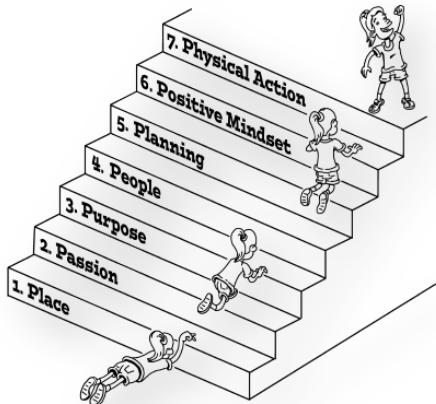


# Resilience Chat Cards

## Introduction: What are resilience cards?



Whenever you are feeling low or what you perceive are early symptoms of stress, you can refer to these cards for suggestions of action you might take. They are designed to be a quick reference point for you to use in the moment to build your protective factors – things that you can use when facing challenges.

Each card focuses on one of **7 Steps to 'Build Resilience'** and has example situations and quick response actions that you can choose to do immediately to get back on track. It's a support tool for you to 'talk' yourself into adopting behaviours that are likely to give you an immediate boost.

# How do I use them?

1. **Acknowledge that you're feeling worried**, and not sure how to manage the situation.
2. **Look through the cards** to find situations and things you are saying to yourself that resonate with how you're feeling right now.
3. **Read the suggested actions** and put at least one of them into practice.

**REMEMBER:** Building your protective factors to aid showing resilient behaviours will take time, effort and practice.

Many of the tips are unlikely to work for you the first time, and some will feel awkward. This is natural and it is only through persevering that you are likely to see a difference.

The more you invest in yourself, the greater the likelihood of you successfully meeting the challenges you face.



# PLACE

**To develop and grow you have to be comfortable in taking risks and learning from mistakes.** Put yourself in the place of greatest opportunity. If you find yourself playing it safe or fearful of trying new things, then this step will help.

## SITUATIONS

“I have to mark every piece of work or I will be challenged (by HoD, HoY, SLT, Inspectors).”

“It doesn't matter if I change the way I plan my lessons, it won't make a difference anyway.”

“I'm not able to keep on top of all my tasks, while maintaining my teaching at the level I want.”

“Other people are much better than me.”

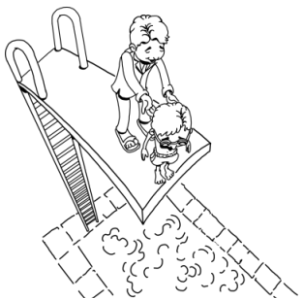
“I got feedback last time that my lesson wasn't good enough and I don't think I'll be able to do any better next time!”

*“You have to be uncomfortable in order to be successful, in some ways. If you stay in your comfort zone you would never do the things that you need to do.”*

**Lights Poxleitner**

# ACTIONS

**Get perspective:** take a few minutes to reflect on what is holding you back. Perhaps it's a lack of confidence, fear of failure or ridicule? Ask yourself 'what's the worst thing that will happen if it doesn't work first time?'



One day you will thank me for this.

**Change mindset:** develop a Win/Learn mindset (rather than win / lose). Mistakes happen or you may not get the result you want - this is OK. Ask yourself 'what did I learn from my last experience?' and 'What will I do differently this time?'

**Create a personal 'mantra':** replace negative sayings with positive words like 'I can do this' or 'I want to have a go'. Repeat it at least 3 times every time you start slipping!

**Visualise success:** close your eyes and imagine yourself in the situation you want, hearing and seeing everything going well. What are people saying? How are you feeling? Keep doing this until it feels real.

# PASSION

**Having passion and energy is very important in any job and particularly during very busy periods.** If you find yourself feeling negative or have trouble regulating your emotions, then take a look at this step.

## SITUATIONS

“I’m feeling really negative today.”

“I’m exhausted and have no energy for the day ahead.”

“I am snapping at my colleagues and / or students.”

“My students are making me really angry, they’re so demanding today!”

“I feel unfairly put upon – why does my line manager ask more of me than everyone else?”

“I’m worried that I’m not hitting my targets.”

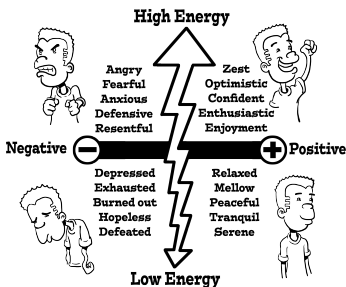
“I can’t stop worrying about a personal issue.”

*“There is no passion to be found playing small, in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.”*

**Nelson Mandela**

# ACTIONS

**Be aware of where you are on the grid:** If you are on the left then recognise your triggers. How can you take time to recuperate and move to the right?



**Do more of what you enjoy:** work with your manager and / or team to make sure there is enough of what you enjoy in your daily tasks. If there isn't then what can you add?

**Talk to your manager/ team:** if you recognise you're on the negative side of the energy grid. Sharing how you feel with your support network can help you to work through it.

**Seek clarity:** ask your manager for clarification on what is expected of you.

**Be kind to yourself:** if you're feeling negative, spend a few minutes thinking about what will help you feel better and find time to build that into your day.

**Take time out** – as difficult as this is, do take a break and time for lunch to give your productivity a boost.

# PURPOSE

**Having a clear purpose in your job and being able to align this to that of your school will really help you power through those times of greatest pressure. If you are not clear about why you do what you do, this step will help.**

## SITUATIONS

“I’m not feeling as connected to my job/team/school as I used to or I would like.”

“I’m under so much pressure to get everything ready for class / parents / my line manager.”

“I don’t feel like I’m making a difference to anyone or anything in my job.”

“I’m not feeling motivated today.”

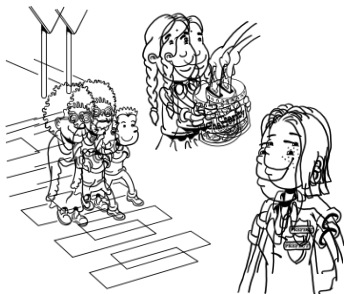
“I don’t see how what I do makes the difference – too many other things are in the way.”

*“I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be compassionate. It is, above all to matter, to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all.”*

**Leo Rosten**

# ACTIONS

**Be clear about your goals:** think through everything you do and why it's important to you, your team and the school. Make sure you celebrate small wins and successes – it will help reduce the pressure you feel.



**Engage with the school values:** ask yourself how your behaviours live up to them and don't let the behaviours of others affect how you feel. Be generous to others and volunteer when something needs doing – people will reciprocate.

**Build relationships:** find time to talk about another team member's day and ask them what contribution they think you make. Listen to understand the impact you have as perceived by others.

**Reframe your tasks:** think about the benefit you are providing to colleagues/students rather than focusing on the activity itself.

**Recognise your language in conversations:** focus more on the positives – the good students and colleagues, not just those that cause you problems!

# PEOPLE

**Being part of a happy, effective team and having your own support team will help you to be more resilient when facing challenges.** If you want to build better relationships or become part of a higher performing team, take a look at this step.

## SITUATIONS

“My team are stressing me out.”

“My manager is putting too much pressure on me.”

“I don't think I'm getting the most out of my team.”

“It feels like a colleague has a problem with me / something I've done.”

“There's a really negative atmosphere in my department, with lots of gossiping and it's bringing me down.”

“I don't feel recognised or acknowledged for my work / effort / contribution.”

*“If you hang out with chickens, you're going to cluck and if you hang out with eagles, you're going to fly.”*

**Steve Maraboli**

# ACTIONS

## **Express your feelings:**

find some time to discuss openly and respectfully how you're feeling with your manager or an individual who is bothering you in some way. It can be cathartic and resolve situations.



**Walk away:** if other people's gossiping or negativity are pulling you down, choose to walk away or try to change the subject to something more positive.

**Be empathetic:** visualise the other person's perspective to understand how they feel and why they may be behaving as they are. It can help you re-align how you feel / view the situation.

**Recognise your team / colleagues:** take the time to say 'thank you' and / or 'well done'. It will start a reciprocal culture of gratitude and recognition which will boost positive energy.

**If you want others to change behaviour:** recognise and be prepared to change too.



# PLANNING

**Depending on your experience, you will know about many of the challenges you face, but how well do you plan for them?** If you do not usually feel ready or well prepared, then this step will help.

## SITUATIONS

“I feel constantly stressed with the amount of things I am expected to do.”

“I feel a lot of pressure to hit a lot of targets and I don't know what to focus on!”

“The direction from senior management keeps changing and I can't keep up.”

“I'm so busy that mistakes keep being made and I'm feeling frustrated.”

“I don't have enough time to plan. It feels like I'm always fire-fighting.”

*“Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.”*

**Paul J. Meyer**

# ACTIONS

**Prioritise planning:** taking time out to plan will save you a lot of wasted time down the line. What are your most important goals and tasks – these are the only things that should be on your to do list.

**Review the plan:** if you feel that your efforts are not making a difference or working towards your goals/plan then review and re-evaluate what's going on. Maybe you need to refresh yourself or create a new plan?

**Focus on what you can control:** if you're starting to feel stressed, write a list of all the things you can control and have a positive impact on (and exclude those you can't). That will tell you where to focus your attention

**Take a break:** as soon as you feel too much pressure or worry. Don't fall in to the trap of thinking working through all of lunch and breaks will help you get more done. Taking a short break will boost your productivity and levels of resilience. Switching tasks will also help.

**Work in focused batches outside the classroom:** Timetable your full day, not just in class. Make specific time available for others, and avoid interruptions as much as possible. Try and work on one thing at a time, rather than multi-tasking.

# POSITIVE MINDSET

**Your mindset is a set of beliefs you have about yourself, others and the world.** It plays an important part in how well you are able to respond to challenges and setbacks. If you regularly tell yourself that you aren't able to do something, then take a look at this step.

## SITUATIONS

"I'll never be able to hit my personal or school targets."

"I'm not good enough to be promoted."

"I'm feeling negative a lot of the time."

"I don't see the point in changing; it won't make any difference to my results."

"There's no way I can do that amount of work, it's impossible!"

"Everyone else in the team is better than me. I feel out of my depth."

*"The more you feed your mind with positive thoughts, the more you can attract great things into your life."*

**Roy T Bennett**

# ACTIONS

**Use positive affirmations:** at the end of each day, tell yourself at least 3 positive things about your performance.

**Boost self-esteem:** when you start feeling like you're no good at something or a task is impossible, talk to your manager or colleague, to ask what they see as your strengths. It's easy to forget about your good parts!

**How important is it:** will the things you are thinking and feeling about have an impact in a week, a month, a year? Put things into perspective – what is the worst thing that could happen – it usually isn't life threatening.

**Think about what you are grateful for:** what are the things that bring enjoyment and fulfilment into your life. Can you switch and think about these when you are having negative thoughts?

**Life isn't fair and the goalposts always move:** you know this and while it is ok to fight injustice, you have to learn to accept it and move on. Adopt this as part of your beliefs and see the difference it makes.

**Talk to your manager:** if you are still feeling negative a lot or struggling to feel confident in your abilities, talk to your manager for support and a review of your targets and objectives. The more you keep to yourself, the more you will feel stressed and lower your resilience.

# PHYSICAL ACTION

**How well do you look after yourself and how comfortable are you in taking action?** Feeling tired, hungry or thirsty makes it far more difficult to manage busy periods and many people also find it hard to take decisions. If you recognise this in yourself, then take a look at this step.

## SITUATIONS

“I’m feeling tired a lot of the time”

“I have no willpower to say no to eating unhelpfully, particularly on really busy, stressful days.”

“It’s too busy to take lunch or breaks - I need to keep working to get everything done.”

“I have a lot going on in and out of work. I’m struggling to balance everything and have no downtime for myself.”

“I haven’t got the time to exercise anymore!”

“I keep making silly mistakes. I just can’t seem to concentrate properly.”

*“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.”*

**Aristotle**

# ACTIONS

**Take regular exercise:** find 20 minutes each day to take a brisk walk or run that gets you out of breath. You need your physical health to boost resilience and deal with busy periods.

**Eat regularly:** keep your energy levels high. Try eating little and often to keep your blood sugar level balanced and don't skip breakfast or lunch – you need to refuel.

**Get enough sleep:** most people need 7-8 hours, work out your ideal amount and stick to it!

**Keep hydrated:** it's really important to keep drinking throughout the day – the average needed is usually at least 2 litres, and possibly significantly more, depending on your height, weight and physical activity.

**Take time out:** take time during the break and lunch away from your work and with others or doing something you enjoy. This really will help you to be more productive and to feel better throughout the rest of the day.

**Form effective habits:** easier said than done! You have a limited amount of willpower, but effective habits help you make decisions despite this: take regular breaks, focus on your controllables, see mistakes as learning opportunities, prioritise your work and regularly check in with your manager and support team.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO

Changing behaviours and habits is not easy and particularly in the environment in which you work.

Lack of control of what you are able to do, when you can take a break and the size of your workload, all add to the challenges you face.

Yet you do have choices, even though it might not always feel like it!

You have the same 24 hours in a day as everyone else and the ability to plan how to use this effectively.

You can also respond to pressures in a way that means you are in control. If you do not feel well equipped to do this, then the good news is you can learn, and some of the tips in the Resilience Essentials Handbook and these cards may help.

If you are worried in any way or recognise you are experiencing the symptoms highlighted in the resilience essentials guide, then you should seek professional guidance from your GP. And if you are worried about a colleague you might suggest that they do the same.

# welbee

Resilience Chat Cards 

<https://welbee.co.uk>

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