Positive Psychology and Building Resilience
How Focusing on Strengths and Positive Emotions Can Make You Stronger
“Resilience, the developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity...is arguably the most important positive resource to navigating a turbulent and stressful workplace.” [1]

7 Characteristics of Highly Resilient People

1. Presence of calm, innovative, non-dogmatic thinking
2. Decisive action (Courage: not afraid to fail)
3. Tenacity
4. Interpersonal connectedness and support (may be single most important predictor)
5. Honesty
6. Self-discipline and self-control
7. Optimism and a positive perspective on life [2]

“The aim of Positive Psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation with only repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life.” [3] – Martin Seligman, Ph.D.

“A pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energising to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development, and performance.” [4]

Virtues and Strengths

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Strengths and Resilience

- Utilizing your strengths activates personal resources that are already present.[5]
- Developing and maximizing personal strengths builds self-confidence and self-efficacy [6]
- Recognizing and synergizing strengths with others builds personal and organizational resilience. [7]

“People experiencing positive affect show patterns of thought that are notably flexible, creative, integrative, open to information and efficient. In general terms, positive affect produces a broad, flexible cognitive organization and ability to integrate diverse material.” [8]

Positive Emotions & Resilience

- Broadens our perspective and builds enduring personal resources [9]
- Facilitates “approach behavior” that prompt individuals to positively engage with others [10]
- Positive emotions “undo” negative emotions [11]
- Facilitates faster recovery from adversity [12]
- Helps develop greater tenacity at work [13]

11. Ibid
12. Ibid
Training for Resilience

1. **Self-Awareness**: Identifying counterproductive thoughts, emotions and behavioral patterns.
2. **Self-regulation**: Develop the ability to delay acting on negative impulses: Stop! Relax. Breathe. Reflect.
3. **Focus on the positive**, develop optimism. Challenge counterproductive beliefs.
4. **Mental agility**: flexibility and openness in thinking.
5. **Focus on strengths** to overcome challenges
6. **Connection**: building strong relationships through positive, effective communication. [14]

In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life.

– Albert Bandura