



Building Resiliency in Young Adults

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Dr. Elko is the author of four books, including *Nerves of Steel* and *True Greatness*, and holds two Masters degrees and a Doctorate from West Virginia University, where he was inducted into its Hall of Fame.

Thriving amid adversity

When an “Epidemic of Uncertainty” occurs, a successful person’s priority is to **Survive**. Once they are secure in their ability to survive, they shift their focus to the next level: how to **Thrive**.

Resiliency

We spend so much time as young people learning how to read and how to write but how about the skill of thinking? There is evidence showing that the way we think can influence if we are happy, productive, and even whether we have the grit to finish what we started. Moreover, practicing effective thinking can give us resiliency, which is our ability to come back from a setback or disappointment.

Young lives need to prepare to “fail forward.”

You will undoubtedly face challenges throughout your life, some examples of near-term challenges are;

- Rejection from college acceptance
- Grades that are lower than expected
- Not being selected for a team or organization

The concept of “fail forward” enables you to take these challenges in stride, learn from them and come out even better on the other side.

As we come through the recent adversities (canceled athletic seasons, graduations and proms), now is a great time to reflect on lessons learned because we know that life goes up and down at times, and when it does, we don’t have to.



Five components of resiliency for young adults



Vision

1

Set your vision

- Set goals for the next 90 days
 - Keep a notebook and write them out
 - Place the goals in a place you can see them
 - Have family goals, academic goals, and extra curricular goals



Goals

2

Have faith in your goals

- Believing is a **choice**, not a **feeling**
- Practice believing that good will happen
 - The recent environment has reinforced fear
- Noticing and being thankful for the good that has happened builds confidence



Obstacles

3

Expect obstacles

- Believing mixed with expecting obstacles leads to resiliency — the ability to come back
- Develop an attitude of comeback before the setback
- Refuse self-pity and self-doubt



Script

4

Write up a “go to script”

- Develop a series of self-talk statements you will use to give you resilience
- Practice using those statements
- Visualize resiliency and use statements that help you rebound from adversity



Circle

5

Name your winner’s circle

- Think of a few friends who are similar and would like to have goals this fall
- Arrange to meet with them regularly
- Discuss and create a plan of how you can support each other

Three questions to ask yourself to help build resiliency

At the end of your day, sit back and take a few minutes to reflect on these three things:

1. What did I do today that I liked?

Think about what you did well and encourage yourself with those successes. Remember them and allow them to continue guiding your actions.

2. What would I have done differently?

Look back on your actions and consider which ones you would change. Learn from them, and let those lessons inform your actions going forward.

3. What am I thankful for?

Take stock of your opportunities by listing the things you are grateful for. Lift your inattentive blindness (perhaps due to panic or uncertainty). When you spend time thinking about what you're thankful for, you'll start to see that it is everywhere.

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” —Socrates



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