



# Resilience

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION: RESILIENCE

Resilience helps you through the challenges in life; it allows you to bounce back from stressful situations and also reduces the initial impact of stress. But resilience is not something that you either “have” or “don’t have”.

*Resilience is about the way you approach situations and can be strengthened in the same way as you strengthen your muscles—through repetition and practice.* Thus, resilience is similar to your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), protecting you from the negative effects of stress.



### 1.1.1 Developing and Maintaining Relationships Using Support From Others

Developing and maintaining positive relationships with others is one of the basic resilience building skills. When you are challenged or stressed it is much easier to respond successfully if you have the support of your family or community of friends and co-workers. Poor communication skills can leave you feeling isolated, making it much more difficult to respond to life’s challenges. You’ll be more effective in your professional mission if you can gain the cooperation of others by learning to resolve conflicts when they arise.

### 1.1.2 Assertiveness in Personal Relationships

**Assertiveness** in your personal relationships allows you to successfully navigate the normal interpersonal problems that are a part of life, whether in personal or professional relationships. Being assertive with others *doesn’t* mean being pushy or aggressive; Assertiveness means standing up for yourself and your rights without feeling guilty. It means taking responsibility for getting your needs met while maintaining respect and consideration for others.

#### 1.1.2.1 Communicating Effectively

The goal of assertive communication in interpersonal relationships is to increase your ability to have as much control over your life as possible in your dealings with other people while at the same time maintaining positive relationships through successful problem solving and good communication.

After a deployment, it may actually seem **more** difficult to communicate requests and replies clearly. Stressful situations, unclear missions, and complicated relationships can lead to problems with effectively communicating what you need, want, and don’t want. Being resilient or able to adapt to stressful or difficult situations requires that you express what you think, feel, or believe in a way that will get you the outcome you need while solving problems and maintaining good relationships. Using assertive communication in relationships involves three skills:

- Accurately communicating how you feel
- Respectfully and effectively communicating what you want or need from others in such a way as to increase the chances that they will comply with your wishes
- Saying “No” effectively in the face of invitations, requests or demands to do things that are not in your best interest.

### 1.1.2.2 Benefits of Assertive Communication

#### **When you are assertive with others, they will respect you for your honesty.**

People will know where you stand, which will make them more likely to take your opinion seriously. As you practice promoting your own wants and needs, you will get more comfortable with the fact that what you want is important. You are respecting yourself by giving your own needs the same consideration that you would give to anyone else's. Resentment comes from unexpressed thoughts and desires and leads to conflict and tension in relationships.

#### **Learning to be direct and set boundaries will help you eliminate resentment.**

As you become more skilled at expressing your true feelings and needs, you may be surprised to learn that assertive behavior actually gets you more of what you need! Finally, assertiveness will make you more resilient in times of high stress. You will be able to effectively make plans with a team, set important goals, and focus on realistic solutions.

### 1.2.2.3 Barriers to Effective Communication

Before you practice assertiveness, it's important to review the degree to which you believe common myths about being assertive. These beliefs can seriously interfere with your ability to use assertiveness in your daily life, even if you have a strong desire to become more assertive; thus, you are less likely to make assertive/ self-care choices. You become more vulnerable to depression and other negative emotions, and feelings of less control over your life. Let's examine some of the common myths, and their counterarguments, associated with being assertive:

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#### ***If I assert (take care of) myself, others will get mad at me.***

- Most people understand that your desire to take care of yourself is reasonable. Others may be annoyed and a few may get mad if you do what's right for you. While nobody enjoys having someone get mad at them, you don't have to like it, only tolerate it. You could even try having some compassion for that person, because they are telling you that they are struggling in life. They are telling you about who they are, not about who you are. Healthy people don't get mad if someone is reasonably taking care of their own needs

#### ***I don't have the right to upset someone by saying "No".***

- It would be more accurate to say that you have a responsibility to avoid the resentment and bad feelings you will experience if you go along with something you really don't want to do. The other person may very well pay for your unwillingness to take care of yourself by having to deal with your resentment, anger, withdrawal or other passive-aggressive behavior. Is that fair to them?

#### ***If I take care of myself and turn down a request, I will be viewed as selfish.***

- Other people tend to view self-care as reasonable. You may be the only one who thinks it is selfish. It is more accurate to think in terms of "self-care". Next time you think in terms of "selfish", substitute the idea of healthy "self-care."
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### 1.1.2.3 Barriers to Effective Communication (cont.)

***If I let someone know how I feel or that I don't understand something, I'll look stupid.***

- People with strong self-esteem have no trouble asking questions. It's actually viewed by others as a sign of a personal strength. Leaders or high status individuals within a group are usually the ones who ask the most questions.

***Expressing my opinion makes me look like a know-it-all.***

- The reality is that it's really unfair to others to keep your objective beliefs or knowledge about a situation to yourself. You may have something to offer that could help and by keeping it to yourself, you do everybody a disservice.

*People who care about me should know what I want or how I feel.* It's a nice surprise when people read us accurately and do something for us without our asking. However, people are actually terrible mind-readers. Everyone is different, with unique thoughts and needs. So, start with the assumption that you'll always have to ask for what you want, and consider it a nice gift on the rare occasion people figure it out on their own. The fact that you can figure out what people want better than others doesn't mean that you care for them more, or that they care for you less.

***If I ask for something, people will more than likely be resentful even if they go along.***

- The truth is that people who are resilient understand how healthy taking care of oneself actually is. They can say "No" when necessary. They don't agree to do things they don't want to do. If they do go along with a request to do something, they will do it happily or at least without resentment. *Only people who can say "No" can be believed when they say "Yes."*

***Other peoples' feelings and rights are more important than mine.***

- This is false modesty. For those who are spiritual, this goes against the wisdom of every spiritual tradition in the world; in one way or another each spiritual tradition acknowledges that we are all of equal value.

***People don't want to hear it if I feel bad or am upset; it's best to keep it to myself.***

- How would you feel if the people you cared about didn't allow you to be there for them or comfort them when they felt bad? It feels positive to be available to meet the needs of others and your friends and loved ones would like to return that same level of care and compassion to support your needs.

### 1.1.2.4 Assertive Efforts to Influence the Behavior of Others

The most basic truth with regard to influencing the behavior of others is this: **If you don't tell others what you actually want, you probably won't get it.** This concept leads directly to these basics of assertive behavior:

- Communicate what you want or expect from the other person
- Communicate how you feel

This having been said, there are two major misconceptions about efforts to use assertive behavior to influence the behavior of others:

- The belief that if our assertive communication is sufficiently skillful, people will respond in the way we would like them to.
- The belief that if others don't respond positively to our assertive efforts, we have somehow delivered our message in an unskilled manner.

***What is actually true is that influencing the behavior of other people is extremely difficult.***

Assertive skills are designed to increase your success rate of influencing the behavior of others; however, even the most skilled assertive behavior on your part *does not guarantee success* in getting someone to do as you ask or in successfully solving interpersonal problems.





### 1.1.2.5 Maintaining Control over Your Own Behavior: Saying “No” to Invitations, Requests, and Demands

The term “invitation” includes all requests or demands that others make of you. When something is an invitation, it makes it clear that you have a choice and you can choose to accept or decline. Declining invitations (saying “No” when you don’t want to do something) does not require that you influence the behavior of others; you only have to maintain control over your own behavior.

#### Saying “No” Nicely

An assertive response doesn’t have to be rude, curt, or unpleasant. As a matter of fact, the more confidence you have in yourself the easier it is to be polite and firm. This can be done by reminding others and yourself of the need for self-care. Also, remind yourself that people are capable of coping with a little disappointment in their lives.

#### The Many Ways to Say “No”:

Memorize these five statements. They tend to be useful in almost any situation you will encounter where you would like to decline an invitation. These aren’t the only ways to say “No,” of course, but it’s a good place to start.

- “I’m sorry, but I really have too much on my plate right now.”
- “Normally, I’d love to help, but I’ve promised myself I’m going to limit my commitments for the time being.”
- “Thanks for asking, but I really need to focus on my personal life right now. I’ve been feeling a little overwhelmed”.
- “I’d like to help you but I really have to stand my ground on this.”
- “No, I’m afraid I won’t be able to help with that.”

#### *Here are some additional pointers for making your request or saying no:*

- **Use assertive nonverbal behavior by keeping good posture.**
- **Keep steady eye contact, and limit your hand gestures so that you don’t seem aggressive.**
- **Make your request quick and clear.** Only ask for one thing; don’t ask for many things at once and risk confusing the issue. You should be able to make a request in one sentence.
- **Ask for something specific.** Don’t leave anything up to the other person to magically understand what you mean or want. Instead of saying “I want you to come home earlier from work,” say “I’d like for you to be home by 7 p.m. so that you can eat dinner with us.”
- **Speak from your own perspective.** Use “I” sentences to show the other person that you are taking responsibility for your request. Don’t try to suggest that other people or the whole world believe that what you’re asking for is reasonable. Avoid using “you” statements – they sound like accusations and put other people on the defensive.
- **Don’t apologize for your request or denial.** Instead of saying “I know you’re incredibly busy and I am sorry for the imposition, but could you drive me to the airport?” Just say “I was wondering if you would be available to drive me to the airport Thursday morning?”
- **Don’t demand things from other people or guilt them into doing what you want.** Make a request, accept their response, and move on. Be polite.
- **You may have to repeat yourself a few times so that the other person hears you.** If you say “no” and they continue to try and convince you to change your mind, you should just repeat your answer calmly, but firmly, so they hear the message.

### 1.1.2.6 Prepare For Disappointment (Theirs, Not Yours!)

No matter how nice you are, when you decline an invitation you are going to disappoint the asking party. This can hamper assertive behavior as most of us don't want to be the cause of discomfort. So, many times we agree to things that make *us* uncomfortable rather than have the other person cope with their disappointment.

### 1.1.2.7 The Challenge to Change Your Mind

You will need to anticipate that people will try to get you to change your mind or challenge your decision. Therefore, it is good measure to be prepared in advance:

**Be ready.** The first rule for saying "No" is to be ready for the challenge to your decision. It will come in almost every case, so having a plan to deal with it is very important.

**Be aware of "Why not?" questions.** These are actually not questions at all but statements challenging your right to say "No." Since they are not really questions, they don't deserve or require an answer.

"No, I'm not going to be able to help you with that today."  
"Why not? It will only take an hour or two."

**Avoid giving reasons or excuses for declining the other person's invitation.**

When you give a reason for saying "No" you open the way for an argument or for continued discussion.

"I'm not going to be able to do that on Friday, I have another appointment."  
"OK, so how about Saturday?"

**Practice listening carefully for the many ways your "No" can be ignored.**

This frequently happens in sales or marketing situations. All sales people are trained to deal with a "No" answer by going to "Plan B" which often is to ask you for a reason for your answer or to simply ignore you and continue with a sales pitch.

**Practice being a "broken record."** Using a "broken record" strategy, you keep repeating your point in a calm, pleasant voice. Avoid every invitation to provide a reason for your answer or to enter into an argument or discussion. Simply repeat your point until the other person is clear that you will not change your mind.

**Memorize a final assertive response.** This statement is very effective when your "No" is ignored or when someone asks you to justify your answer with "Why not?".

"I've said 'No' as nicely as I know how. I'm going to have to ask you to respect my answer. Can you do that?"

**How many times do you say "Yes" when you really want to say "No" ?**

Our ability to maintain control over our own behavior is infinitely easier (at least in theory) than our ability to influence the behavior of others. Setting limits with other people or saying "No" to their invitations, requests, or demands is probably the most effective thing you can do to gain a feeling of control over your life as you interact with others.

*Self-care requires us to tolerate discomfort in another person.*

**This doesn't mean we have to like discomfort but we must be able to tolerate it by believing that others will be able to cope.**

### 1.1.2.8 Non-Assertive Efforts to Influence the Behavior of Others

In order to become an assertive communicator, it is important to learn about the different styles of communication. There are **five communication styles** that people use when they interact with others. While it's not recommended to use any of the non-assertive communication styles, sometimes it is easiest to learn about what something is by looking at what it is not. Let's take a closer look at the following non-assertive communication styles:

#### 1. Passive    2. Aggressive    3. Passive-aggressive    4. Manipulative    5. Assertive

**1. Passive Behavior** means giving in to other people's wants without expressing what you want or need. Passive behavior is supported by a set of beliefs including:

- I don't deserve to get what I want
- People should know what I want
- It's rude or selfish to ask for what I want
- I'm not a nice person if I say "No" to a reasonable request

People who are passive don't tend to ask for what they want and therefore tend not to get it; therefore their needs are rarely met. When this occurs they become hurt and resentful. Resentment can lead to **passive-aggressive behavior** in which displeasure with others is demonstrated in passive ways (e.g. avoiding eye contact, ignoring others, subtle sabotage, sullenness, procrastination, sarcasm, stubbornness, forgetfulness, etc).

Often, passive people feel guilty for having their own wants or needs. They may appear to be "people pleasers" or strive to make things easy. Or, they may simply wonder if their thoughts, feelings, or needs are wrong, imposing or unfair to others.

**2. Aggressive Behavior** means communicating what you want, need, or deserve in a hostile, demanding, or intimidating way that is insensitive to other people's rights and feelings. This approach puts other people on the defensive, so the only natural thing for them to do is to surrender or fight back – neither of which is a great way to gain trust and cooperation. In the end, aggressive communication may get you what you want, but you're likely to create enemies and unnecessary conflict in the process.

In the moment, an aggressive approach may make you feel powerful, but over time you can become a habitual bully. You might also feel guilty about treating other people this way, or sad that others don't seem interested in being around you. Being angry or feeling like you have been wronged can certainly lead to aggressive responses. Most people behave aggressively because they want to feel powerful or in control of a situation; they're afraid that they won't get what they want any other way.

**3. Passive-Aggressive Behavior** style of communication is a combination of aggressive feelings and passive actions.

***Passive-aggressive behavior shows that the individual is feeling hostile, but they try to hide it to avoid responsibility.***

Instead of talking directly to someone, passive-aggressive behavior might be to spread rumors. Or, instead of doing an undesirable chore, a passive-aggressive person might pretend not to hear the request to finish that chore. It's a sneaky way of saying "I don't like that," or "I don't want to," without saying anything at all.

Usually passive-aggressive behavior is brought on by feelings of anger or being wronged, but not having enough confidence to express those feelings directly. It can make other people feel angry, confused, or resentful because they pick up on hostility but can't identify what the underlying problem is. Your hidden anger can offend others and even lead to loss of respect. People who are passive-aggressive end up feeling resentful because they seldom get their needs met, since they have not communicated their needs clearly. They may also feel guilty for the way they make other people feel.

**4. Manipulative Behavior** is when a person gets what they want by making other people feel bad for them, or making other people feel afraid or guilty. Manipulation allows people to play the victim or the martyr so that others will give them what they want. As long as the other person doesn't know that they've been manipulated, they might feel sympathy or guilt as a result of the manipulation.

Manipulation may get you what you want in the short-term, as long as the people you're manipulating don't realize what is going on. However, the long-term effect is likely resentment and mistrust from others.

### 1.1.2.8 Non-Assertive Efforts to Influence the Behavior of Others (cont.)

**5. Assertive Behavior** requires more than recognizing what your responsibilities are; it also requires that you take ownership and action. Here is a list of personal responsibilities associated with being assertive:

- I have the responsibility to ask for what I want.
- I have the responsibility to say no to requests or demands that I can't meet.
- I have the responsibility to express all of my feelings, positive or negative.
- I have the responsibility to tell others when I've changed my mind.
- I have the responsibility to give myself permission to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
- I have the responsibility to follow my own values and standards.
- I have the responsibility to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe, or it violates my values.
- I have the responsibility to determine my own priorities.
- I have the responsibility to allow others to determine their own behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
- I have the responsibility to require honesty from others.
- I have the responsibility to communicate that I am angry, even to someone I love.
- I have the responsibility to be uniquely myself.
- I have the responsibility to acknowledge when I am scared and say "I'm afraid."
- I have the responsibility to say "I don't know" when I don't know.
- I have the responsibility not to give excuses or justify my behavior if I don't want to.
- I have the responsibility to make decisions based on my own judgment.
- I have the responsibility to meet my own needs for personal space and time.
- I have the responsibility to be playful and frivolous when it's how I feel.
- I have the responsibility to be as healthy as I can, even if I'm healthier than others.
- I have the responsibility to make sure that I'm in a non-abusive environment.
- I have the responsibility to make friends and avoid people I'm not comfortable around.
- I have the responsibility to change and grow.
- I have the responsibility to make sure that my needs and wants are respected by others.
- I have the responsibility to make sure that I am treated with dignity and respect.
- I have the responsibility to make decisions that make me happy.

#### Five Communication Styles

1. passive

2. aggressive

3. passive-  
aggressive

4. manipulative

5. assertive

## 2.1 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In this section you will learn the steps of conflict resolution. This includes identifying the conflict, your thoughts and emotions as well as consequences. You will also learn what steps you need to take if you decide to pursue resolving a conflict.



### 2.1.1 What is Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution is a set of structured guidelines for settling arguments and disagreements between people. The primary goal is to arrive at a solution that's acceptable to everyone involved. Conflicts don't have to have a winner and a loser.

Most conflicts  
can be resolved  
with a  
*win-win* outcome.

Learning effective conflict resolution skills will increase the likelihood that you will be able to solve disputes amicably and reduce the level of stress for all involved. It improves relationships and increases the likelihood that the other person will want to cooperate with you in the future. Even casual relationships or acquaintances can be useful or important to you in ways you may not anticipate, so it's worth putting in the effort to be civil.

**Resolving conflict allows you to give your full attention to the task at hand rather than focusing on the conflict.**

Although working through the steps of the conflict resolution process takes some time and effort, it actually saves you time in the long run. You will not spend time avoiding the other person, undermining the other person's efforts, or recovering from the other person's attempts to undermine what you're doing.

Unresolved conflicts tend to *escalate* until the original cause is overshadowed by resentment that could lead to *violent* confrontation.



This information will help you learn how to work with the other person in the conflict to come to a resolution that's acceptable to both of you.

You'll learn how to state your needs, when to compromise, and when to brainstorm with the other person to find a new way to solve the conflict.

## 2.1.2 Steps of Conflict Resolution

There are 10 steps to conflict resolution and you will learn about each step.

Step 1: Identify the problem or conflict.



Step 2: Identify the thoughts and feelings.



Step 3: Identify the negative consequences of the conflict and the positive consequences of resolving the conflict.



Step 4: Decide whether to pursue a resolution.



Step 5: Set up a time to talk.



Step 6: Present your side of the conflict in assertive and respectful terms.



Step 7: Listen actively and respectfully to the other person's point of view.



Step 8: Negotiate a solution acceptable to everyone.



Step 9: If you can't come to an agreement, make plans to think it over and meet again or to ask a third person to help you reach a fair resolution.



Step 10: Review the progress you've made and thank the other person for meeting with you.

## 2.1.2 Steps of Conflict Resolution (cont.)

### STEP 1: Identify the conflict (cont).

First, you need to be able to objectively define the conflict, how you feel about it, and who it impacts. Many people attempt to solve conflicts without understanding what the dispute was really about. Once you understand the conflict you can decide whether resolving it is something you want to do at this time. Understanding the underlying cause of the conflict will help you define it more clearly. Here are some examples of different types of conflicts:

- **Miscommunication** - What one person says and what another person hears may be two different things. If you and the other person in your conflict have misunderstood each other's words, actions, or motives, then you have a miscommunication conflict.
- **A dispute over role expectations** - One of the most common causes of conflict in both family and work situations. In this type of conflict, one person feels that the other person is not fulfilling their role and responsibilities or is not living up to their end of a bargain.
- **Lack of information or faulty information** - People don't always have their facts straight when they talk or communicate.
- **Unmet emotional or physical needs** - This can make you feel that the situation is unfair and cause anger and conflict with those whom you feel should be meeting those needs.
- **Different value systems, beliefs, or interpretations of events** - You see this in relationships between friends and loved ones, and even between countries, which sometimes results in war.
- **Competition for limited resource** - Food, money, awards, or prizes can be a source of conflict.

### STEP 2: Identify the thoughts and feelings.

Make a point of identifying what you were thinking *and* feeling both during and after the conflict. If you identify that you were particularly upset, it will serve as motivation to solve the problem.

### STEP 3: Identify the consequences.

Identify the negative consequences of the conflict and the positive consequences of resolving it for both you and the other person. Be specific. Also think of the negative consequences for other people who are not involved directly in the conflict. For instance, if there is a conflict between you and your spouse, how are your children impacted? If you have a conflict at work, how are your coworkers affected? If you have a conflict with a friend, how does this impact your relationships with mutual friends?

### STEP 4: Decide whether to pursue a resolution to conflict.

Decide whether you should address the conflict with the other person involved or whether you should just let it go. If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, making an attempt to resolve the conflict may be the best choice:

- Does this conflict still seem like a problem?
- Will the conflict continue to get worse if you don't address it?
- Will you feel resentment if you don't address this conflict?

If you are unsure, take a minute to try and see the conflict from the other person's point of view. Thinking about the other person's viewpoint may or may not change your attitude toward the conflict. But taking time to do this can help you to gain some perspective of the situation and help you to negotiate more effectively with the other person.

#### Ten Steps For Conflict Resolution

1. ID conflict

2. ID thoughts and feelings

3. ID consequences

4. Decide to pursue conflict resolution

5. Set up time to talk

6. Present your concerns

7. Listen to other's point of view.

8. Negotiate a solution

9. Be persistent

10. Review progress

## 2.1.2 Steps of Conflict Resolution (cont.)

### STEP 5: Set up a time to talk.

Don't just jump into a conversation with the other person. Give them some time to prepare. If the other person doesn't have sufficient time or attention to devote to it right then, the process will not go smoothly.

Try to think of a time when neither of you will be tired, stressed out, nor preoccupied with other tasks. Try to pick a location that's neutral ground, for instance a coffee shop or a park, and where you will not be interrupted. Remember, you need to agree on the location and time of the meeting, so it's best to come up with a few alternatives. Do not be confrontational or aggressive, but be assertive about the need to meet. Finally, if you've overreacted or acted unfairly, be prepared to offer a sincere apology (even if the other person overreacted as well). Genuinely owning up to things when you've made a mistake is a mark of resilience.

It's also wise to problem solve and plan ahead: what will you say if the other person refused to meet with you or if they insist on talking about it on the spot? If they want to talk immediately ask yourself, "is there time to talk at the present moment without distraction?" and "Is the other person calm enough to talk productively?" If the answer to both questions is 'yes,' and you feel prepared to talk, then you should go ahead and find a place to sit down and talk. If you answer 'no' to either of these questions, you should suggest meeting at a later time.

If the other person says something like "I've got nothing to say to you," try one of the following:

- Make sure that if you owe an apology you have given one in a sincere tone
- Go over the negative consequences of maintaining the conflict and the positive consequences of resolving the conflict.
- Remind the other person that resolving the conflict is important and will make both of you feel better
- If the other person still refuses to meet, suggest that you'll check in with them in a few days. Be sure to follow up.
- The other person may feel that they need to reject you the first time you try to approach them in order to save face. Be persistent. Check in after a few days to suggest getting together.

Once the other person has agreed to meet with you it's important to make sure that the meeting has a chance of being productive. By gently, yet assertively, showing the other person that you're willing to put in the energy to work on resolving the problem—no matter what their emotional reaction—you'll give your conflict negotiations a better chance to succeed.

### STEP 6: Present your concerns.

Once a time has been set, be prepared to let the other person know what you believe to be the problem and how it makes you feel.

- Give the other person a chance to respond.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand something.
- Find something in what the other person is saying to agree with, even if it's something very small.
- Respect their viewpoint and opinion, even if you don't agree with it.
- Pay attention to what they are saying.
- Give nonverbal feedback, such as nodding, to indicate you're listening.

#### Ten Steps For Conflict Resolution

1. ID conflict

2. ID thoughts and feelings

3. ID consequences

4. Decide to pursue conflict resolution

5. Set up time to talk

6. Present your concerns

7. Listen to other's point of view.

8. Negotiate a solution

9. Be persistent

10. Review progress



### STEP 7: Listen to the Other's Point of View

Once you've stated your case assertively, listen carefully to the other person's response. Don't get angry if they voice complaints and requests of their own. Active listening involves making eye contact and giving other indications that you're hearing the other person. Here are some simple indications that you are listening:

- Give the other person a chance to respond.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Respect their viewpoint and opinion, even if you don't agree with it.
- Pay attention to what they are saying.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand something.
- Give nonverbal feedback, such as nodding, to indicate you're listening.
- Find something in what the other person is saying to agree with, even if it's something very small.

#### QUICK TIPS FOR HANDLING SOMEONE'S ANGER, SILENCE OR TEARS DURING CONFLICT:

**Anger:** It is not effective to respond to anger with anger. Instead, use an assertive, but respectful, tone and practice active listening. This will make clear that you won't be drawn into an argument. Suggest a short "time out" to cool down (e.g. "I can see this is upsetting to you. Why don't we take a few minutes to cool down and then meet back here? This is important and I really want to hear more about your side of things."). Research shows that a 20 minute time out is enough to allow anger to subside.

**Silence:** If someone won't talk to you after you've invited them to share their perspective, do not respond with anger. Continuing to use an assertive but respectful input is important to you. Remind the other person of the consequences of maintaining the conflict. Here's one possible response you can use to silence: "I understand that you're not eager to talk about this. But this problem has consequences beyond our personal feelings. (List the consequences). This is important and I really want to hear your side of things."

**Crying:** Some people use crying to manipulate a situation when they feel like they've lost control. Other people cry because they're genuinely upset. Because it's often hard to discriminate, continue to use an assertive but respectful tone. Offer to get the person a tissue or a glass of water. Here's one possible response you can use to crying: "I can see this is upsetting to you. Would you like to take a few minutes to get composed and then I'll meet you back here? This is important and I really want to hear more about your side of things."

### STEP 8: Negotiate a solution.

Typical business negotiations include bargaining on both sides. It's common to start out by asking for more than you actually expect to get and then try to wrangle as many concessions as possible from the other side. However, when you're negotiating a solution to a problem between two people, your goal isn't to try to get as much as possible from the other person; your goal is for both sides to get their reasonable needs met.

Negotiating a solution may involve making compromises or jointly brainstorming solutions that had not previously been on the table. The goal is to try to reach a solution in such a way that no one feels like they "lost" in the process. It may take more than one session to solve the conflict. If so, it's important to set a time to meet again or to agree to ask a third person to help you settle things. Finally, you need to review the progress you've made and thank the other person for meeting with you, even if you didn't get everything you wanted from that meeting. This increases the chances you will be able to negotiate successfully with this person in the future.

#### Ten Steps For Conflict Resolution

1. ID conflict

2. ID thoughts and feelings

3. ID consequences

4. Decide to pursue conflict resolution

5. Set up time to talk

6. Present your concerns

7. Listen to other's point of view.

8. Negotiate a solution

9. Be persistent

10. Review progress

## 3.1 PERSONAL QUALITIES

Strengthening your personal qualities – including realistic thinking, optimism, and personal values – allow you to feel more in control of your life. Resilience is also supported by developing strong connections with others through gratitude, forgiveness, and generosity. Practicing these personal qualities on a daily basis reduces negative emotions such as anger and resentment, which themselves are internal stressors. Research has demonstrated that integrating these personal qualities into everyday life even improves immune functioning.



But what if you didn't know you were viewing the world through a distorted lens? You would believe the purple world you saw was actually purple! Think how difficult life would be if you acted as if everything were really purple (What red light are you talking about officer? They're all purple."). This is an example of how our distorted thoughts ("there's only purple lights") about a certain situation can influence our understanding of a situation ("You're crazy! All of the lights are purple"). Distortions in our thinking interfere with our ability to respond to the world as it is. The fewer distortions we have the better we can communicate, get along with others, solve problems and the happier we will be in general. It's difficult to see our own distortions and it's much easier to see the distorted thinking of others. In fact, it often leads to conflict when we attempt to point out the distorted thinking of another person.

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**“Men are disturbed  
not by things, but by the view  
which they take of them.”**

**— Epictetus**

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### 3.1.1 Realistic Thinking

**Realistic Thinking** requires that your assumptions and beliefs about life don't interfere with your ability to accurately view the world without distortion.

Think of your thoughts as a lens through which you view the world—like glasses or a telescope. If the lens is clear, you accurately see what is actually in front of you. If the lens is cracked, broken, colored, or otherwise distorted you see the world in a distorted fashion.

Now, if you understand that the lens is distorted you can compensate for the distortion by reminding yourself that the world doesn't actually look the way it appears through the lens. If you are wearing sunglasses with purple lenses for example, everything looks purple. Because you know the lenses are colored, you don't really believe everything is actually purple.

### 3.1.2 Don't Believe Everything You Think

One of the primary thought distortions is to believe that all of our thoughts reflect reality and that we should therefore believe everything we think. Start thinking of it as "the mind" rather than "my mind".

**Remember, you are not your mind or  
your thoughts. You are separate.**

The mind is a tool for planning, creativity, imagination, and solving problems in the real world (what do you do when you are locked out of your house?). The mind is a wonderful and powerful tool when used properly. When left to run amuck however, it can cause lots of problems. For example, when a chain saw is used properly, it can do a lot of efficient work. Used carelessly or without training, it can cause a lot of damage. The mind is the same kind of tool. Believing everything you think is like the out of control chain saw.

### 3.1.3 Separate Yourself From Your Thoughts

One of the most powerful strategies for keeping the lens of our thinking free of distortions is the practice of separating ourselves from our thoughts. We do this by learning to observe our thoughts as something outside of our true selves, much like watching a leaf float by on a stream. At first this might seem like a strange thing to do because most of us believe that we are our thoughts; we believe that if we think something, it must be true.

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## The *truth is*, we are not our thoughts.

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As a matter of fact, most of our thoughts are not particularly interesting or important. Observing your thoughts is designed to get you to recognize that you can have thoughts that are just thoughts. Some are funny, some are scary, and some are nonsense.

As you recognize your thoughts as just noise which doesn't have to be taken seriously, it will be easier for you to simply hear your thoughts as you think it, without feeling like you have to believe it or take it seriously. It is not necessary to talk back to or challenge thoughts that cause you distress; just recognize them as noise.

### 3.1.4 Catching the “What if...”:

#### Understanding Catastrophic Thinking

Catastrophic thinking is the mistaken belief that bad or catastrophic events are likely to happen when the actual likelihood of the catastrophic event is extremely low.

It is a thought error that has a negative impact on resilience because it causes people to focus their energy and coping efforts on something that isn't real. This kind of thinking almost always has a “What if?” starting the thought. Take a look at how “what ifting” can distort our ability to see clearly when it creates catastrophic thinking:

THE “WHAT Ifs...”	CATASTROPHIC THOUGHTS
I'm having tightness in my chest	I <b>MUST</b> be having a heart attack
I'm asked a question in class	I am <b>GUARANTEED</b> to say something stupid
If I let my son wait for the school bus	He <b>WILL</b> get kidnapped
If I touch the door going into the mall	I <b>WILL</b> get contaminated by germs and get sick
If I get on a plane for the first time	I'm <b>SURE</b> it will crash given my luck
I get in an elevator full of people	I'm <b>SURE</b> it will get stuck and I will suffocate
There's a bag on the side of the road	It <b>MUST</b> have an IED inside it and it <b>WILL</b> explode

One of the simplest things you can do to begin to change catastrophic thinking is to pay very close attention to every time you hear “what if?” in your thoughts or coming out of your mouth. Ask a friend to tell you when you are “what ifting” if you have a difficult time noticing yourself.

As you can see from the examples, while “What if?...” looks and feels like a question, a catastrophic “what if” thought is really a statement and a prediction of a negative outcome. This outcome can be something associated with dying or being completely humiliated and rejected or it can sometimes be a less serious outcome.

If we were to draw a diagram of a “what if” thought it would be composed of two elements:

- A description of the circumstance or situation that might trigger a worry
- A prediction of some catastrophic or undesirable outcome

One of the problems with much of unrealistic thinking is that we believe it is factual. Until we become aware of the role of “what ifting” in unrealistic thinking it is easy to believe we are accurately evaluating what might happen. When you get good at separating your “what ifs” into its two parts—situation and imagined catastrophic outcome. It then becomes easier to formulate an accurate view of the world.

### 3.1.5 A Solution

The best way to determine whether your thinking is accurate or distorted is to ask yourself, “When this has happened in the past, *what has actually happened in my personal experience?*” Not what could have happened, what might have happened, or what almost happened, but what *actually* happened? This question becomes somewhat confusing for military personnel who have been in a combat zone because what actually happened in combat may have actually been catastrophic. Once home however, it’s necessary to make a shift in the consideration of what actually happens. At home, catastrophic events have a very low probability.

It’s also important to pay attention to the fact that *what might happen, what almost happens, or what could happen* cannot figure into your evaluation of *what actually does happen* in everyday life. When you begin to pay attention to what actually does happen in everyday life away from a combat zone, you’ll almost always find that the answer is “nothing or nothing too serious”.

### 3.1.6 Do I Mistake Possible for Probable?

Another significant thought distortion that interferes with realistic thinking is to *fail to distinguish what is possible from what is probable* (or likely). In a combat situation, it’s important to be extra vigilant and it may be important to pay attention to not only what is likely to happen but what is possible, because it’s difficult to gauge the likelihood of catastrophic events. In non-combat environments, we have a lot more experience with what is likely or not likely to happen. The challenge becomes shifting our thought process.

As with all unrealistic thinking, the challenge occurs when we act on what we think is an accurate view of the world, when in reality it’s distorted. Our actions and decisions are then likely to be ineffective or actually cause us difficulty. Consider the following examples:

If you were to buy a lottery ticket, is it *possible* you could win the lottery?

- Because it’s *possible* that you could win the lottery, should you act on that possibility and make a decision that actually affects your life? For example, should you quit your job? Buy a new car?

If you were to get on a plane, is it *possible* it could crash?

- Because it’s *possible* your plane could crash, should you allow that possibility to determine your decision or course of action? Should you refuse to ever fly again?

If you were to eat a piece of candy, is it *possible* you could choke on it?

- Because it’s *possible* to choke on a piece of candy, should you act on that possibility and make a decision that actually affects your life? Should you avoid ever eating candy or other hard foods ever again?

If you can identify with any of this thinking then you may be experiencing unrealistic thinking that is based on the failure to make a clear distinction between what’s *Possible* and what’s *Probable* (or likely).

Can you identify any similar unrealistic thinking that you have that causes you to avoid a situation in real life, basing your decision on a statement like “Well, it’s possible it (unlikely bad or catastrophic outcome) could happen”?

### 3.1.7 Anything is Possible

Most people are willing to agree that literally anything is possible. It's possible that the next time you eat in a restaurant you could be served bad food and get food poisoning. It's also possible that you could be killed next time you drive your car. But people continue to eat in restaurants and drive cars on a regular basis. How are they able to do that? Even though bad things can happen, based on their own personal experience they have decided that it is not likely to happen to them.

**Most of the time people engage in realistic thinking.** They understand that anything is possible. Since this is true, there is little need to consider what is possible when making a decision. Realistic thinking, which is part of resilience, allows us to ignore what is possible and focus only on what is probable or likely to happen in life.

### 3.1.8 The Language of Powerlessness

The language we use is a direct reflection of how we see the world. When we see ourselves as powerless, as pawns on the chess board of life, being moved around against our will, our choice of language will reflect that sense of ourselves. Here are some examples of how language reflects our sense of hopelessness, helplessness, and powerlessness:

- 
- “Everything she says just *pulls me down*”.
  - “My sisters are always *putting me in the middle*”.
  - “My husband *manipulates* me into feeling guilty when we discuss my past”.
  - “I am constantly *forced into* sticking up for my buddy”.
  - “I’m really getting tired *of being pushed around*”.
  - “I am constantly being *sucked into* these arguments”.
  - “She’s always *making me* do what she wants”.
  - “I am constantly being *dragged into* their arguments”.
  - “Every time I talk to him he *puts me on* a guilt trip.”
  - “My boss takes every opportunity to *take advantage of me*”.
  - “She is always trying *to keep me* from having fun”.
  - “I’m always *falling into* the trap she sets”.
  - “I thought I was being helpful, but he was *playing me* like a fiddle”.
  - “When we were talking he kept *dumping on me*”.
- 

If you look carefully, you'll find that each of these phrases suggests you have no control over an outside force. This is an example of how our thinking magnifies feelings of helplessness. As you examine these phrases, try to see that there is no power forcing you to do things you don't want to do or go to places you don't want to go. Changing this belief system requires that you change your language and therefore your thinking. Changing the way we talk helps to change how we think.

### 3.1.9 The Language of Invitation

Many of our interactions are a series of invitations we give to one another. As with any invitation, we can **Accept or Decline**. If you examine each phrase in the language of powerlessness, you'll find that with a small change in the wording you can turn each situation into an **invitation**, a simple request that you go along with whatever is being asked of you. This is called the **Language of Invitation**. When you do this you will find that your sense of powerlessness or victimization begins to change. Simply remind yourself that these are **invitations** to do something you don't want to do and it becomes immediately obvious that **you can refuse the invitation**. This allows you to **choose** what you will do in each situation.

Here's how it sounds when you use the concept of invitation:

Powerless Statement	Reframed as an Invitation
She really <b>made me</b> mad when she said that	She <b>invited</b> me to get angry by saying that
I'm really getting tired <b>of being pushed</b> around	I'm regularly being <b>invited</b> to do things I don't want to do
I am constantly being <b>sucked into</b> these arguments	I'm constantly being <b>invited</b> to argue with him/ her/ them.
Being around those two really <b>weighs me down</b>	Those two are always <b>inviting</b> me to get down on myself
She's always <b>tugging at me</b> to do what she wants	She always <b>inviting</b> me to follow her lead
I am constantly being <b>dragged into</b> their arguments	I am constantly being <b>invited</b> to participate in their arguments
Every time I talk to him he <b>puts me on</b> a guilt trip	Every time I talk to him he <b>invites</b> me to feel guilty about my decisions
She is always trying <b>to keep me from</b> having fun	She is always <b>inviting</b> me to walk away from things I enjoy
It seems I'm always being <b>taken advantage of</b>	It seems I'm always being <b>invited</b> to do things that are against my own best interests
I'm always <b>falling into</b> the trap she sets	She's always <b>inviting</b> me to do what's in her best interest, rather than my own



### 4.1 OPTIMISM

Optimism is a set of beliefs that help to focus your attention and behavior on the opportunities and possibilities of life. Optimism is not a rose colored lens; it's a clear lens, without distortion, that allows you to see life realistically and clearly.

Optimism allows you to see opportunities that arise from your challenges and can cause positive changes in your life. Pessimism, on the other hand, creates a sense of threat around your life stressors. Where the pessimist sees problems, the optimist sees opportunities.

Both Optimism and Pessimism influence your personal resiliency in terms of your health, behavior, happiness, success, and your thinking. In fact, research has shown that optimism leads to long term health benefits and greater resistance to disease.

### 4.1.1 Realistic Optimism

Optimism is not to be confused with **Unrealistic Optimism**, which is related to denial. Denial and Unrealistic Optimism have to do with what has been called “Fuzzy Knowledge” and is about assuming the best outcome regardless of not knowing the facts of the situation. For example, in a combat environment, it is not wise to simply assume the best if you don’t know what’s around the next corner. There is no reason to believe that this strategy is likely to lead to good outcomes. On the other hand, Realistic Optimism has been shown to be very effective as a strategy for dealing with “Fuzzy Meaning”. This is where the facts are clear, but the meaning of an event is open to interpretation.

For example, if your wife doesn’t seem excited to receive a call from you, there may be many possible meanings. If you make it about you (“*She doesn’t want to be with me anymore*”), then you’re setting yourself up to be upset. If on the other hand, you interpret her behavior as being about her (“*She must really be tired after a full day with the kids*”), you are less likely to be stressed.



In this case you are more likely to respond in a fashion that is in both of your best interest (concern, compassion) rather than in a way that is likely to lead to problems (defensiveness, accusations).

Realistic optimists are resilient because they understand the difference between *Fuzzy Knowledge* and *Fuzzy Meaning* and interpret situations filled with *Fuzzy Meaning* in a way that contributes to their own well-being.

### 4.1.2 Perspective

#### The Optimist’s World View:

- All possibilities exist in the world.
- Every problem has a solution. If you don’t look for it, you won’t find it.
- Because of the belief that every problem has a solution, new and creative strategies are often tried.
- Success is expected.
- The world is neither fair nor unfair. It simply is.
- While truly bad things can happen, they tend not to happen in your personal world. On the occasion that they do, the experience is ultimately viewed as an opportunity to learn and grow.
- Optimistic beliefs will help create many more positive outcomes in life because they help interpret events realistically.
- Success is viewed as a result of effort, persistence, and ability.

**The Pessimists World View:** in the dangerous combat environment it may seem that pessimistic beliefs are realistic. Carried outside the combat environment the pessimistic world view is even more toxic.

- The possibilities in the Pessimist’s world view tend to be weighted toward the negative. Pessimists are often worriers.
- The likelihood of success is constantly in doubt.
- Life is not fair but it should be.
- There is very little that can be done to control events.
- Bad things are likely to strike close to home no matter what efforts are made to prevent this from happening.
- Good outcomes are viewed as the result of luck.

## 4.1.2 Perspective (cont.)

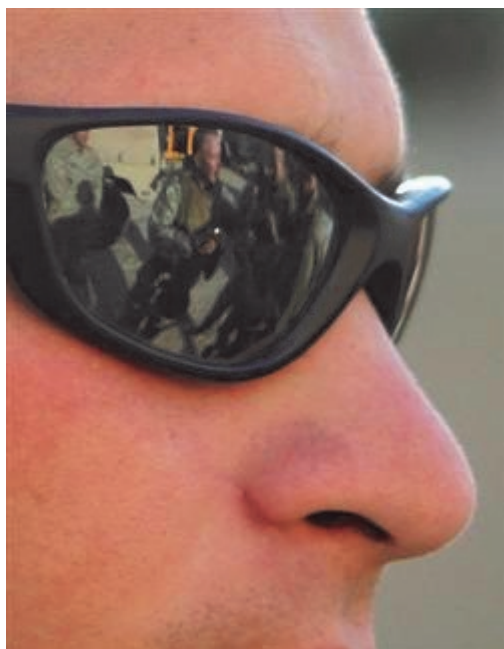
**The Unrealistic Optimist's World View:** When Pessimists and skeptics challenge the value of optimism, they are confusing Fuzzy Knowledge with Fuzzy Meaning. The beliefs of unrealistic optimism should be challenged because they tend to result in anger, resentment, and disappointment.

- This is the world of rose colored glasses.
- Events in the world can be controlled by being a good person (“If I am good, good things will happen to me”. This is called the fairness contract.)
- Because of the belief that life must be fair, the unrealistic optimist believes that protection from negative event is a guaranteed result of living a good life.
- If bad things do happen, the Unrealistic Optimist becomes confused, resentful and angry. There is a sense that the fairness contract with the world has been violated.
- Rationalization and denial are central to this belief system. This can lead to staying in very bad situations without seeking solutions.
- There is a central belief that things will somehow work out without personal effort.
- Good outcomes are viewed as a confirmation of life's fairness and as evidence of a life well lived.

The beliefs of  
unrealistic optimism  
should be challenged.

***Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in awhile, or the light won't come in.***

***- Alan Alda***



## 4.1.3 Change Your Lens: Seven Steps to Realistic Optimism

It's possible to learn to change the lens through which you view the world. There are seven key steps to maintaining a perspective of realistic optimism:

**Step 1 –Interpret the Events in Your Life in a Positive Way:** Interpret the world realistically by paying attention to what actually happens in life, not what could happen, what might happen.

**Step 2 - Focus on the Positive:** In the Army's Resilience Program, *Comprehensive Soldier Fitness*, this strategy for increasing resilience is called “*Hunt for the Good Stuff.*” This is important because we frequently focus our attention on what goes wrong, what could go wrong, or what almost went wrong. It's important to retrain our thinking and focus on the experiences we have in life that work out well, even when they are not perfect. This also allows you to increase the level of Gratitude in your life, which is a characteristic of resilient people.



### 4.1.3 Change Your Lens: Seven Steps to Realistic Optimism (cont.)

**Step 3—Resist the Desire to Complain:** While we tend to think that “getting things off our chests” has value, the reality is that complaining usually makes you feel worse by keeping your attention on an unhappy situation. The idea that we are “pressure cookers,” who need to vent off steam, is not accurate. Complaining will distance you from positive people and attracts negative people who further encourage anger, hostility and envy



**Step 4 - Decide for Yourself What Is and Isn't Possible:**

Be skeptical of limiting beliefs that say something can't be done - “that's impossible” or “that can't be done” has been made about every scientific advance in history. Of course not everything is possible; but there are many things that we dismiss too easily. This is about learning to “think outside the box.”

**Step 5 - Be For Things, Not Against Things:** This is a critical piece of developing optimism. When you are against something you are focused on creating less. This often requires attacking, punishing, complaining, and reacting. When you are for something your focus is on creating more. Creating more is about new ideas, options, and productivity.

**Step 6 - Laugh at Yourself, but not at Others:** Humor opens us to possibilities. It reminds us that many of the solutions we thought were foolproof in the past weren't. Or that many of the limitations we thought were set in stone, weren't. Therefore we should be open to new opinions and experiences. Think

back at what you thought to be absolutely true ten years ago. Has any of that changed? Can you laugh at it now?

Optimists don't use humor to hurt others. Avoid the pessimist's use of cynicism and sarcasm as a substitute for genuine humor. Remind yourself on a regular basis that you can increase your sense of accomplishment and well-being by your own efforts. Feeling good about yourself shouldn't require that you put others down, judge them or compare them unfavorably to yourself.

## 5.1 DEVELOPING FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is the process of letting go of a long list of negative feelings that are associated with hurtful behavior that has been directed at you, someone you care about, or humanity as a whole. These include hurt, resentment, sadness, anger, hate, and a desire for retaliation. Forgiveness is releasing the burden of past pain.

Forgiveness is something you do for yourself and for your own well-being. There is no such things as “one size fits all” approach for dealing with past hurt.

***“Hating someone is drinking poison and expecting the other person to die from it.”***  
-Nelson Mandela

### 5.1.1 What Forgiveness is Not

Forgiveness is **not** forgetting or denial of wrong action. As a matter of fact, the first step in forgiveness is to acknowledge the fact that you or someone you care about has been hurt by another person. It is not rationalizing or excusing misbehavior or giving someone permission for future misbehavior. Forgiveness does not require that you continue to be involved with the person who hurt you. Self-protection or keeping a distance may be required.

### 5.1.2 The Value of Forgiveness

Forgiveness keeps us from poisoning ourselves with anger, hate, and resentment. The process of forgiveness has been shown to have positive effects on your health, resulting in reduced blood pressure and heart rate, lower anxiety, and a reduction in depression.

### 5.1.3 The Key To Forgiveness: Compassion

**“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle.”**

**—Philo of Alexandria**

The key to forgiveness is Compassion. Forgiveness is possible when you understand that when a person behaves badly, that behavior is their own suffering leaking into the world and on to you and other people in the form of negative behavior.

When a person behaves badly toward you, you can be certain that the behavior is not about you. It is a reflection of their perspective on life and the degree of their pain and unhappiness.

***Meanness is pain in disguise.***

If you come upon an injured dog, it is not wise to try to pick him up—you will most likely get bitten. The fact that the bite comes from the dog's pain and is not malicious does not lessen the severity of the bite. Remember, you don't forgive the act that has hurt you, you forgive the person. You can forgive and still keep your distance if protecting yourself from this person's pain is necessary for your well-being.

If you are having trouble with forgiveness, it may be because you are trying to forgive what has been done to you as in “I forgive him for calling me a name”. This doesn't work and you will find that as the person's pain continues to leak out in the form of hurtful behavior. You will continue to be angry and you will regret having tried to forgive. However, if you forgive the person rather than the act then the repeated hurtful acts will not be evidence that you were wrong to forgive; rather, it will be evidence that you are truly dealing with a person in pain (for whom you can feel compassion). Thus, there is no need for resentment, sadness, anger, hate, or retaliation.

### **Practice Forgiveness**

- Identify feelings you have toward other people which result in hatred, resentment, hurt, and the rest of the negative emotions that keep you in stuck in the past. Forgiveness is about creating a new future free of this pain.
- Pick one person and identify the hurtful behavior you'd like to forgive. Start small, with a minor misbehavior that you'd like to stop carrying around with you.
- Remind yourself that their behavior is pain in disguise. If you can, try to understand what that pain is.
- Determine whether the goal is forgiveness, or forgiveness and restoring the relationship (reconciliation). Remember that reconciliation requires more than forgiveness. Only consider reconciliation to be your goal if:
  1. They acknowledge their misbehavior and apologize. Remember an apology is a promise—a promise not to do it again.
  2. They ask for forgiveness
  3. They do not repeat the behavior

### 5.1.4 Forgiveness Takes Effort

“What we forgive too freely doesn’t stay forgiven.” – Mignon McLaughlin

The most difficult step in practicing forgiveness is learning to see the pain behind another person’s misbehavior. This takes practice and effort. You will want to start slowly. The first step in learning forgiveness is to start with practicing Compassion. Part of compassion is to learn to see that we are all the same and all face challenges.

- Just like me, this person is seeking happiness.
- Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness, and despair.
- Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering.
- Just like me, this person is trying to fill emptiness.
- Just like me, this person still has a great deal to learn.

### 5.1.5 Learn By Watching

Increase the effort you make in watching how people react to their world by recording your observations. Practice these specific observations each time you see any type of misbehavior or personal struggle.

- Watch people become impatient and frustrated.
- Notice their anxiety, self-consciousness, and shyness.
- Pay attention to sarcasm, prejudice, and put downs that some people believe will raise them above others.
- Ask yourself if your judgment of others doesn’t sometimes come from your need to feel superior to them.
- Notice how many of the negative behaviors you see in others are similar to your own reactions to situations or people in your own life.

Practice this process for as long as it takes you to begin to feel somewhat automatic recognizing the “great battle” that people are engaged in. Sometimes you’ll be able to identify it specifically; sometimes you’ll only be able to infer its presence. You will know you are making progress when the things people do that used to fill you with anger or hurt now cause you to feel some compassion.

### 5.1.6 Beliefs Interfere With Forgiveness

At times, it will be difficult to forgive, no matter how hard you are trying. There are a number of reasons why it is difficult; this is usually associated with your thoughts about the situation, rather than viewing the situation from neutral ground. Here are some examples of thoughts that can interfere with forgiving someone who has hurt you:

- The hurt was so great, how can I possibly forgive?
- There are some things that can never be forgiven.
- She doesn’t deserve to be forgiven.
- Why should I forgive? What he did was wrong.
- She has to pay for what she did.
- He’ll suffer if I withhold forgiveness.
- If I don’t retaliate she’ll (I’ll) think I’m weak.
- Continuing to judge him makes me feel like I’m a better person than he is.
- Why should I show compassion for her? She certainly didn’t care about how I felt.

**It is important to remain aware of these thoughts when you find it hard to forgive.**

## 6.1 GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a positive emotion that occurs when you understand and acknowledge that the good experiences you have in life, small or large, are not owed to you, but are gifts. It is the opposite of taking things for granted. Gratitude has been shown to have very positive effects on enthusiasm, energy, and well-being. Because of the positive benefits of Gratitude on health and happiness, it is important to bring the regular practice of gratitude into your life.

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“Gratitude implies humility—a recognition that we could not be who we are in life without the contributions of others. Gratitude also implies the recognition that it is possible for other forces to act towards us with beneficial, selfless motives. In a world what was nothing but injustice and cruelty, there would indeed be no possibility of gratitude. Being grateful is an acknowledgement that there are good and enjoyable things in the world.”

“Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier,” by Dr. Robert A. Emmons

### 6.1.1 Developing Gratitude

There is a clear relationship between gratitude and resilience. Research has shown that the positive effects of gratitude are multiplied as you increase the:

- Strength of your feeling of gratitude
- How often you experience gratitude in any given minute, hour or day
- How many life circumstances you feel grateful for
- Number of people in your life who you feel grateful to

There are a number of things you can do to increase your sense of gratitude in each of these areas. They take just a few minutes a day and can have a life changing effect.

### TIPS ON HOW TO INCREASE GRATITUDE...

#### ***Begin each day with a two minute gratitude***

***session:*** find a quiet space of two minutes, close your eyes if possible, and bring to mind the things and people in your life you are grateful for. Remind yourself that they are gifts in your life.

#### ***Create a short prayer or affirmation concerning the gifts you have received:***

use this on a daily basis to remind yourself that even though you have worked and planned for what you have, life could have turned out differently.

***Use a Daily Gratitude Journal:*** write at least five things that you are grateful for on a daily basis. Your entries can be short or long – the length doesn't matter. To begin, make a commitment to do this for at least two weeks and then work to develop it into a lifelong habit. Each new entry has to be different; don't repeat. You will find that this helps you to begin to pay attention to the many small gifts that come into your life.

#### ***If you have children in your life, make it a practice***

***to discuss gratitude on a daily basis:*** help them to create and use their own Gratitude Journal. Doing this is a wonderful teaching tool as you help your children to develop resilience.

#### ***Focus on the fact that Gratitude can turn difficulties into gifts and use this truth each time you are faced with a challenge in life:***

print this little poem by an unknown author, post it where you can see it and use it to support both your morning Gratitude session and your Gratitude Journal.

“Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire, If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something For it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times.

During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your limitations

Because they give you opportunities for improvement

Be thankful for each new challenge

Because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes

They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary Because it means you've made a difference.

It is easy to be thankful for the good things.

A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are Also thankful for the setbacks.

Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.

Find a way to be thankful for your troubles

And they can become your blessings.”



### 6.1.2 Write a Gratitude Letter

Identify a person to whom you are grateful for their presence in your life or for something that was done for you recently or in the past. The person does not need to be present in your life now. This person should be someone to whom you believe you have not sufficiently, or ever, previously expressed your gratitude.

After you have identified this person, take a few minutes to write a letter expressing your gratitude, how your life was affected by the person's actions and specifically what the person did for which you are grateful. Be as specific as possible in describing the contribution they made to your well-being. It is up to you whether you actually deliver the letter or not. If you choose to express your gratitude to someone personally by speaking to them, don't delete the step of writing the letter and giving it as a gift. It's something that will last long after your words have faded. You can do this as often as you think of different people who you have neglected to thank for whatever contribution they have made to your life.

If you decide to actually express your gratitude to someone and you don't get the response you hoped for, remind yourself that this isn't a contract with the other person. You are not owed anything in return. Remember, this exercise is for you.

***Look for opportunities to be grateful for the experiences and people who come into your life on a minute to minute basis.***

Get used to noticing the days you don't get stuck at all at the red lights while driving, when someone holds the door or a traffic stranger says 'hello' in passing. Pay attention to the beauty that you are surrounded by all the time — a flower, a tree, a vista. Recognize and seek out new things to be grateful for.

## 7.1 GENEROSITY

Generosity is the act of giving of yourself for the purpose of benefiting others. It has long term positive effects on your psychological well being and increases the bonds in relationships on which we depend when we are confronted with stressful situations.

Research has documented that the act of giving can actually increase activity in the pleasure centers of the brain, increase longevity, decrease chronic pain, decrease depressive symptoms, lower rates of heart disease and improve the body's immune response.

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**“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”**

- Winston Churchill

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### 7.1.1 Practicing Generosity

The practice of Generosity is exactly that—practice. Look for extra opportunities for face-to-face generosity on a daily basis. These include such things as opening the door for someone, smiling at a stranger, giving a small gift and other opportunities to give of yourself each day to make someone's life better.

**Here are some examples of generosity:**

- Giving money to someone we know
- Giving money to a worthy cause or organization
- Handing money to someone in need
- Giving of our time serving on a committee of a non-profit organization
- Helping to organize a fundraiser
- Giving of our time to personally help someone in need
- Doing something positive for your community or neighborhood
- Spending time with someone

### 7.1.2 When Generosity Isn't Generous

Generosity is actually harmful and is not defined as generosity when:

- Giving is done at a significant personal cost of health or well-being
- Giving is done to manipulate or create guilt in the receiver

While generosity is most frequently an observable behavior, its effect on increasing personal resilience is associated with empathy and compassion. This is one reason why acts such as giving money out of a sense of obligation, or donating your time but feeling angry about the time that's required, provides no increase in resilience. The physiological benefits of generosity are self-generated.

### 7.1.3 Generosity and Developing Resilience in Children

Generosity has been shown to be a key component of interventions for troubled children and youth. Allowing children to feel that they are contributing members of their communities' leads to less rebellious or delinquent behaviors. They learn the capacity to look and reach outside themselves and focus on something other than personal stress or challenges.

## 8.1 PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND VALUES

Personal strengths and values are aspects of your character that define what's best about you. Identifying and using your strengths are resilience skills that support the capacity to cope with the changes and challenges in life. You can turn to them to provide direction in your life and to see you through distressing times. As with physical strength, you already have personal strengths and you know that there is always room to improve and grow stronger.



### 8.1.1 Developing Strengths and Values

The easiest way to develop a new strength is to try to learn from someone who has that strength. This is why people who grow up with good role models tend to have personal strengths and values that see them through tough times. Throughout history, great men and women have learned how to act by watching the actions of others whom they admired.

The process is fairly straight forward. Select a personal strength you want to develop. Then think of someone who you admire that possesses that strength. This person can be someone you know, a public figure, a famous person from the past, or even a fictional character from a novel, movie, or TV series. Then learn as much as you can about this individual by reading about them, watching them on TV or in movies, or personally observing how they display their personal strength in their everyday lives. Pick one or two ways you could imitate them and practice this strength in *your* life.

### 8.1.2 The Importance of Strength and Values

Research has identified personal strengths and values that support resilience in all cultures around the world. The following list was developed by Peterson and Seligman in their research on resiliency.

Creativity	Originality	Ingenuity	Wisdom	Knowledge	Curiosity
Interest in new things	Open-Mindedness	Good Judgment	Critical Thinking	Love of Learning	Perspective
Courage	Bravery	Persistence	Industriousness	Integrity	Authenticity
Honesty	Vitality	Enthusiasm	Energy	Love	Kindness
Generosity	Nurturance	Care	Compassion	Altruistic Love	"Niceness"
Personal Intelligence	Emotional Intelligence	Social Responsibility	Loyalty	Teamwork	Fairness
Leadership	Forgiveness	Mercy	Humility	Modesty	Prudence
Self-control	Appreciation	Gratitude	Hope	Optimism	Humor
Playfulness	Spirituality	Religiousness	Faith	Wonder	Purpose

## 8.1.2 The Importance of Strength and Values (cont.)

Here are some reasons why it's important to know what your personal strengths are:

- You'll feel more confident and in control of a difficult situation when you know what strengths you carry with you
- Defining and practicing your strengths will help you make decisions. You can then take on responsibilities at work and home that are in line with your strengths.
- You can also pick leisure activities that will lead to greater personal satisfaction and enjoyment.
- People whose jobs and leisure activities are in line with their strengths report more life satisfaction. Identifying strengths will help you focus your daily efforts on areas that are likely to be productive and rewarding.
- Knowing your strengths will help you identify areas where you can improve yourself and open up future possibilities.

It's important that you use your personal strengths and share them in ways that will improve your work, your personal life, and your community. To be as resilient and effective as possible, you need to use your strengths in the majority of your daily activities.

**It's important to use your personal strengths in the majority of your daily activities.**



## 9.1 SKILLS

Skills that improve a sense of control over life are central elements of Resilience. These are the skills that help to balance life, and protect you against feeling overwhelmed. Goal Setting, Time Management and Problem Solving are areas of life that are sometimes taken for granted, but they often are the difference between success and failure. These qualities are what make a mission successful in the field. They can make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful effort at developing the kind of life you'd like to live.

### 9.1.1 Goal Accomplishment

Goals are desired situations, events, or "things we want to have happen" and that we are willing to exert some effort to achieve. It is the concept of effort that makes a goal different from a "wish" or simply hoping that something will happen.

As a part of the military community, you have continuously set and worked towards goals and you know that goals can be set in a variety of areas. You may have goals for professional development, personal life, fitness, family, or education, for example. You may have immediate goals, like tackling your spring cleaning, and long-term goals, like saving for retirement.

**Although your goals may be very different from other peoples' goals, what is similar is the process we all go through to set and accomplish our goals.**

## 9.1.2 Six Simple Steps to Accomplishing Your Goals

### 1. Identity Your Goals

The first step in accomplishing your goals is identifying what your goals are. When you do this, it is helpful to think about what your values are regarding different areas of your life: family and friends, spirituality, health, and so on. What parts of your life do you find meaningful and what areas would you like to see change? It can be helpful to think, “How are things now?” and “how would I like my life to be?” In answering these questions, consider the following areas of life and try to be concrete and specific: **Family, Friends, Education/ Career, Financial, Spiritual, Physical/ Health, Mental/ Emotional, Social (activities/ fun), Community.**

### 2. Prioritize Your Goals

Putting your goals in order of importance is necessary because it will help you focus your efforts. Then, pick a goal you'd like to work on. Think about what will help you to achieve this goal. Here are some things that help accomplish goals: **Support from others, having a plan and structure or schedule, resources, belief in yourself, motivation, and time.** It's also important to recognize that the *absence* of any of the above can *interfere* with you achieving your goals.

### 3. Break Larger Goals into Small, Achievable Steps

As you break your goals into smaller steps, consider the resources that you will need, such as time, money, equipment, computers, and people. For long term goals, it is helpful to set many small, short-term goals and then break each of those goals into steps. By doing so, you will feel closer to reaching your long-term goal by making continual progress.

### 4. Share Your Goal With Someone

Sharing your goal with someone else will actually make you more likely to follow through. It creates a sense of accountability and provides a place to discuss your progress or things that may be getting in your way. Other people can also be a source of encouragement. Of course it's important to pick someone who will cheer you along as you work toward achieving your goal.

## 5. Implement Your Plan

Put your plan into action by setting a date to get started and by tracking your progress. Once you have prioritized and made a plan, the next step is to take action. Start by setting a day and time to start working toward your goal, and mark it on your calendar. Then make a commitment to yourself that you will start on the selected day and time.

Another way to implement your plan is to create a checklist or a chart to help you track your progress and setbacks. With every goal that you strive to achieve, there may be progress and setbacks. A setback moves you away from achieving your goal. This can be something like not exercising at all for a week due to an illness. It is important to remember that *everyone* has setbacks. When this happens, take note of what is preventing your progress, but be careful not to put yourself down or become critical. Doing this will only make it harder to get yourself back on track. Instead, focus on way to modify your plan so you can be successful.

When implementing your plan, it is also important that you commit to stand and stick with the plan you set for yourself. Making changes and achieving your goals are not always easy. You will have days where you don't want to follow the plan, or you want to give up. But giving up will make you feel worse in the long run, and will not help you progress toward your goal. Remember, it is important to recognize and reward yourself for making progress.

## 6. Monitor Your Plan And Revise or Make Changes as Needed

Once you have implemented your plan, keep track of what you are doing and monitor your progress to make sure that you are effective. This will help you to revise your plan if it isn't working well.



## 10.1 TIME MANAGEMENT: LIVING WITH PURPOSE

**“Don’t let your day define your priorities—  
Let your priorities define your day.”**

Time Management is one of the Resilience skills that keep you from expending unnecessary energy on coping with stress. When we are feeling stressed out, many times this is about a sense of time pressure—too many things to do and not enough time. ‘Not enough time’ implies there could be more time if we somehow could “find” it. How many times have we said, “I’ll just have to **find the time** to do it?”



Time management involves more than simply crossing completed tasks off a list. It is about knowing what goals are important to you and then spending your time working to meet those goals. To-do lists can be helpful tools for organizing and focusing your thoughts. However, it is important that the items you check off at the end of the day lead towards your ultimate goals. If completing the tasks on your list do not lead to a more satisfying life, there is a problem.

### 10.1.1 The Myth of ‘Not Enough Time’

When we have the inaccurate belief that there is such a thing as ‘more time’, if only we could somehow find it, the lens through which we view our world becomes distorted. This creates an illusion that we can actually expand time to fit our needs. Here’s an interesting exercise:

- ***Make a list in your head of all of the things you have to do today.***
- ***Now imagine that you were informed that you had just won \$10 million dollars in your state lottery, but you had to pick up your winnings today in the state capitol or forfeit them. Can you imagine saying, “I had a lot of things planned today. I really don’t have the time to pick up the money.” No, you’d shift picking up that money to the top of your list of things to do and head straight to the lottery office in the capitol.***

That’s what we mean when we say, “There’s no such thing as not enough time.” Rather, it is a matter of priorities. Think about how we normally use “not enough time” to make excuses for how we prioritize things:

***“I’m sorry mom, but I just didn’t have a second yesterday to give you a call.”***

When the truth is much less attractive:

***“I’m sorry mom, but calling you was way down on my list of priorities yesterday.”***

This raises some uncomfortable truths:

- It’s uncomfortable to admit that our top priorities are the things we actually do.
- It’s also uncomfortable to admit that good intentions don’t count and that the things we don’t get done are actually our lowest priorities.
- It’s uncomfortable to admit that we **choose** what we put into our non-expandable time.
- To avoid acknowledging these truths we create the myth of “not enough time.”

We then come to believe the myth that there is “not enough time” when we talk about how busy we are. This allows us to fool ourselves with the excuses we give for the priorities we choose. Resilient people realize that we tend to hide behind “I don’t have time.” This is an excuse that allows us deny how we *actually* prioritize things. The belief that we can **find time** is an internal stressor, because it leads us to try to do things that are not in our best interests, like cram too much stuff into too little space.

### 10.1.2 Prioritizing Time

Resilient people don't think in terms of time, they think in terms of Priorities. They know that there is only so much time, and it's the same every day. It never expands or shrinks. Resilient people never think "I don't have time," they are honest with themselves and acknowledge the real truth, "This is lower on my list of priorities." So, while there is no such thing as 'not enough time,' there is such a thing as setting your priorities (What comes First? Second? Next?).

### 10.1.3 Managing Your Daily Tasks

*Maintenance tasks* are things you do every day to keep life going at the most basic level. These are your top priorities and will tend to get done. These are things like going to work, making dinner, picking your daughter up from school, etc. Notice that in a pinch you could choose to do something else in *almost* every case. For example, you could ask a friend or relative to pick up your daughter or walk your dog in an emergency.

Everything that is not a maintenance task is an *optional task*. Optional tasks are things that:

- Can be delegated to someone else
- Can be done tomorrow or the next day without serious consequences
- Are motivated by guilt
- Are things that will give you a greater sense of control over your life and will give you a sense of satisfaction by completing them

When you look at your Optional Tasks you may find yourself arguing with the idea that these things are optional. If you're like most people who feel overwhelmed with time pressure you will resist the idea that there are even such things as "Optional Tasks." However, remember it is really about priorities.

#### Quick Tips for Creating and Managing your Active Priorities:

- Identify your important day-to-day maintenance tasks
- Add one priority that supports or reflects your personal values
- Identify which optional tasks you will choose as your Active Priorities
- Make delegating tasks one of your priorities
- Evaluate what you actually did at the end of the day—these were your real priorities

## 11.1 PROBLEM SOLVING

Effective problem-solving is a sign of the ability to successfully adapt to stressful situations. While there is definitely a set of *skills* you can use to solve problems, there's also an *attitude* that affects your success at solving problems. When you're faced with a problem, your attitude and thoughts influence how you respond to that problem. This in turn can influence the outcome of the situation. A resilient attitude toward problems means that you:

- Assume that problems and challenges are a normal part of life.
- Recognize you are able to cope with these situations.
- Identify problems when they occur.
- Avoid the tendency to respond on impulse. Instead, take a moment to think, consider your options, and then make a careful decision.

In fact, research studies show that people are more likely to succeed at finding solutions to problems if they simply expect that they are in control. By maintaining a positive outlook, making realistic plans, and then following through, you're more likely to successfully solve the problems you face.

People who engage in **active problem solving** accurately distinguish the areas of life that may be changed through *problem solving* and those which require a *shift in perspective*.

### 11.1.1 Active Problem Solving Versus Passive Coping

This view utilizes a rational, logical approach to finding solutions to the challenges that confront you. When you use active problem solving you seek out new information and assume that some control over events is possible. You trust your own judgment to find solutions while being able to accept and utilize negative feedback if deemed accurate and useful. Active problem solvers are

flexible and can adapt to a situation. They set and then work towards goals in a logical progression. If a solution is not working, they can shift to a different strategy easily.

People who engage in *passive coping* avoid addressing the changes and challenges in life directly. This world view responds to life's difficulties through avoidance, withdrawal, pessimism, and deferral to others. Passive coping is often accompanied by substance abuse, wishful thinking, denial, blaming, distraction, rumination, following others' leads, and relying on others excessively. Because passive coping tends to interfere with reaching goals, this world view is self-reinforcing, confirming the belief in powerlessness.

### 11.1.2 Problem Solving

#### STEP 1: Identify the problem.

The first step is identifying the problem that you want to solve. This may seem obvious, but stopping to define the problem requires that you shift your attention away from your emotions toward a more practical or accurate analysis of the situation. In fact, research suggests that being impulsive and easily frustrated is associated with having poor problem-solving skills.

You can avoid that trap by taking a moment to really stop and think. Assess what isn't working and needs to be changed. Ask yourself: What do you want to achieve? What isn't working?

#### STEP 2: Set a goal.

The second step in problem-solving is to set a goal for dealing with the problem. The goal should be very specific and something within your power to achieve.

#### STEP 3: Brainstorm solutions.

The third step in problem-solving is to brainstorm possible solutions to the problem that will satisfy the goal you set. Brainstorming means generating as many ideas as possible. When brainstorming, it is critical to not pass judgment on your ideas. Treat each idea as worthy of consideration. An idea that may seem ridiculous can be further developed into an excellent solution.

#### STEP 4: Evaluate solutions.

The next step is to evaluate each of your possible solutions. First, eliminate any alternatives that you are sure you don't want to pursue further. Weigh the pros and cons of each solution. Put them in writing so that you can see the benefits and downside of each one. Think about both short and long-term consequences for each option.

#### Problem Solving Steps

1. Identify the problem
2. Set a goal
3. Brainstorm solutions
4. Evaluate solutions
5. Choose a solution
6. Make an action plan and try it
7. Assess your success
8. If it didn't work, try another

## STEP 5: Choose a solution.

The next step is to choose the best solution. Sometimes pure facts dictate which ideas will work and which will not. In other situations, you may need to rely on feelings to decide, or a combination of facts and intuition. When selecting the best approach, consider:

- What solution has the best payoff, or maximizes pros and minimizes cons?
- Is the solution going to be helpful in the short run but have negative consequences in the long term?
- Which approach is the most realistic to accomplish for now, in terms of time, resources, and money?
- How much risk is associated with each alternative?

If you end up with no solutions that work, you will need to repeat the brainstorming step to discover more potential solutions. Or, you might consider re-defining the problem, in case you weren't able to find a solution because the problem was not properly identified.

## STEP 6: Make an action plan and try it.

The sixth step is to make a plan to put the solution into action. To do this, you'll devise a specific plan to implement your solution. You may need to divide the plan into steps.

## STEP 7: Assess your success.

After giving your solution a fair try, the next step is to decide if it worked. Did you meet your goal? If you didn't meet your goal, ask yourself: Was the plan realistic? Should the plan be changed?

## STEP 8: If it didn't work, try another.

If you did not meet your goals and solve the problem, the next step is to choose a different solution and try again. You can go back to your list of solutions and select the next-best option. Or if nothing from your list seems to help, you may not have identified the problem correctly. In this case, you can go back to step 1 and see if there are other, more helpful ways to think about the problem you're facing.

### *What Did You Learn?*

Lastly, consider whether you gained new knowledge, understanding, or skills in addressing this problem. Part of being resilient is seeing challenges as opportunities to learn and grow, so that similar challenges won't be as hard next time you face them. Can you see what you have learned from the difficulties you encountered, even if they were unpleasant?

Problem solving helps you respond thoughtfully, instead of reacting impulsively; this, in turn, is associated with resilience, and with higher rates of success in addressing challenges.

### Problem Solving Steps

1. Identify the problem
2. Set a goal
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