of papers, sort your sock drawer, take out the recycling). You'll feel an instant mental lift.

8/ SPREAD HAPPINESS

Here is where you get proactive. A smile or a kind word to someone else takes attention away from self and can instantly make you feel better (and someone else too!) Whose life could you intentionally change for the better? Be liberal with your smiles, your acknowledgments, your thank yous. That energy returns to you and fills up your bank.

9/TAKE A MENTAL TIME OUT

It is always OK to take a break. Go back to #1 and STOP for a few minutes. Breathe and reconnect with the present moment.