



## SEPTEMBER 2016 THE BIG STUFF

Perhaps it is the 15th anniversary of 9/11 or simply my age, but it seems like a lot of big stuff is happening lately. Unexpected big stuff – untimely deaths, friends battling serious illness, the first hurricane to strike our area in 11 years. It has been a bit of a roller coaster ride. I was briefly leveled by a few of these recent setbacks. That rarely happens to me. I work every day at creating the capacity to deal with whatever life throws at me. Recently, it took me longer to bounce back. It led me to revisit a few stress management techniques.

The ability to recover from adversity is called resilience or resiliency. Psychologists note that resilient people share several traits. These include optimism, positivity, emotional regulation, and a knack for re-framing failure as opportunity for learning and growth. Even if we are born with less than sunny dispositions or a lack of self-confidence, we can become hardier with practice and intention. My years of studying workplace stress have taught me that there are lifestyle practices that contribute to resilience. Attentiveness to our diets, regular exercise and consistent rest all contribute to our ability to bounce back.

In my experience, people under stress default to one of three tendencies – they feel, think or act their way out. Regardless of your personal tendency, you can benefit from adopting any one of these resilience-building practices. I caution you to adopt only one at a time. We know that taking on one small modification and practicing it successfully over time leads to stress hardiness. Lifestyle revolution causes more stress than it relieves.



- Take a series of deep breaths.
- Take a nap.
- Take a 20 minute walk - outside if possible.
- Write down three things that went well today - no matter how small.
- Read the funnies.
- Call a trusted friend and vent.
- Jam to some head-slaming rock music.
- Take a drive.
- Window shop.
- Workout, hard.
- Ask someone for a different perspective.
- Help somebody.



**the supplement**  
FACILITATING VITALITY

## DAILY RESILIENCE-BUILDING PRACTICES



### ACTING YOUR WAY OUT

- Drink eight glasses of water.
- Eat fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Stop drinking caffeinated beverages at mid-day.
- Shoot for 7-8 hours of sleep per night.
- Get 30 minutes of moderate exercise every day.
- Get the occasional bout of intense exercise.
- Keep a food diary.
- Wear an activity tracker.
- Limit your alcohol consumption to red wine with dinner.

### THINKING YOUR WAY OUT

- Write down three things that went well.
- Count your blessings.
- Review your accomplishments.
- Learn something new.
- Re-frame perceived failure.
- Ask for a different perspective.

### FEELING YOUR WAY OUT

- Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings - both good and bad.
- Revisit the good times by looking at photos.
- Go to a funny movie.
- Listen to a comedy channel.
- Help someone less fortunate than you.
- Get together with someone you know well.
- Practice The Open Heart Meditation.

Barbara Fredrickson, PhD, one of the gurus of positive psychology, is the force behind The Open Heart Meditation. This is a simple meditation that when practiced daily can decelerate aging, broaden your thinking and build your resilience.

Spend five minutes of every day for the next three weeks pondering something, someone, some place for which you feel heartfelt love. This small investment can literally change your life. The subject of my open heart meditation is my dog, Dolly. For Dolly every day is a new chance to play. Her interests include squirrels, lizards, and daily swims. Serenity for Dolly is a nap in the sun after chasing squirrels, lizards and daily swims. None of it ever gets boring. It is brand new and wonderful each and every time. Dolly embodies resilience.



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 18 years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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