

Bounce Back: Handling Life's Lumps and Bumps

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Have you had days when you thought a breeze would blow you over? You were feeling dis-stressed, depressed or plain worn out. We can bounce back more easily when we have developed some everyday grit or resilience. The end result of building resilience is that we have increased strength, skills and adaptability to handle life's pains, strains and challenges. We are able to bounce back.

As pastor and author, Gordon MacDonald, states in *A Resilient Life*, "Developing resilience is demanding, mostly done in secret, often humbling, not always fun." Like MacDonald I have become a student of resilience. Unlike MacDonald I believe that fun may be an important part of becoming a tougher cookie. Keep posted as I am developing a keynote that will help people at work and home to develop the ability to **bounce back**. Here are *three Cs to resiliency* to consider:

1. Care for your body. Eat, sleep and exercise. Thousands of dollars are spent on telling us how to do these three life survival basics.

- Eat sensibly with minimal white sugar, flour, salt and process foods. Translation: Eat more vegetables, fruits, protein (meat, nuts, beans, legumes and dairy products) and whole grains and eat less junk food. I'm not a dietician but, hey, I can see my mother's wagging finger when I reach for a bag of potato chips.
- Sleep deprivation causes accidents, miscommunication, illness and an unnecessarily ugly face. Look at my article at <http://www.lightheartedconcepts.com/pdf/Night%20Sleep%20Tight.pdf> for tips on getting a good night's sleep.
- Find the kind of exercise that works for you, your life style and body. Walking is always a healthy alternative and we're talking further than the yellow pages. A minimum of 20 minutes three times a week is recommended.

2. Change your critical self talk. If we indeed have between fifty and sixty thousand thoughts a day in our head, we had better be aware of the most damaging and the most empowering. Then increase the latter.

- Journal your thoughts, your conversations and dreams. Look back in a couple days with a detective's eye.
- See a professional if you can't get the nasty put downs in your head controlled and replaced by some supportive self talk. You might be

surprised to discover with an observant therapist just how many thoughts have been tripping you up.

- Learn your strengths and celebrate them. Take Martin Seligman's Signature Strengths Questionnaire at <http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu>

3. Choose your perspective. Develop some habits that provide a realistic and sometimes needed optimistic viewpoint.

- Know what you value and live accordingly. Values range from freedom to family, from contemplation to merriment, from culture to nature, from honesty to kindness, from order to creative chaos.
- Hang around supportive and caring people. Trade in the old ones if necessary. New thoughts may require new pals.
- Hum tunes that cheer you. Eliminate the ones that depress.
- Laugh at the absurdities. We can often catch ourselves stressing over trying to change unchangeable circumstances, places or people. Give up on Aunt Ethel's smoking. Her addiction is for her to take on or not.
- Before going to sleep each night think of three or more reasons to feel grateful.

What really is this concept of resiliency at work and home? It's the ability to adapt, to learn and carry on after the inevitable set backs of daily living. I'm reminded of what Stephen Covey said at a recent seminar focused on his new book, *The 8th Habit*, "You are the creative force for your life!" Use that force well so when the going gets tough you can *bounce back*.

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