

## The Power of Resilience and How It Intersects with Emotional Intelligence

“Resilience is knowing that you are the only one that has the power and the responsibility to pick yourself up.” — Mary Holloway

Adversity is inevitable if you are living on this planet, breathing air.

We face challenges, setbacks, and moments that test our strength. Some people seem to bounce back quickly, while others struggle to find their footing.

What separates the two?

It's not luck—it's resilience. And resilience isn't just a quality you're born with; **it's a skill you can build** and when it's intricately linked to emotional intelligence, resilience empowers you to navigate life's difficulties, adapt, and ultimately, thrive.

### **Resilience and Emotional Intelligence: Two Sides of the Same Coin**

Resilience and emotional intelligence (EQ) work hand in hand.

Emotional intelligence is your ability to **perceive, understand, and manage emotions**—both your own and others'.

Resilience, meanwhile, is **the ability to recover** from challenges. These two traits reinforce each other, allowing you to face adversity with greater strength and flexibility.

According to research from the American Psychological Association, emotionally intelligent individuals are more resilient because they can:

1. **Perceive emotions:** They recognize how they feel during stressful situations, and this awareness gives them the tools to address those feelings before they become overwhelming.
2. **Regulate emotions:** Instead of letting emotions control them, they manage and respond to distress with positive attitudes and effective coping skills. This emotional regulation is essential for building resilience.
3. **Build a community and support system:** We need each other. As iron sharpens iron, so does one person sharpen another.

## **Resilience Is a Skill, Not Just a Trait**

We often hear that someone is "resilient," as though it's an inherent trait they were born with.

But resilience is not something you either have or don't have—it's a skill. And like any skill, it can be developed through training, practice, and feedback. When you actively work to increase your emotional intelligence, you're simultaneously building your resilience.

## **Practical Steps to Build Resilience and Emotional Intelligence**

### **1. Develop Self-Awareness**

Self-awareness is the cornerstone of both emotional intelligence and resilience. It involves recognizing your emotions, understanding their sources, and identifying how they influence your behavior. When you're aware of your triggers, you're better equipped to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively.

- How to build it: Practice mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or journaling, to regularly check in with your emotions. Start each day with a simple question: What am I feeling right now, and why?

## 2. Practice Emotional Regulation

Once you're aware of your emotions, the next step is learning to regulate them. Emotional regulation means not letting emotions dictate your actions—especially in stressful situations. It's the ability to stay calm, keep perspective, and choose how to respond.

- How to build it: When you feel stressed, take a moment to pause before reacting. Focus on breathing deeply, which can physiologically reduce stress levels, and ask yourself how you can respond constructively. Cognitive reframing—looking at the situation from a different, more positive perspective—is a great tool for emotional regulation.

## 3. Cultivate a Growth Mindset

According to research by psychologist Carol Dweck, individuals with a growth mindset—believing that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work—are more resilient. They see failures and challenges not as personal shortcomings but as opportunities to grow.

- How to build it: When faced with a setback, consciously reframe your inner dialogue. Instead of saying, “I can't do this,” say, “I can't do this yet.” This small shift in language fosters resilience by encouraging persistence and adaptability.

## 4. Build Strong Relationships

A support network of trusted friends, family, or colleagues provides emotional safety and encouragement. Studies have shown that resilient people are more likely to seek help when they need it, leaning on their relationships during difficult times.

- How to build it: Invest in your relationships. Reach out regularly, offer support to others, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you're struggling. A well-tended support system is crucial for bouncing back from adversity.

While there are well-known strategies to build resilience, there are also some lesser-known, yet highly effective methods. These approaches may not be the first that come to mind, but they can offer profound growth.

### 1. Practice Stoicism

Stoicism, an ancient philosophy, teaches that while you can't control external events, you can control your response to them. This practice involves learning to accept things as they are and focusing your energy on what you can control. Stoicism builds emotional resilience by promoting emotional regulation and detachment from outcomes.

- How to build it: Begin by practicing the Stoic idea of premeditatio malorum—anticipating challenges before they happen. By mentally preparing for setbacks, you reduce their emotional impact when they arise.

## 2. Cold Exposure (Wim Hof Method)

Cold exposure might seem unrelated to resilience, but research on the Wim Hof Method shows that regularly subjecting yourself to cold (like cold showers or ice baths) can train your body and mind to handle stress more effectively. This form of controlled stress builds your ability to endure discomfort—enhancing both physical and emotional resilience.

- How to build it: Start with cold showers. Begin with 30 seconds at the end of your regular shower and gradually increase the time. The key is staying calm and breathing deeply through the discomfort, which helps regulate emotional responses to stress.

## 3. Embrace Creative Expression

Art, music, and writing are often overlooked as tools for resilience. Creative activities provide a safe space to explore and express emotions, offering a healthy outlet for processing difficult experiences.

- How to build it: Make time for a creative hobby, whether it's painting, playing an instrument, or writing. These activities allow you to process emotions constructively, helping to regulate your mood and strengthen your emotional intelligence.

## Habits to Support Resilience and Emotional Intelligence

Developing resilience and emotional intelligence is not a one-time effort—it's a lifelong journey. Here are some habits that can consistently support your growth:

- Daily Reflection: Take a few minutes each evening to reflect on your day. What emotional challenges did you face? How did you respond? What could you improve next time?

- Gratitude Practice: Cultivating gratitude can shift your perspective from what's going wrong to what's going right, enhancing emotional regulation and resilience.

- Physical Activity: Regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance emotional resilience. Even a daily walk can make a difference.

- Sleep Hygiene: Quality sleep is essential for emotional regulation. Prioritize sleep by creating a routine that supports consistent rest.

Resilience and emotional intelligence are not reserved for a select few—they are skills that anyone can build through intentional effort and practice.

By cultivating self-awareness, regulating your emotions, embracing challenges, and developing healthy habits, you can not only endure life's hardships but grow stronger because of them. As this quote reminds us, the power to bounce back lies within each of us:

**"Resilience is knowing that you are the only one that has the power and the responsibility to pick yourself up."**

Mary  
Holloway