

Resilience Enhancing Thinking – Dr. Mark Adams

Types or Examples of Resilience Undermining Thinking or Distorted Thinking Patterns

- **Resilience to reality:** “This shouldn’t be happening!”, “This shouldn’t be happening to me!”
- **Awfulizing/Catastrophizing:** “This is awful, nothing could be worse!” (It’s as bad as it could be); “It’s wholly bad!” (There are no good aspects / no good can come from this); “It’s the end of the world!” Or, predicting that the worst-case scenario will happen without considering other more likely or possible outcomes.
- **All or nothing thinking:** Evaluating experiences on the basis of extremes; things are either “excellent” or “terrible”, “perfection” or “failure” with no shades of grey. Also called black and white thinking.
- **Personalisation/Blame:** “It’s all my fault/their fault!” (no others contributed).
- **Ignoring context:** Interpreting events in isolation, without considering the bigger picture or relevant contextual factors.
- **Self-doubt/Fortune telling/Jumping to conclusions:** “I won’t be able to handle it!”, “I just know that it’s going to go badly!”
- **Low Frustration Tolerance:** “I can’t stand it!”
- **Avoidance:** Refusing to think about something as it’s too uncomfortable.
- **Condemning (self or others):** “I’m useless!”, “I’m a failure!”, “He or she is a total *!#!”
- **Demands (musts, should, ought to, have to):** “I must achieve outstandingly well or else I am an inadequate person!”, “Others must treat me fairly or else they are awful people!”, “They should be different to the way they are!”, “They shouldn’t be in that role!”, “My circumstances have to be favourable or else it’s awful and I can’t stand it!”
- **Negative filter:** Focusing only what is wrong or lacking without acknowledging positives.
- **Resilience-undermining imagery:** Playing ‘dodgy’ or negative mental videos of not coping, bad outcomes etc.

Types of Resilience Enhancing Thinking or Helpful Thinking Patterns

Acceptance of Reality: “This is happening/has happened. Now what can I do?”

De-awfulizing/De-catastrophizing: “It’s not as bad as it could be.”; “It’s not 100% awful. Some good may come from this.”; “It’ll pass / I’ll adjust.”

Balanced thinking: Rather than evaluating events in extremes, looking at the details and acknowledging that there may be both good and not so good aspects to a situation.

Broadening the picture: Considering the range of factors influencing a situation (de-personalizing); considering the broader context in which an event/situation occurs.

Self-confidence: “I will handle it.”

High Frustration Tolerance: “I might not like it, but I can stand it.”

Facing your dragons: “What’s the worst that could happen? If that happens, how will I handle it?”

Being realistic: “That’s the worst that could happen....how likely is it?”

Compassion (to self and others): Focusing on specific behaviours. Not rating/labelling ourselves or others on the basis of specific actions. Accepting self/others as fallible.

Preferences (rather than demands): “I would prefer to always achieve well but if I don’t it’s not awful, and it doesn’t make me an inadequate person.”; “I would strongly prefer it that.....but if not.....”

Gratitude/Appreciation: Keeping in touch with the positive aspects of a situation (or one’s life more broadly).

Resilience-enhancing imagery: Imagining oneself coping with difficulty or experiencing success.

Source: Notes from South Wales Coaching Conference, 8th March <http://www.adamspychologyservices.co.uk>

See also:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294888712_Palmer_S_2007_PRACTICE_A_model_suitable_for_coaching_counselling_psychotherapy_and_stress_management_The_Coaching_Psychologist_3_2_72-77

Accessed 17th March 2018

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/cognitive-distortions/> Accessed 17th March, 2018

Cognitive Distortions: When Your Brain Lies to You