

CULTIVATING RESILIENCE

A new year. A new job. A new car. A new baby. A new manager. The year 2017 may bring all or none of these disruptions for you. If it does bring some of them, then to be prepared for these changes, in what Malcolm Turnbull has called our agile and innovative nation, we need to be strong and resilient.

At the beginning of each new year, we often spend time assessing our goals. Making changes is easier in Australia because the weather is warm and we have that post-Christmas glow after holidays and having connected with family and friends. That base of emotional and physical wellbeing makes decision-making easier and better. We all know that we have occasionally made bad decisions when we are under stress or just plain overtired.

When I was a young teacher, I recognised that some of my students from challenging family situations were inherently resilient. But current research clearly indicates that resilience can be taught – and also self-taught.

Last November, I had the pleasure of attending a free ALIA careers workshop. Anne Rundle, Manager of Culture and Life Long Learning for Adelaide City Council, spoke at

the session about the introduction of resilience training for all council staff.

She told us that in 2013, Professor Martin Seligman, the founder of positive psychology and a former president of the American Psychological Association, was Thinker in Residence in South Australia. Seligman proposed that we systematically measure and build wellbeing across the entire society to improve the resilience of the population in a rapidly changing world and to reduce the number of people experiencing mental illness.

Dr Seligman's PERMA+ principles are used across military, council and commercial organisations to build strong and resilient people. They incorporate

- Positive Emotion
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment
- plus physical activity, nutrition, sleep and optimism.

Staying resilient in periods of disruption is particularly important because

- resilience combines mental, emotional, and physical skills to generate optimal performance, promote healing after injury, and assist in managing life at work and at home
- resilient individuals are better able to bounce back and overcome adversity by leveraging mental and emotional skills and behaviour by seeking out training
- resilience can be built, maintained and strengthened.

Your toolkit of coping strategies enable you to deal with stress and maintain a sense of control in your life. You could take time out to relax, exercise, meditate or enrol in a course of study (Have you enrolled in the ALIA PD Scheme?). You can also deal with stress by breaking challenges down into smaller goals and keeping a journal. So spend some time building your own resilience at the start of 2017 and plan a healthy, balanced life for yourself that will also benefit your colleagues, friends and family.

I'll be trying to do the same. 🌟

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Useful websites
beyondblue.org.au
wellbeingandresilience.com/perma-plus-1

