

Shift Happens: Learning to Bounce Back from Disappointment, Difficulty, or Disaster

MARC

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Bouncing Back: Rewiring Your Brain for Maximum Resilience and Well-Being

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Affectionate Breathing

- Sit comfortably; breathe slowly and gently.
- Incline your awareness toward your breathing with tenderness and curiosity
- Let the body breathe itself; notice the natural nourishing and soothing of the body
- Feel the whole body breathe
- Allow the body to be gently rocked by the breath
- Savor the stillness and peace in the body

Shift Happens


- Shit happens
- Shift happens, too
- Shift can happen in this moment
- Shift can happen in any moment
- That's the shift

Shift

- Shift brain functioning in the moment
- Shift responses to experience over time
- Abide in a new way of being

Mindfulness

- Pause, become present, focus attention
- Notice and name experience
- Practice self-compassion for whatever we are noticing; shift brain functioning
- Step back, reflect, inquire
- Shift perspective, view
- Discern options, choose wise action

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- Imagine walking down the street
 - Notice someone you know walking toward you
 - Wave “hello!” There’s no response. Notice your response to the lack of response
 - The person notices you and waves “hello!”
 - Notice your response to the response
 - Notice any differences in your responses

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters - Portia Nelson

I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.
I am lost...I am helpless
It isn't my fault.
It takes me forever to find a way out.



II

I walk down the same street.

There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe I'm in the same place

But, it isn't my fault.

It still takes a long time to get out.



III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in...it's a habit
My eyes are open,
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.



IV

I walk down the same street
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.

-Portia Nelson

Self-Compassion

- May I be kind to myself in this moment
- May I accept this moment, exactly as it is
- May I accept myself in this moment, exactly as I am
- May I give myself all the compassion I need

Hand Gestures of Self-Compassion

- Fists closed
- Palms open, facing upward
- Palms extended and forward
- Palms placed over heart

Self-Compassion Break

- Notice moment of suffering, or inquire: “Is there any suffering here?”
 - Ouch! This hurts! This is painful.
- Soothing touch (hand on heart, cheek, hug)
- Common humanity: I’m not alone; I’m not the only one
- Kindness toward experiencer
 - May I be kind to myself in this moment
 - May I accept this moment exactly as it is
 - May I accept myself in this moment exactly as I am
 - May I give myself all the compassion I need to respond to this moment wisely

Mindfulness and Compassion Activate Caregiving System

- Mindfulness
 - Focuses awareness on experience
 - May I accept this moment, exactly as it is
- Self-Compassion
 - Focuses kindness on experienter
 - May I accept myself exactly as I am in this moment
- Common Humanity
 - I am not alone; I am not the only one
- Activates caregiving system
 - Shift from reactivity and contraction to openness, engagement

Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Increased motivation; efforts to learn and grow
- Less fear of failure; greater likelihood to try again
- Taking responsibility for mistakes; apologies and forgiveness
- More resilience in coping with life stressors
- Less depression, anxiety, stress, avoidance
- Healthier relationships; more support and, less control and/or aggression
- Increased social connectedness, life satisfaction, and happiness

Soles of the Feet


- Stand up; feel soles of feet on the floor
- Rock back and forth, rock side to side
- Make little circles with your knees
- Lift each foot; place back down
- Walk slowly; notice changes in sensations
- Offer gratitude to your feet that support your entire body, all day long

Conditioning

- Experience causes neurons to fire
- Repeated experiences, repeated neural firings
- Neurons that fire together wire together
- Strengthen synaptic connections
- Connections stabilize into neural pathways

- Without intervention, is what the brain does

- Conditioning is neutral, wires positive and negative



The brain is shaped by experience. And because we have a choice about what experiences we want to use to shape our brain, we have a responsibility to choose the experiences that will shape the brain toward the wise and the wholesome.

- Richard J. Davidson, PhD

New Conditioning

- Choose new experiences
 - Focused attention, compassionate listening, gratitude practice
- Create new thoughts, new experience of self
- Create new learning, new memory
- Encode new wiring
- Install new pattern of response, new habits, new ways of being

Shift from Self-Critical Voice to Self-Compassionate Voice

- Loving awareness of breathing
- Let a moment of discomfort arise; notice where you feel in the body
- Notice any critical self-talk; notice the words; notice the tone of voice
- Use critical voice as cue to practice: “May I be kind to myself in this moment; may I accept myself in this moment exactly as I am.”

Re-conditioning

- Memory de-consolidation - re-consolidation
- “Light up” neural networks
- Juxtapose old negative with new positive
- Neurons fall apart, rewire
- New rewires old

Re-Conditioning

- Resource with memory of someone's compassion toward you
- Evoke compassion for your self
- Evoke memory of someone being critical of you (or inner critic)
- Hold awareness of criticizing moment and compassionate moment in dual awareness
- Drop the criticizing moment; rest in the compassionate moment.

Modes of Processing

- Focused Attention
 - Tasks and details
 - Deliberate, guided change
 - New conditioning and re-conditioning
- De-focused Attention
 - Default network
 - Mental play space - random change
 - De-conditioning

De-Conditioning

- Default network
- De-focusing, loosens grip of attention
- Creates mental play space, free association
- Can drop into worry, rumination
- Can drop into plane of open possibilities
- Brain makes new links, associations
- New insights, aha!s new behaviors

De-Conditioning

- Reverie, daydreams
- Imagination
- Guided visualizations
- Guided meditations
- Brain “plays,” makes own associations and links, connect dots in new ways
- Reflect on new insights

Compassionate Friend

- Sit comfortably; hand on heart for loving awareness
- Imagine safe place
- Imagine warm, compassionate figure -
Compassionate Friend
- Sit-walk-talk with compassionate friend
- Discuss difficulties; listen for exactly what you need to hear from compassionate friend
- Receive object of remembrance from friend
- Reflect-savor intuitive wisdom

Sense and Savor Walk

- Find a quiet place in nature; walk slowly
- Notice colors, shapes, sounds, smells
- Linger and savor, repeat
- Notice state of being

Post-Traumatic Growth

- 75% Americans will experience potentially traumatizing event at least once in lifetime
- 8% will develop PTSD
- More than 50% will fully recover, finding meaning, deepening sense of self, stronger ties to community and common humanity

Post-Traumatic Growth

- Acceptance of reality; create the new narrative
- Support from family; belief in recovery
- Community of “the tribe”
- Positive re-framing; positive meaning of negative event
- Helping others
- Appreciate new life because of catastrophe

Intelligences


- Somatic: Body-based equilibrium
- Emotional: managing one's own emotions and empathizing with others'; compassion
- Relational: connect, heal heartache, access resources, navigate peopled world
- Reflective: conscious awareness, mindfulness

Rewiring through Movement

- Body inhabits posture of difficult emotion (40 seconds)
- Body moves into opposite posture (40 seconds)
- Body returns to first posture (20 seconds)
- Body returns to second posture (20 seconds)
- Body finds posture in the middle (30 seconds)
- Reflect on experience

Power Posing

- Amy Cuddy TED talk
- https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are
 - Before important meeting or interview:
- Stand tall and straight, like mountain pose in yoga
- Lift your arms in triumph
 - or
- Place hands on hips (Wonder Woman)



*Kindness is more important than wisdom,
And the recognition of that is the beginning
of wisdom.*


- Theodore Rubin

*Doing a kindness produces the single most
reliable momentary increase in well-being
of any exercise we have tested.*

- Martin Seligman

Take in the Good

- Notice: in the moment or in memory
- Enrich: the felt sense in the body
- Absorb: savor 10-20-30 seconds, felt sense in body
- Repeat: 6 times a day, install in long-term memory




Increasing the social connections in our lives is probably the single easiest way to enhance our well-being.

- Matthew Lieberman, UCLA

Positivity Portfolio

- Ask 10 friends to send cards or e-mails expressing appreciation of you
- Assemble phrases on piece of paper
- Tape to bathroom mirror or computer monitor, carry in wallet or purse
- Read phrases 3 times a day for 30 days
- Savor and appreciate



Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in the eyes of the Divine. If only they could all see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, nor more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. ...I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.

- Thomas Merton

Brahma Viharas

- Loving Kindness
 - Compassion
 - Sympathetic Joy
 - Equanimity
-
- Send and receive wishes to and from your partner

One for Me; One for You

- Breathing in, “nourishing, nourishing”
- Breathing out, “soothing, soothing”
- In imagination, “nourishing for me, nourishing for you, soothing for me, soothing for you”
- “One for me, one for you”
- Practice breathing “one for me, one for you” when in conversation with someone

Caregiving with Equanimity

Everyone is on his or her own life journey.
I am not the cause of this person's suffering,
nor is it entirely within my power to make it
go away,
even if I wish I could.
Moments like this are difficult to bear,
Yet I may still try to help if I can.

Shame De-Rails Resilience

Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging.

Shame erodes the part of ourselves that believes we are capable of change. We cannot change and grow when we are in shame, and we can't use shame to change ourselves or others.

- Brene Brown, PhD




Love makes your soul crawl out of its hiding place.

- Zora Neale Hurston

Love guards the heart from the abyss.

- Mozart



Just that action of paying attention to ourselves, that I care enough about myself, that I am worthy enough to pay attention to, starts to unlock some of those deep beliefs of unworthiness at a deeper level in the brain.

- Elisha Goldstein

Reconditioning


- Anchor in present moment awareness
- Resource with acceptance and goodness
- Start with small negative memory
- “Light up the networks”
- Evoke positive memory that contradicts or disconfirms
- Simultaneous dual awareness (or toggle)
- Refresh and strengthen positive
- Let go of negative
- Rest in, savor positive
- Reflect on shifts in perspective

Wished for Outcome

- Evoke memory of what did happen
- Imagine new behaviors, new players, new resolution
- Hold new outcome in awareness, strengthening and refreshing
- Notice shift in perspective of experience, of self

Coherent Narrative

- This is what happened.
- This is what I did.
- This has been the cost.
- This is what I learned.
- This is what I would do differently going forward.



Mastering the art of resilience does much more than restore you to who you once thought you were. Rather, you emerge from the experience transformed into a truer expression of who you were really meant to be.

- Carol Orsborn