

Building a Resilience Toolbox

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The word “resilience” is very popular nowadays. It is used in many aspects of our society including corporate America entertainment, schools, and health care, just to name a few. What is it? Some would say it’s the antidote to *stress*. We think that stress was something that needed to be minimized, or eliminated. But now science has shown us that it is minds and bodies respond to stress that makes a true difference in our health, longevity, and quality of life

Stress, in a medical context, is a physical, mental, or emotional factor, external or internal, that causes bodily tension.

Stress can be positive (an upcoming wedding or birth of a child) or negative (job loss or physical injury). *Resilience* is quickly recover from or adjust to a stressful event or circumstance. For example, public speaking is one of the top stress encounter. If you gave a presentation but it did not go well, you could ruminate about it for days (low resilience). or you it as an opportunity for improving your communication skills (high resilience).

It used to be thought that we were all wired a certain way – looking at the world as half-empty or half-full. Science has us that our perception of things can be altered by developing positive health habits ranging from mindfulness to exercise. So in a sense we create our own resilience.

The idea of a resilience toolbox is that it represents a set of behaviors and habits that you have identified w you deal with stress on a healthier level.

Some of these seem like common sense, but it's amazing how we don't follow them due to the hyper-connectivity an nature of the modern world. Sleep, for example, is a critical part of our health and vitality. It should be number one in t toolbox. But it is not prioritized, and often lack of sleep is seen as a badge of honor in finishing a work deadline. Thriv company founded by Arianna Huffington, has a [section of its website dedicated to helping people reap the benefits](#)

Life will inevitably send each of us challenges and storms to endure. Our task is not to eliminate any hardship compl build the right toolbox that can withstand what looks like an outright setback.

The toolbox you need will likely require a variety of skills, traits, and practices that you can cultivate to see you through challenging of times. This is certainly true when it comes to health. We might place all of our focus on the right pre treatment and medical team when we're diagnosed with a frightening condition, but we need to do just as much in mentally ready ourselves for the journey ahead.

The right toolbox can help you to advocate for your own needs and build a coalition of support in your network that y upon to stand with you in the tough times.

Enduring, Not Curing

When it comes to any health problem including heart disease or AFib, the objective isn't always to find a cure. Someti is to build resilience and endure through the inevitable challenges.

Building a toolbox, at its essence, is about developing a set of coping strategies that can help you navigate the trava emerge. These include proper sleep hygiene, balanced nutrition, mindfulness, exercise, music, and social support netw of us turn to laughter as a critical component of how we cope. Sometimes all you need is a little dose of *Step Brothe [Night Live](#)*, or a live comedian to make that small shift in perception needed to pull you out of a dark place and help from a more realistic and balanced perspective.

For me personally, mindfulness was my game changer.

For years I have turned to music and exercise to build resilience and help me deal with stress. My lifelong dream of b member of U2 continues to fuel me when my tank is on empty. While that will likely never happen (unless Bono is re blog), listening to and playing music have been instrumental (no pun intended) in maintaining the quality of m

After a series of negative life stressors, music and exercise weren't enough to keep me going. I spoke with a friend on learning mindfulness. The next thing I knew, I was in Carlsbad, California at a week-long retreat.

Learning to be the silent witness of your thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations is a very empowering place to longer get swept up in the constant stories we all tell ourselves every day, or the habitual and unproductive reactions events that are so easy to play out.

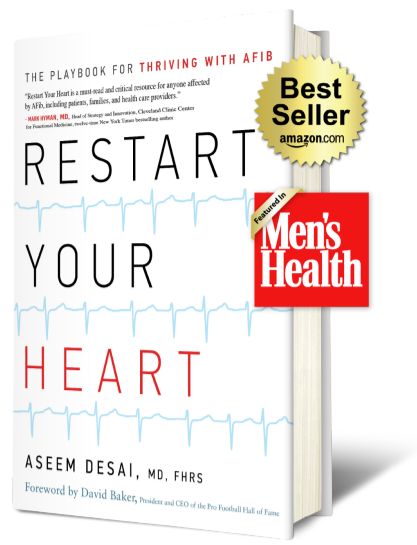
Since I found mindfulness so helpful for me, I teach it to my patients and colleagues on a regular basis. From simpl techniques to silent meditation, it has helped many people, including myself. Jon Kabat-Zinn is often considered the the modern day mindfulness movement. He defines mindfulness as "...the awareness that arises through paying at purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally." You can learn more information about mindfulness in this [pr \[Mindful.org\]\(#\)](#)

Beyond the tools of music, exercise, and mindfulness, social connections and healthy relationships have made a big d me as well.

How about you? Take some time to write down the components of your toolbox – and write down a list of people you for support.

Remember to also be there for the people in your life who count on you as part of their own toolbox. As the saying go because all of us are fighting a tough battle.

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