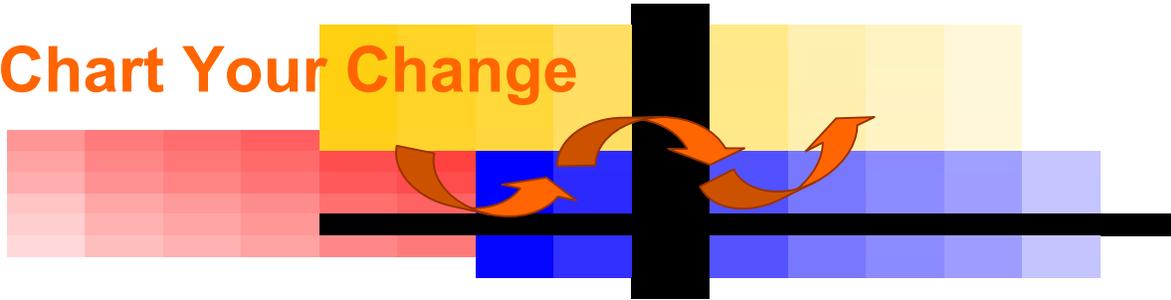


Chart Your Change



“A positive attitude may not solve every problem but it makes solving any problem a more pleasant experience.”
-- Grant Fairley



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Welcome to Chart Your Change.

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1. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The person who is a master
in the art of living
makes little distinction between
their work and their play,
their labor and their leisure,
their mind and their body,
their education and their recreation,
their love and their religion.
They hardly know which is which.
They simply pursue their vision of

excellence and grace in whatever they do,
leaving others to decide whether
they are working or playing.
To them, they are always doing both.

-- From the Zen Buddhist text

2. LESSONS LEARNED BUILDING ESSENTIAL STRENGTHS

While there is no way to change the negative circumstances of our childhood environment (for those who have experienced traumatic events), there are many ways to develop successful coping skills to counteract them now (even if we didn't developed these skills as kids).

One man responsible for making a transformational shift in the way we can approach life, Martin Seligman, founder of Positive Psychology, points out that there is a different way, a strengths-based approach. His research has demonstrated that it is possible to be happier — to feel more satisfied, to be more engaged with life, find more meaning, have higher hopes, regardless of one's circumstances.

Seligman describes the old approach -- which he says took over after World War II -- as victimology, an emphasis on psychological damage and on the impact of nurture over nature in our early environment as a driving force in our psyche. Psychologists then believed that people were shaped by environment -- a harmful or traumatic environment would inevitably result in a bent or skewed or non-functional person. However, this thinking defied the reality of numerous research studies which showed that at least one-fourth of the children, coming from the same harmful environment, did learn successful coping skills.

Dr. Emmy Werner, also known as the Mother of Resilience Research, conducted a long-term study of children of poverty, alcoholism and abuse and was surprised to discover that many recovered from their harmful backgrounds by the time they were in their thirties. She concluded that one's upbringing does not build a lifelong prison.

WHAT MAKES THESE CHILDREN DIFFERENT?

1. **They possess an inner resolve to transcend**, to make their lives work.
2. **They made a different choice.** In choosing and follow-through, there is resolve and something to hold onto that offers a better way.
3. **They recruit help.** Ideally, first and best of all, is to have parents who believe in you, and, if that fails, neighbors, friends, teachers. Not having to do it alone is the strongest element in transcending trouble -- we all need love and hope and help.
4. **Education** remains one of the most important factors in resilience. One young girl in the study, the daughter of drug addicts, told the researcher she felt completely isolated, except for school. There she felt competent.
5. **Mental distance.** If a family situation is insane, most people will build, within it, their own sanctuary and sanity. They learn the tricks of mental distance. They

escape: into music and books. Skills aren't only a way to build a better future, they are a safe house.

A WHOLE NEW VIEW OF STRENGTH

As adults, we may not realize that we too have a capacity for resilience. We too can learn to ask for help. We can learn to understand consequences and make a different choice. We can learn alternative ways to go at life, so that when trauma strikes, we don't become overwhelmed. The essential strengths are linked to our ability to reinvent ourselves, to stay open to possibilities and to reframe the way we see ourselves:

1. **The ability to see bad times as temporary.** During the Stock Market Crash of '29 the difference between those who despaired and those who weathered the crash was their perspective.
2. **Value the abilities you have.** Through insight and scrupulous self-assessment, a woman who felt helpless as a child begins to see that she was smart and had learned how to recognize and respond to her father's moods; she was an accomplished strategist.
3. **Reframe the way you see yourself.** Explore what you have, who you are and what you can do.
4. **Seeking support** is the fundamental building block to developing your strengths. Don't do it alone -- in fact, don't even try. One of the standout findings of resilience research is that people who cope well with adversity, are able to ask for help or recruit others to help them.
5. **There is no timeline**, no set period, for finding strength and coping skills. The ability to turn around is always there.
6. **Belief** -- be it in the future, the world at the end of the power lines, or in a higher power -- is an essential ingredient.
7. **Setting goals** and planning for the future is a strong factor in dealing with adversity. In fact, as University of California-Davis psychologist Emmy Werner, Ph.D., points out, it may minimize the adversity itself.
8. **Trusting** in oneself and recognizing one's strengths is important. University of Alabama psychologist Ernestine Brown, Ph.D., discovered that when children of depressed barely-functioning mothers took pride in helping take care of the family, they didn't feel as trapped.

THE TRIUMPH TO OVERCOMING THE ODDS

There's a satisfaction to overcoming adversity, especially when you didn't start out on stable ground. And many people, once they've made it through, have strong faith in themselves and their strengths, more so than those who have not been tried so hard.

Surprisingly, many people don't actually recognize their own strengths. Teaching them such self-recognition is a major part of any program helping adults focus on building strengths and a newly resilient approach to life.

Inspired from research studies cited in Psychology Today article.

3. COACH'S TIP # 7

REFRAME THE WAY YOU SEE YOURSELF

Organize your strengths into three simple categories:

1. I have (strong relationships, role models, structures and rules you live by)
2. I am (a person who has hope and faith, cares about others, is proud of oneself)
3. I can (communicate, solve problems, gauge the temperament of others, seek good relationships).

Write these three sentences and fill in the blanks. As you read your responses, notice from which category you draw the most confidence:

1. I have _____
2. I am _____
3. I can _____

Inspired from the work of Edith Grotberg, Ph.D, University of Alabama, Birmingham, who heads an international resilience project.

Have a Joyful Month



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Request Flo for your next event. In addition to being the founder of Thinking Well Consulting, Ms. Mauri is an Executive Coach and Educator at NYU, teaching Organizational Behavior, Emotionally Intelligent Leadership and Management Styles. She is certified in Conflict Resolution and Organization Development. Ms. Mauri specializes in assessment tools and self-awareness techniques for maximizing human potential. Are you getting in your own way toward advancing your true aspirations and talents? Are you experiencing challenges in your business relationships and want to breakthrough repetitive no-win cycles? Are you ready to define and lead with your strengths? A coach can help you take action to achieve your goals. Contact Flo today for a conversation.

Chart Your Change is your select source for inspiration, coaching tips and personal development. We share the very best of essays, research studies and success tools for taking your human potential to the top of Maslow's pyramid: self-actualization and transformation.

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