



Professional Resilience: Be Your Best Under Pressure

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Professional Resilience is:

- The ability to give your best even when you feel your worst
- The ability to act from your values, not your feelings

Understand Your Brain: The ability to give our best, think clearly, and maintain high levels of health has everything to do with our ability to stay out of defense and maintain high brain function.

Signs that the non-thinking, survival brain is too activated

Fight

My way is best...
Angry - Critical
Resentful
Argumentative
Defensive
Over explain
Snide Remarks
Exploding
Mean humor

Flight

Worry
Hurry
Anxiety
Make 'nice'
Tend
Befriend
Shutdown

Freeze

Can't fight or escape, so...
Overwhelm
Shutdown
Denial
Incapacitated
Helplessness
Hopelessness
'Deer in the headlights'

Negativity

Blaming
Whining
Complaining
Accusing
Bitterness
Critical
Mean/Snide

Judgment

I'm right
They're wrong
Judgment is fear
We all do it
*Be aware of who you judge
so you can remind yourself
to activate your thinking
brain when you are in their
presence*

Excitement

Infatuation
Passion
Agitation
Anticipation
Exhilaration
*Important to have in our lives,
but recognize that high brain
function is diminished*

Physical and emotional indicators

Tension headaches
Migraines
TMJ
Chronic Pain
Neck/shoulder/low-back
pain

Digestive upsets
Fatigue, loss of zest
Joint pain
Fibromyalgia
Sleep problems

Anger / irritation
Worry / hurry
Overwhelm / sadness

Know Your Indicators

The more aware you are of your survival brain reactions, the faster you will be able to make the shift and control them. Which are yours most often?

Practice Self-Regulation Techniques, Especially when Others Are Not

When we become surprised or upset, we hold our breath. Holding our breath tells the brain that something is wrong and it responds by releasing stress hormones: cortisol and adrenaline. These chemicals stop our thinking and activate our fight, flight or freeze reactions. Muscle tension, headaches, irritation, anxiety, poor decision-making, blaming and complaining arise. When we belly breathe and exhale fully, the brain receives the message that we are safe and stops manufacturing stress chemicals. It starts producing different chemicals, including serotonin, opiates and endorphins. These chemicals activate our relaxation response, our thinking brain and our health systems. With this chemical balance you can think clearly and stay calm plus enhance your immune, repair and growth systems which promote healing and stop physical and emotional pain. Because of social contagion, this shift positively impacts those in your presence in as little as 1/20th of a second.

Practice Belly Breathing:

Place a hand on your belly and the other hand on your low back. Feel both hands move out as you inhale, and move back in towards each other as you exhale.

A Belly Breathing Strategy

Inhale for a count of 4

Hold for a count of 2

Exhale for a count of 6-8

Rest for a count of 2

Belly out – shoulders down

Breathe in and out through your nose

To the degree that you can, breathe in and out through your nose. Nose breathing maintains the correct balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood, reducing tension and a potential 'fight or flight' response.

Tense, hurried or anxious? You're just a breath (or two) away

When you notice you have body tension or worried thoughts, lengthen and emphasize your exhalation. This slow, focused exhalation turns on your parasympathetic nervous system and activates your 'relaxation' response. Slow down to 4 – 6 belly breaths per minute.

Most Important Times to Breathe Each Day:

1. Before you sleep – after you get in bed, roll onto your back & take 7 long slow deep breaths
2. In the morning before you get out of bed (we don't get full oxygen exchange while sleeping). Empty out the stale air in your lungs.
3. Start your meetings and important conversations with a few deep breaths (and water)
4. When you want to act from your values and not be hostage to your emotions
5. In the presence of children
6. Before you greet (remember social contagion and your impact)
7. Before you eat
8. When you are with someone who is frightened, angry or upset

It is essential that at least one time a day you take 5 minutes to be still and breathe fully and deeply. This sends the signal to your brain that you are safe; turns off the signal to release stress hormones; and lets your body rest, recuperate and regenerate.