



Getting Good at Stress: Building Your Resilience

We can work within our **Window of Tolerance** to expand our emotional capacity, and to become more resilient. This involves working at the edges with both conceptual (mindset & mood) and embodied (physical) practices.

The skill of **Centering**--building your capacity to tolerate strong sensations without slipping into automatic actions to avoid discomfort—is central to becoming more resilient.

In this practice, you'll look at how you can ***shift your perspective*** to increase your resilience.

Our mindsets, perspectives and moods are, by definition quite subjective (despite those moments we know they're the truth).

I'll ask you to actively, on purpose, raise your stress levels with just right amount of challenge (vs. threat) and then, on purpose, return back to a state of physiological coherence--where your energy is operating within the Optimal level of the **Window of Tolerance**.

The more you practice this when the stakes are low (your job is not in danger, your kids are simply being kids, etc.) the easier and more quickly it will be to recover when you're overwhelmed, frazzled, or taken by surprise.

Exposure and repetition *at the edge* is how you'll build your resilience skill-set. You can do this practice alone, though asking a trusted other to partner with you will provide a boost to your learning.

The Practice

1) Bring to mind a real situation that feels difficult or that saps your energy. Recognizing the experience, let yourself feel fully into the situation, noticing your thoughts about it, your body sensations, and your emotional feelings about it.

2) Imagine a dial, like a thermostat, just next to you. Turn up the dial on the experience by 2 degrees and **renew yourself with a couple of breaths while you keep attending to the situation.**

3) Then either speak it out loud or tell a partner what it is with only a bit of detail. Notice your experience here, **reflecting** on what's true for you.

4) Then **Center yourself**, step back (yes, *literally*) and speak two different perspectives you might have on the given situation.

For example, you might say: *"I hate this job, it's beneath me, get me out of here!"* and *"It's so great to have a job in which my boss has a good sense of humor and appreciates me!"*

With each perspective, **really step into it** as if you were trying on a new garment in the store. Try each on and see what it feels like.

5) Notice what specific evidence exists for the perspective you are trying on to be true. Keep reflecting on your experience.

If you're doing this with a partner, tell your partner why it's true for you. Do this for both perspectives.

6) **Return** to the real situation and notice how **grounding your perspective with evidence** changes your experience of yourself in the situation.

7) Now **choose the more resilient perspective**, and let yourself fully acknowledge that you are residing in this more skillful, resilient perspective.

Each time you engage in this practice, **you're re-wiring your brain to become more resilient.** Rinse and repeat.