

# Resilience

## ***Presenter Pam Kerouack-Warner***

Hello. Thanks so much for taking some time today to listen to resilience. This is Pam Kerouack-Warner. I'll be talking with you about a number of aspects of resilience today.

### **Objectives**

We are going to talk about what resilience is. We'll talk about what makes someone resilient. And you might want to ask yourself, do I have these qualities? Is there something that I can really build for myself to build resilience? And lastly, how you can build it. I'll tell you you'll also have access to our life management resources and tools, and live monthly webinars, as well as an on-demand library. So make sure you check out your employee assistance program. Make sure you check out what we offer you online, because there's just a lot out there that's available to you to help with this topic, as well as many other topics. And by the way, don't forget. You have counseling sessions available free of charge, totally confidential. You just need to give us a call and we'll get you some names of some counselors in your area. You make that appointment. And again, because it's an employee assistance program counseling session, it is free of charge. It's for you, anyone in your household, and any children up to the age of 26, whether they live with you or not. So don't forget about that resource.

### **What is resilience?**

So let's start with what is resilience. Resilience is the ability to manage stress. Now, that sounds weird, right? Everyone experiences stress, but there are some people who are just better able to cope than others. You can have two people experience the exact same event. One person is overwhelmed by the event, but the other one seems to deal with it. Maybe even learn from it and then move on. And that difference between those two people is really based upon resilience. There's been a lot of focus on this topic in the last few years, because scientists have wondered, "Is resilience something that we're kind of born with? Or are there actually skills that people could practice in order to help build resilience?" And as I said, the good news is you absolutely can take steps to improve your resiliency. So we're going to talk about coping in a healthy way. And there are some unhealthy ways of coping. Right? When we just kind of sit there and be a couch potato, or we just scroll through social media for hours on end. Those are not healthy coping skills. But there are some really good coping skills that I'm going to share with you. Returning to our own normal. And I think that's such an interesting thought, right? That the normal. You probably have heard those over the last couple of years. The new normal, the old normal, returning to the normal. But what we're saying is returning to a place of a baseline for

yourself that you're comfortable. And sometimes we don't return. I think all the times when something happens, we don't go back to the way we used to be. It's almost impossible. What we do is learn from whatever situation we're facing. We integrate that new understanding. And we create the new normal for ourselves. So returning to our own sense of normal. And resilience is also building strength out of these negative events. What can we learn from what has happened? I'll share with you a quick understanding from myself. I had a lot of early losses in high school. Gosh, the first year my grandfather passed away. The second year my uncle and my dad passed away on the same day, unfortunately. And it took a lot to integrate that information for myself. But I'll tell you, it really had me very early on appreciating life, appreciating that we're not promised another day. Right? Appreciating that I need to have adventures and I need to live my life with full connection to it. And had that not happened, I don't know if that would've been the case. So yes, my heart grieved for a long time. However, I could build meaning out of the trauma of those losses. So think about that. No matter how challenging, and there's been a lot of other challenges for me. I'm sure there's been for you. What can you take with you? And what do you need to leave behind? Resilience does not mean that you don't get sad or hurt or stressed or overwhelmed. Resilience does mean that we address those feelings and emotions and events, and then we move on with our new understanding of the world.

## Qualities of resilient people

There are a lot of qualities of resilient people. One is a positive attitude. This idea of, "Okay, I have to integrate this event. I have to find a way to move forward. Well, how can I do so?" And that's the positive attitude. Looking for possibilities rather than being stuck in negativities. It's about being self-aware. Being aware of the strengths that you have. Right? That you can use in the given situations that you find yourself in. What are your strengths? What are your challenges? That's also something. And self-awareness, that's part of self-awareness, is what are the challenges for you? What are the areas that you could really use some support in? It's okay. We all have weaknesses. Right? But how do we offset those weaknesses? Either by using our strengths or by finding support in those weak areas. We talked already about the ability to find meaning in negative events. Right? And then hope for the future. Not false hope. I think there's a real challenge when we're talking about hope. Right? There can be hope that things aren't the way they are, and that's false hope. Right? Things are the way they are, and we must deal with whatever it is that we're presented. Hey, can I talk about the pandemic really quickly, since we're two years into it? There can be hope that this is not going to be impactful, which is not ... That's false hope. Or we can have hope that we can learn how to manage and live with the changes that this virus has brought to us. That's real hope. Right? Hope that we can learn and get through and build resiliency through this time. Do you know a resilient person? Think of some of the qualities that come to mind when you think about that person. I definitely ... I look at strength as being positive, as looking for opportunities, as looking for options and then picking the best option that's available. Sometimes we have to choose between not so good and bad options, and

we have to go with the not so good. Right? So unfortunately, sometimes the options aren't necessarily what we want them to be, but they are what they are. And a resilient person is going to make the best of it. And understand that when you move forward there's always other choices and possibilities coming your way.

## **What happens when there is a negative event?**

Let's talk about that negative event. What happens when something negative happens? Right? It could be anything. It could be something small, like you're stuck in traffic. That just happened to me last week. I was driving a very long distance, and it was not an easy drive. Or it could be something really life changing, like the loss of a job or a natural disaster, which we're seeing a lot more of today. Our bodies are built to respond to stressors really in a way that ensures our survival. So it's normal and it's healthy to respond in ways that sometimes make us feel bad. Right? So think about this. Having those anxious feelings. What am I going to do? How am I going to manage this? Sometimes we find a difference in our sleep or appetite, our attention. Right? There may be some fear that comes up with this negative event. And sometimes there's self-doubt. Maybe it's some negative feelings. Right? And it's important for us to pay attention to those processes so that we can get support and help, so that we can talk ourselves through this. And just even something like, "You know what? It's typical to feel this way when this negative event happens, so I need to engage in some really good self-care right now in order to get through." That might be talking with other people. It might be really shoring up your resources. It might be making sure that you're eating well and exercising so you can give yourself the best opportunity to manage this negative event.

## **Myths about resilience**

There are lots of myths about resiliency too. Let's bust some myths, okay? One is resilient people don't get stressed. Well, we know that's not true. Right? Resilient people can get stressed and do get stressed by life events. Resilient people have easy lives. That's a big myth. And I'll tell you, it's a really interesting myth, because most resilient people have had challenges, early challenges, that they've learned to overcome. They've built skills to manage those challenges. So more often, resilient people have had early challenges that they've had to get through, and they've had to learn skills to get through those challenges. And now they have them. And I'll tell you, unfortunately, people who have had really easy lives, I mean, it's nice at some level. Right? But they may not have built resiliency skills. So then when something throws them off, it's really hard for them to recover. I've seen that a lot. I teach college courses and psychology. And I've seen that with kids who come in. They're not really kids, they're young adults. But they come in with having had an easy time in high school. Everything was easy for them. They got the easy A's all the time. And then they come into college, and no one's monitoring everything they do. No one's paying attention to when the assignment is due. They're just

expected to pass the assignment in. And then I see these people, these young adults, some of which will fall apart and really be challenged by the demands of college. Because they haven't learned those early skills. And that's the same thing with resiliency. We need some challenges in order to build those skills. Resilient people recover from negative events right away. Well, we talked about that. It depends. Right? Think of your happiness is a baseline, kind of a place where you sit on a day to day basis. Right? Then something negative happens. Could be a loss, could be a threat, whatever it is. If you don't stay at that baseline. You fall below it until you can recover. And it takes different people different skills and different amounts of time in order to get back to that baseline again. And I will say resilient people might recover more quickly. Maybe even get stronger than they were before. It doesn't mean they don't fall below the baseline. Everyone does. And they have periods of being sad or feeling uncertain. They might have memories of the event that really trigger their upsetness. But they're going to come back to a baseline of happiness. How about resilience is something you're born with? We just talked about that. Right? That's not true. You can build skills in resiliency. So if you're not resilient, today's your day, because you're going to learn some skills to really shore up your resiliency.

## **Anyone can be resilient**

Anyone can be resilient. We're built for it. You don't have to have a certain amount of money or social status in order to be resilient. You don't have to have the exact combination of genes. You're built for resiliency. There's something that we have as humans called the adaptation phenomena. Really what happens, we all have this relatively stable level of happiness. And by the way, your level of happiness and mine may be different because we all have different baselines. Right? And what happens though as humans, despite major positive or negative events, we eventually come back to our baseline of happiness. We can change that baseline a little bit, by the way, depending upon the habits that we engage in. That's a whole other topic. So I won't divert too much to that topic. But I will say to you, we do have a stable, a fairly stable baseline of happiness. So think about this. People who live in cold climates eventually get used to the cold. Might not even bother them anymore. Right? People who live in hot climates tend to get accustomed to it. No matter what your circumstances, you are designed to adapt and adjust. And really think about this. Don't underestimate that power. I want you to think about this. A time where you demonstrated resiliency to a negative event. Right? Did it take you a little bit of time but then you got back to your baseline? We all tend to come back to this baseline. We're built for resiliency.

## **Your path to resilience**

I love this picture by the way, because there's different pathways to resiliency. And it doesn't mean that one pathway is better than the other pathway. The way you develop resiliency is your way. Right?

If you find things that work for you and your lifestyle, that's what you want to do. Right? And I'll tell you, somebody else might use different skills, because that's what works for them. So you can make your own decisions about what works for you and what doesn't. And what I would tell you is we're going to talk about some ideas. Don't overwhelm yourself and try everything at once. Just pick one idea and start utilizing that. And when you start integrating that idea into your life, then start working on another idea or a skill.

## **Resiliency: Build healthy habits**

So there's a couple steps we're going to talk about. We're going to talk about taking care of ourselves, creating a support network, building confidence, and dealing with negative self-talk. And we're going to go over each of these on the next few slides. But can I point out this picture? I just love this picture. Tell you a quick story. I was training one time for a sprint triathlon. And I like biking, I like swimming, but I am not a runner. So it was really a bit of a challenge to do this run. And so what I would do is I'd go down to the track, and I would start running. And I'd say, "Oh my gosh, I can't do this. I just can't breathe. I don't think I can run. I can't, I can't, I can't." And then I finally said to myself, "Why am I making this so much harder by reminding myself of my can'ts? Right? I can't do this." So what I ended up doing is switching my thinking. I started dealing with the negative self-talk. And I started telling myself every time I go down to the track, I'm noticing I'm going a little bit further. My breath is coming a little bit easier. And I don't want to tell you I ran with ease, because I really didn't. It was a challenge. However, it was so much easier when I said, "I can do this," and get rid of that T. Right? I can do this. I am breathing easier. I'm able to do this. That self-talk really helped me to persevere and complete the triathlon in a comfortable time. So what are you saying you can't do? What is it that you're telling yourself, "Oh, I can't possibly"? We have to start changing that and really dealing with it in order to start living the life that we most want. I can't possibly travel by myself. I can't possibly learn this new language. I can't do this. I can't do that. Let's start changing that up. Let's get rid of that negative self-talk. Let's take those scissors to the T and start really realizing that we can do the things and stop limiting ourselves.

## **Habits of resilient people**

So first and foremost is habits taking care of ourselves, engaging in relaxing activities like deep breathing, like massage, facials. Hiking in the woods is a relaxing activity. Right? What works for you? What helps you to be still and relaxed? Reading. I'm just thinking of some of the things that are my favorites. But what are your favorites? Jot them down. Because you really do need to include these things into your day to day. Life engage in relaxing activities. Exercise. 30 minutes most days of the week. People will say, "I'm too tired to exercise." And I always respond with, "You're too tired to not exercise. Exercise gives us energy." So if you're not doing it, you might want to implement that. 15

minutes. Just get started. 10 minutes. When you start really kind of pushing yourself to do that 10 or 15 minutes and then you start realizing the benefits of that, you're going to want to work up to those 30 minutes most days of the week. And by the way, do something you like doing. Why not exercise in ways that we enjoy, rather than forcing ourselves to do things we really don't even like doing? There are all forms of exercise. So many different types. Do something that really works for you. I think this is a fundamental, and I think many of us are not doing this fundamental. Eating well, eating from the color of the rainbow each and every week. Go shopping, get all kinds of colors of fruits and vegetables and incorporate them into your weekly diet. Add some good sources of protein and whole grains, and maybe even some dark chocolate now and then. Eating well actually helps us to focus. It helps to release stress. It feeds our mind, which is essential to concentration, focus, sleep, mood regulation. There's so much that goes along with eating well. Do things you enjoy. And if you don't know what those are, literally I've counseled people who were saying to me, "I don't even know what I enjoy." Then here's what I would answer. Try new things. Whatever might even a little bit appeal to you, give it a go. You don't have to continue doing it if you don't like it but give it a fair shake. Give it a try and see if it's something that you can incorporate into your life. I've learned so many new things over the last few years that I hadn't done before, and I'm finding, "Oh, I kind of like them." I learned pickleball. I paddle board. I love paddle boarding. I'm trying to learn a different language. So do different things so that you can find what works for you. And when you take good care of yourself, keep that in mind. When you take good care of yourself, you can take better care of others. Be curious about yourself. Do an experiment. The next time you feel stressed or overwhelmed, do something healthy. Like go for a walk, meditate, read, cook something healthy. Whatever it is, you might be surprised at the outcome when you do that.

## **Habits of resilient people**

All right. Habits of resilient people, creating a support network. I think this is really also important. Surround yourself with healthy people. People that are also setting goals and living life fully, that are really present to their emotions. Not trying to deny them. Be around healthy people. And I'll tell you, look around yourself. Who's in your network. Right? It's a key part of resiliency. So choose carefully the people you're going to include in your life. Your life is important. You shouldn't just invite any old person inside. Think of it like a VIP club. Only let people in who are going to respect and value you. People who will support you and lift you up. And it may be hard sometimes but asking for help is important. You don't have to go it alone. I will also tell you that research shows that helping others and connecting with your community in a way that gives back is linked to happiness. So think of ways that you can give back, connect with your community and give back, help others in need. It can really make a difference in your own feelings of self-worth and your own self-confidence, which let's talk about next.

## Habits of resilient people

Building self-confidence. Accept yourself for who you are. You have strengths. Right? And you have weaknesses. We all do. Focus on those strengths. Weaknesses we can compensate for, we can get support for. But those strengths, those are the things that are going to get us through. So focus on them. Appreciate yourself. I would encourage you to have an appreciation file. Just add things to that file whenever they come through to you. A strength that you could write down and put in your file. When someone says something to you that supports who you are, put that in that file. Because sometimes you're going to have to remind yourself of why you should be appreciating yourself. And you might need to pull that file out and remind yourself by what you've written down and what others have said. You might even jot down in that file sometimes that you solved problems, so that you can remind yourself when you're feeling overwhelmed, "Hey, I've done this before. I've been in this place of being this emotion, and I've gotten through it." Lastly, trust your instincts. I'll tell you. It's really important for us to understand that there's a part of ourselves that has awareness that we can feel, but we might not be able to just think it out. It's the unconscious. And that unconscious mind is always picking up information. And sometimes we might not be able to put our hand on that information, but our body really relates to it. We just have this instinctual understanding of: this is really not good for me, or this is good for me. And so sometimes we get away from trusting our instincts. And so one of the things you might want to consider is: do some daily mindfulness or daily meditation to just get back in touch with yourself, to get back in touch with those instincts that can really inform you and drive you forward when you're faced with challenges or decisions.

## Habits of resilient people

Habits of resilient people. Dealing with negative self-talk. Right? We all have a negative voice inside of us telling us maybe we should give up or we're not good enough. And sometimes it's tempting to go into that voice, but it hurts your resilience. And sometimes arguing with that voice can actually make it louder. So the best possible thing is to acknowledge that voice is part of you but it doesn't define you. It's like a pesky fly. You might even want to label the voice. This is my inner critic, or this is Pam's inner critic. Give it a name so that you can identify it when it shows up. And when those thoughts come up, you can recognize them again. "Oh, there's Pam's inner critic again," or whatever name that you have for it. And I'll tell you, you also have this compassionate witness inside of you. It's the true best friend that we carry within. And that compassionate witness can recognize the inner critic as a programmed part of our brain. Ah, there it is again. Right? Doesn't try to drown it out. Just doesn't take it personally either. Just says, "There we are again, having that critic voice come up." Is there a pattern to your inner critic? I'll tell you what. So I'm going to tell you another quick story. You know I like stories, right? So my sister was always told that she wasn't a good cook. I don't know why. Because the other siblings I have, I have three siblings, all of us really are good cooks. But she was

kind of told or led to believe that she wasn't a good cook. So that made her feel apart. Right? It made her feel different, and it always made me sad for her. In the last, oh, maybe 10 years or so, she really changed that around. And she just really decided, "You know what? I am a good cook." And so she started cooking more and more. She started watching cooking shows a lot. And then what she would say is, "Come on over for dinner. I'm making my famous mac and cheese," or, "I'm making my famous spare ribs." And I just chuckle every time she says it, because she has decided to use her compassionate witness to overcome that inner critic. Oh yeah. That's that voice from the past. Oh, there it is again, that voice from the past. Well, I'm just going to override that and move forward with my true understanding of my life as of this moment. Not what I've been told about myself, but what is actually true about myself. What have you been told about yourself? Maybe your parents or your teachers or your grade school friends? Notice when that critic comes up, label it, recognize it, and say, "You know what? I'm not that person anymore. Might not have ever been that person. This is who I am." Embrace your truth as it stands today.

## Accept discomfort

Accepting discomfort. It's so important. Change happens, right? Negative events happen. It's part of life. Nothing remains constant. I'll tell you. No matter how good something is, it's going to change. And no matter how bad something is, it's going to change. I want you to think about this for a minute. Lifting weights. Just for a moment, okay? What would happen if you always lifted the same amount of weight over and over again? Your muscles would never grow. Right? In order to grow your muscles, you have to get uncomfortable. You have to lift a heavier amount of weight. Might be hard. You might be sweating. You might not be able to do as many reps as you did before. But you know what happens? You're growing. You're improving. Stress, discomfort. It's a chance to grow and improve. You simply have to remain focused on your own skills, your own responses, your own thoughts and behaviors. Don't get focused on things that are outside your control. They're outside your control. Right? We want to focus on what we can control or influence. A lot of times negative events work like personal crucibles. Crucibles were the vessels medieval alchemists used in their attempts to turn base metals into gold. Negative events shape you. You're going to come out on the other side different. Maybe more informed, maybe stronger. It's a chance to really learn about yourself. Wow, I got through that, and this is how I got through it. And wow, that skill that I have here really helped me to overcome. So when we're comfortable with discomfort, we're growing. We're challenging ourselves. We're expanding. We're expanding our definition of who we are. Isn't that pretty fabulous? Right? We're learning more about ourselves and the talents and gifts we were given. Right?



## Get through it

Get through it. And I will tell you, the only way to get through it is to go through it. Again, there's a lot of things out of your control. In fact, most things are out of our control. But successful resilient people don't focus on those out of control things. It's a waste of time and energy. Instead, they choose to focus on what they can control themselves, what they can influence. They focus on how they think about the problem and how they're going to respond to the problem. They include thoughts about how they managed in the past and how they can use those skills in this current situation. Might even practice positive affirmations. I can get through this. I am strong and resilient. I am open to possibilities. Making good choices, practicing hope. It may be that the hope is about: I hope that things will work out for the best possible outcome. And I'm going to do my best to move through this event. Talk about that negative self-talk again. Right? We have to change it. Rather than, "I can't," it's, "What can I do? What can I influence?"

## Locus of control

I love this little diagram. But it's a little different than how I normally present it. So I want to show you something. We have this small circle right here of control. It's our own thoughts, feelings, behaviors, actions. That's it. Those are the things that we have. Right? Then you have this outside your control. You notice how much bigger that is? There's a lot of things we don't have control over, like traffic, the economy, the price of gas. Other people, no control over them. And it's a big circle. It's most things in our lives. But this influence, and why I don't like this particular diagram, because this is a broken circle. This is actually a broken circle. Because there's the ability to expand your influence or to contract your influence based upon what you do. So let's say other people. Right? Within the workplace, I can't control other people. But I can certainly influence other people by how I treat them, by how I set boundaries with others, by the respect that I give to other people. It's really interesting. I tend to be a fairly friendly person. And so to just today I went out this morning and I was meeting people in the grocery store. And when I picked up my dog food and a couple other places I went to, I just had some great responses from people. We were chatting and we were talking. And I was asking questions about others, and they were in turn being kind to me. And that's about influence. Because I could have went out this morning and been grudgingly pessimistic. And I might not have made eye contact, I might not have engaged in a conversation. I might just have walked in, got what I needed, not looked at the person, not asked them how they were today, and I would've had a very different experience. Right? That's influence. We influence the situations by what we control our own thoughts, actions and behaviors. So let's start looking at... And even, by the way, the environment. Right? Like I can't control gas prices. That's absolutely true. Neither can you. But I can influence the outcome by what I choose to do. Maybe I start planning my routes so that I'm driving less. Right? Spending less on gas. So I can't control it, but I can influence it based upon the actions I'm taking. I hope this is giving

you some ideas. I really like playing with this, so that you can really look at, "Okay, what do I control? And thereby, how can I influence the outcome?"

## **Be flexible**

All right. Let's go on to the next slide. Be flexible. It's so important. Give yourself permission to feel your feelings. And I have to say and. I don't like but. And I don't like avoiding strong feelings. Sometimes you have to acknowledge those strong feelings and just sit with them. So if I had my druthers, I would change this slide to say, "Give yourself permission to feel your feelings. And if they're strong feelings, you might just want to sit with them until they dissipate." Feelings flow. You don't get stuck in feelings unless you try to avoid them. It's really fascinating. The more we try to avoid a feeling, the more it shows up in our life. So if we could just kind of sit through the feeling, it goes away. It doesn't last. So depending upon the situation, you can work to resolve this issue, or you can take care of yourself. You have to make decisions here. What's the situation, and how do I want to move forward here? Spend time with loved ones and spend time alone. Right? Flexibility. What do you need at that time? Ask for help and try to do things for yourself. Again, both. It's important to have that flexibility. Offer help or focus on yourself. Again, depending upon where you are in the situation. There's a very old story about a tree and a reed that were in a rainstorm. It's actually great winds along with the rain. And the tree would tease the reed for being weak and small. But one day there was a really big windstorm, and the tree who acted strong and rigid and refused to bend was broken during the storm. But the reed, who was able to bend with the wind and adjust, was just fine. Sometimes in a storm you have to bend and adjust depending upon the moment.

## **Resiliency: Coming out on the other side**

Coming out on the other side. Finding hope, search for meaning, and learning from a past. After an event, you're going to be different. You'll be changed by it. But it's a chance to not only return to your baseline at some point, but really to exceed it. What's important to remember is this can take time. Don't expect this to happen overnight. And really learn to be patient with yourself.

## **Find hope**

So first is find hope. What's your desires? I love using visualization. In fact, you can use meditations and use mental imagery to look at: what do I need to start including more of in my life? What do I need to start letting go of so that I can open up space for new things to happen? It's a great way of visualizing your desires. Right? And then turn worries into plans. Rather than sit with worry. That's a future oriented activity. It doesn't help you in the present. So instead of worrying, let's kind of figure out what is it that I'm worried about and start making a plan of action. In fact, write down that plan of

action. So for instance, if I'm worried about somebody else, that doesn't help. What may help is making a plan to call them once a day, once a week, offering support in whatever way I can offer. If you are worried about your finances, that's not very helpful. So instead, plan how you're going to spend your income. What unnecessary things can you get rid of? How can you reuse and reduce and recycle. Right? Those are important steps if you're worried about finances. So let's just, instead of worrying, it's a useless waste of energy, let's kind of figure it out. And practice optimism. Right? Not false optimism, but real optimism. I can make this work. I can figure out a plan of action to move forward. It's really important. So that you can ...

## Quote from Fred Rodgers

Well, I love this quote. Let's pause for a minute. When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Right? It's a totally different shift in how we look at things. We can be scared or we can look at, wow, there's resilience here. There's resilience that's happening. How can we support that resilience?

## Search for meaning

Search for meaning. Right. I think that's really important. Search for meaning. When bad things happen, we can easily get stuck in the moment and get tunnel vision. Instead, let's try to think about the big picture. Right? What's the outcome? What can I learn from this experience? How can I move forward? I lost my job. That really rots, right? We don't like that. It makes us feel upset and anxious. But what's the long term? Well, it could offer possibilities I haven't been allowing myself before. Right? So let me figure out my next step to move forward. Search for meaning. How can you move forward?

## Learn from the past

Learn from the past. Think about your past and learning from it is a great way to learn more about you. Right? What have you done to move forward based upon the experiences you've had in the past? Both the good and the bad, by the way. You can learn from positive things, just like you can from negative things. Right? How'd you respond? Did humor work for you? Did planning work for you? Were you a strategist? What did you learn about yourself when you look at some of these past experiences?

## The Waffle House Index

I love the Waffle House Index stories. So let me share this a bit with you. In the aftermath of a natural disaster, the head of FEMA tries to measure the damage. And it often includes looking at the storm itself and photographs of the affected areas. But they also use something called the Waffle House Index, because Waffle House is a 24/7 restaurant and they seem to be expert in resilience. They're great at bouncing back. And many of their restaurants are located in disaster-prone areas. So if the Waffle House is serving a full menu, damage is limited. They literally have a cold food menu if they don't have electricity. So if they're not serving hot food, things are pretty shaky. And if it's closed, there's likely severe damage. Because again, they're experts at resiliency. So what can we learn from the Waffle House Index?

## The Waffle House principles

Well, have a manual. You may not have a life manual, but you can certainly have that list of strengths and resources, both internal and external resources. And if you find that that list is too short, that's an area that you can start building. Right? Building resources in your community, in your personal life, in your workplace. That's the manual that you are creating of strengths and resources. Accept the situation. Because I'll tell you what, even if you don't accept it, it is what it is. Right? Focus on what you can control and influence, not on the problem itself. Because the solution lies in you, not on the problem. Be flexible, like that reed in the storm. You may do a little more on some days, a little less on others, kind of go with the flow instead of being resistant and rigid. Know you're going to get through it. You have to really trust and believe, "I'm going to get through this. I'm going to learn something from this, and I'm going to move on and integrate this." And again, I get it. Sometimes things just take us to our knees, and they're really hard to manage and get through. But you will. You just keep plotting through and find the best outcomes, best ways of moving forward. Use the choices that you have available to you.

## Thank you for attending!

Listen, I want to thank you so much for listening to me today. I sure do appreciate it. I hope you found maybe some insights and some information that maybe you didn't have before. I think it's really important for us to understand that resilience is something that we can build, that we don't necessarily just come to the table with, but that we can learn and we can use skill building to really improve our resilience over the course of our life. So again, Pam Kerouack-Warner here. Thanks so much for listening to me. Hopefully we'll get a chance to have a live session in the future together. Take care now.

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