

Resilience:

The 8 Skills You Need to Live Your Life with Inner Strength and Mental Toughness



**Presented By
Connie Ragen Green**

"Life Doesn't Get Easier or More Forgiving; We Get Stronger and More Resilient."
~ Steve Maraboli

I'm Connie Ragen Green and I'm an author, publisher, and entrepreneur. In 2005 I found myself feeling like I needed to make a big change in my life. I had been working as a classroom teacher in the inner city of Los Angeles for twenty years. Although this was a career I loved, as I got older it became a job that was more physically and psychologically demanding than it had been when I first started. I wanted and needed a change and I was more than ready to work on my mindset as I set new life and career goals.

In my spare time (this is an attempt at humor, as teachers don't really have any spare time!) I worked as a real estate broker and residential appraiser. This was work I had done since before I returned to school to earn my teaching credential. For all of those twenty years in the classroom I had worked after school, on the weekends, and during our scheduled breaks throughout the school year with my real estate clients. This enabled me to own a home and care for my aging mother on a single income in one of the most expensive cities in the world.

When I made the conscious decision to resign from my teaching position and turn my real estate clients over to people better suited to meet their needs on a full time basis I knew I would have to learn the skills required to be a more resilient person and one with inner strength and mental toughness. What follows here is the culmination of more than twenty years of study, implementation, course correction, and success in my work as an online marketing strategist, multiple bestselling author, independent book publisher, and entrepreneur.

My goal is to teach you how to develop specific life skills that will serve to help you maintain enthusiasm while moving from one opportunity to another during your lifetime. If I can do it, you can do it, too.

Take your time going through this material so you will get the most out of the ideas and concepts I am sharing here. And do not be fooled by the simplicity of each skill; my motto has been to keep everything as simple as possible since coming online in 2006 to start my business.

Thank you in advance for having an open heart and mind around this topic of resilience and mental toughness. Years ago I would have dismissed these ideas as being a waste of time and now I understand they are the reason I have been able to change myself from the inside out and create a lifestyle by design that has opened up the world to me. If only I had known decades ago my life could be so different from what it was at that time.

Wishing you a creative, prosperous, and productive life of joy and fulfillment!

Connie Ragen Green

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Resilience: The 8 Skills You Need to Live Your Life with Inner Strength and Mental Toughness

1. Develop your understanding of resilience and mental toughness
2. Enhance your emotional regulation skills so you are in control
3. Take full responsibility for your situation to grow exponentially
4. Build a solid and supportive community of like-minded individuals
5. Practice gratitude and forgiveness for yourself and others in your life
6. Strengthen your relationship with yourself with a morning routine
7. Move your body throughout each day to keep blood flowing to your brain
8. Challenge yourself regularly with new skills and projects

Skill #1 - Develop Your Understanding of Resilience, Inner Strength, and Mental Toughness

What does it mean to be resilient and have mental toughness?

In order to strengthen resilience, it's important to understand the concept in depth. Resilience is the ability to move forward by *growing* through every part of life's process. Struggling is a natural part of living. What matters is how we react to struggle.

It's easy to let difficulty keep us down. It isn't easy to stay afloat when the waters are rocky, and it's okay to feel that struggle. Resilience is associated with toughness. Part of being tough means admitting to difficulty and working through it instead of ignoring it.

How many times have you heard someone say "just toughen up" or something similar? While it is easy to say what does mental toughness really mean?

According to Wikipedia it is defined as:

"Mental toughness is a collection of attributes that allow a person to persevere through difficult circumstances (such as difficult training or difficult competitive situations in games) and emerge without losing confidence."

At one time being told to toughen up was thought of as being cliché. The view on mental toughness has now changed. Who isn't leading a more stressful life these days?

Life can really throw you a curve ball at any time and it is important to have that mental toughness to deal with any situation. How you deal with a stressful situation is directly related to your mental toughness.

Having mental toughness is an asset when it comes to all types of situations including: sports, facing an emergency, dealing with a major injury and more. For example a marathon runner needs mental toughness to overcome the pain of running so many miles.

They have to dig deep and find the strength to keep on going, even when their body is screaming at them to stop.

When a person can get through these barriers they are often the people who will succeed in life. They have trained themselves both physically and mentally to keep going. This is what makes the difference between being good at something and excelling at it.

Learning to push through and deal with whatever life throws at you is possible for anyone. You just need to be prepared to train your mind and body to do this.

Research has shown that as a person ages they do become tougher. A senior person may have a weaker body due to their age, but mentally they can be super tough!

On the downside some people who appear to be mentally tough are often insensitive to certain situations. This may make them seem tough, but in fact they could be lacking in certain skills such as building relationships with people.

The world today has evolved into a busy and stressful environment. It is important to have a certain degree of mental toughness just to survive. On the upside we have developed into a society that is not afraid to speak out. People are encouraged to discuss their stressors and so can find help more easily.

Life is something that you can either go through, or grow through. Resilience requires the willingness to grow and adapt. Life has peaks and valleys. It is always changing. If you're able to accept this, you'll find that you're more motivated to get curious about the lessons of each moment. You're not born with resilience, but you can develop this skill.

Benefits of Strengthening Your Resilience

When you practice the skills that go into being resilient, you'll notice positive changes in your life. Bouncing back from adversity doesn't mean that things will just get back to normal, but that they will get to an even better place.

How to Put These New Skills into Practice

It can appear difficult to implement new habits, especially when they involve making big changes in your life. Keep in mind that you can learn something from everything you encounter, and this is a good opportunity to learn something that will improve your self-worth and enthusiasm for life.

When you're learning something new, it's easy to beat yourself up for not getting it immediately. Let go of self-judgment and try something new. If it doesn't work out the first time, see what might work for you in the future and go from there. Go easy on yourself when you're seeing what works for you.

Keeping a journal can help you get your thoughts out so that you don't have to keep them in your brain. Sometimes it can be overwhelming to have so many thoughts swirling around like a whirlpool. Writing it out can help ease that feeling. Set a timer for 10 minutes and write whatever comes to you, even if it doesn't make sense.

One of the skills you'll learn emphasizes the importance of building community. You can use this skill to implement changes you want to make by asking for accountability. Having people around you who know the changes you're trying to make will remind you of your goals.

As your self-awareness improves, so will your ability to maintain a positive outlook on your progress. If you can look back at the work you do and be proud of yourself even if you were not perfect, you'll be more confident in your ability to grow.

Part of resilience is facing difficult things head-on. That can bring up some difficult emotions. Explore how to handle those emotions in the next skill.

Skill #2 - Enhance Your Emotional Regulation Skills So You Are in Control

You have the freedom to choose your reactions. Your emotions and thoughts are not facts that you need to act on.

You can reframe any situation in order to see it from a positive perspective. Look at the situation in a new way and avoid mind-reading or attempts at predicting the future. Practice mindfulness skills by doing something that directs your attention to the present moment.

Increase positive experiences by doing things you enjoy and making happy memories. There isn't very much that we have direct control over in our lives. For example, we cannot control other people, the weather, and traffic. Though it may seem difficult, we *can* control our reactions to the many things we have no control over.

If you feel like you have no control over your reactions and emotions, have no fear. There are specific things you can begin doing that will improve your ability to mindfully walk through your feelings in a productive way.

Having the ability to regulate emotions means responding to all levels of emotional situations in a way that helps you rather than hurts you. The development of this skill will lead to more resilience by providing a way to feel emotions without letting them control your behavior.

The inability to regulate emotions leads to insecure relationships and shame because it doesn't directly address the core emotions. Working on emotion regulation will help you identify emotions and react to situations in a reasonable way. It will help you address what is causing your suffering without engulfing you in negativity.

Re-Frame the Situation

There are a number of things you can do to strengthen your ability to regulate your emotions. A great way to begin this practice is by implementing a concept called "cognitive reappraisal." This involves changing your perspective on a negative situation into a positive one.

It's easy to assume that the worst thing possible is going to happen. We tell ourselves stories about the semantics of emails, the odd looks we get, and what the future holds for us. It's easy to wonder what the next unfortunate thing will be.

This habit creates unnecessary suffering and frequently leads to further negative emotions rather than good ones. It's impossible to mind-read and we cannot tell the future. By attempting to do so, more frustration comes and it's difficult to handle. Instead, look at the situation objectively to consider other scenarios.

For example, imagine you're having dinner with your family, and someone gives you a look that seems frustrated or annoyed. Immediately, your mind may start racing to the possible things that could be wrong. You play through everything you've ever said or done that could have caused this person to look at you that way.

If you believe these negative things so much, you'll noticed heightened negative emotions and a poor attitude. Thoughts begin to flood, and your behavior may be influenced.

Instead of assuming anything about what might have caused this situation, you can pause to take a step back and re-reframe your perspective.

Rather than having the thought, "They are mad at me for no reason," you could re-frame that idea and consider the thought, "They might be having an off night, or that look was not intentional." By thinking of these things differently, you'll feel your anxiety lessen and your emotions will not turn into something too powerful to keep track of.

When you find that you're feeling strong emotions, you don't have to push them down and tell them not to exist.

Allow Negative Emotions

It's important to understand that all emotions are valid. If you tell yourself that there are emotions you're not allowed to feel, those emotions won't go away. Instead, they'll make their way into the ways you speak to yourself, behave, and regulate emotions in the future.

If you can practice accepting your emotions, you'll notice that it's easier to feel them. Acceptance doesn't mean that you have to be pleased with your emotions. It doesn't mean that you have to be at peace with the current situation. Accepting your emotions simply means that you're acknowledging the truth of what you feel.

Rather than trying to push down your emotions, it helps if you can label them instead. When you can label what you're feeling as an emotion, you can say to yourself, "Right now I am feeling anger," and you'll notice a new separateness begin to form where the emotion doesn't feel so much like it's controlling you.

It isn't always easy to acknowledge your emotions and not do anything in reaction to them. One way to develop this skill further is by practicing mindfulness skills.

Mindfulness encourages non-judgmental awareness and will help you sit with your feelings rather than react to them.

Mindfulness helps to tether us to the present moment. These skills build resilience and they enhance your quality of life. Doing these things daily helps strengthen your brain function and reminds you of good coping skills in the future.

Increase Positive Emotions

Whether you're in a time of distress or a time of peacefulness, it's important to have positive experiences. Sometimes we get lost in the hustle and bustle of life and we forget to have fun on purpose. By doing things to have a good time, you're setting yourself up for success in the future.

Having positive memories helps give hope when times are difficult.

If you're struggling, try doing something you've previously enjoyed. Give yourself permission to have a nice time, even if things feel like they're falling apart around you.

You can increase positive emotions by doing things that you enjoy. You can watch your favorite stand-up comedian, go on a hike in the woods, or enjoy a cooking class. If you can't think of anything you like, start by going on a walk or taking a shower and being mindful while doing so.

Knowing how to regulate your emotions is a powerful tool for resilience. This skill offers the ability to sit with emotions and move on from them without making impulsive decisions.

When you're going through a stressful period of life, it can feel like everything is out of control. However, you *can* control your reactions.

Skill #3 - Take Full Responsibility for Your Situation to Grow Exponentially

It is impossible to be perfect all the time. We all make mistakes because we simply cannot always know what the right thing to do is. Admitting that you make mistakes will increase your resilience.

Get curious about the role you play in every part of your life. Even if someone wronged you, get curious about your behavior and reaction. You never have to blame yourself. Simply look at the situation so that you can learn how you want to behave in the future.

As mentioned, there isn't much in this world that you have the power to control. Understanding that fact will provide freedom from a lot of stress.

Just as we have the power to control our reactions to situations, we also have the power to control the next action we take.

If you're able to take a step back and look at a situation objectively, you'll be able to use the information you gain to inform your next steps. It takes humility to look at a situation and see what you could do differently.

Every situation is an opportunity to learn more about yourself. If you can look at yourself while taking a step back to understand with compassion, you'll be able to make wise, well-informed decisions in the future.

Get Curious

Taking responsibility for your part of your situations can help you take charge of your life. When you're able to look at your life and take a look at your role in it, you can realize your power to overcome.

Begin by getting curious about the situation. For example, if you were fired from your job, you might ask, "Was there anything I could have done differently?" or "What can I learn from this to help me in my next job?"

Remember to have a totally non-judgmental attitude. If you're criticizing yourself, you're not taking responsibility but, instead, digging yourself further into the challenge.

You don't have to think that everything is your fault. Most of the time, it isn't. However, it will strengthen your resilience to take an honest look at your part in your circumstance.

Are there people you need to apologize to?

Sometimes taking ownership for your actions can be difficult. It's important to have humility, especially when you're apologizing to others. Your ability to verbalize your wrongdoings will display your maturity and ability to emotionally regulate.

Resentment can hinder the ability to apologize. If you feel resentment toward anyone, you can take responsibility of your forgiveness process.

Make Changes

It's difficult to understand exactly how to take responsibility for your own happiness. When things feel out of control and chaotic, it can seem even more difficult. There are a few ways you can really begin to implement changes that will last.

Begin by implementing consistent daily routines. Do the same things each morning that help you get prepared for your day. Include five minutes for a mindfulness exercise.

You can schedule your time in order to help you set boundaries and keep track of your personal growth.

Set reminders to go off throughout the day that will guide you back to the present moment. These reminders can help you to pause in the present moment and move forward from there. Maybe you're in the middle of a crisis and a reminder goes off. This will remind you that you get to make your own decision.

Check in with yourself a few times a day to identify some emotions. By getting in the practice of identifying your emotions, you'll be better able to take responsibility for them and make changes that meet your needs. When you can identify your emotions frequently, you'll be better able to identify them in times of confusion and doubt.

Remember to see every moment as a learning opportunity. Continually ask yourself, "What am I learning from this?" Thinking about this will help you feel more empowered to make changes in your life because it will increase curiosity and self-confidence.

Skill #4 - Build a Solid and Supportive Community of Like-Minded Individuals

Community adds meaning to life and creates stronger connections between you and the world around you.

There are many ways to build your community. It is all about what is realistic and fun for you.

It does require effort and attention to develop new relationships. Talk to those you care about and actively listen to them.

Use Your Community to Hold You Accountable

Increasing resilience means building a strong support community. You don't need to have many people in your support group, but it's important to reach out and make new connections when needed.

A community is strong catalyst for a meaningful life. Having others to share our highs and lows with gives a stronger sense of purpose and acceptance. When we're going through difficult times, it's of the utmost importance to hold on to a community.

Other people can serve as guideposts, cheerleaders, and supporters when we let them in. Building a community is a vulnerable thing to do because you have to reveal parts of yourself that show you might not be perfect. It might feel scary at first, and then it will feel freeing and relieving.

Try these techniques to build your community:

1. Analyze your community. Look at the people around you and examine your relationships with them. Do they need to be closer? Do you need to meet more people? Are there ways you can open up?
2. Strengthen connections. Bonding with friends is important, and you can do so by inviting your friends to participate in activities you're interested in. Doing things you enjoy with the people you care about is a great way to build a stronger connection.
3. Allow time for conversation. Actively listen to your friends by responding to what they have to say and staying off of your phone. By getting to know your friends better, you'll allow them to get to know you better.
4. Join a group. You can find local groups of people who are interested in things you love. Engaging with them frequently will give you a group of people that you can confide in and rely on.

Communicate

Communication is a skill that is indispensable for getting around daily life. Working on communication skills will enhance the connections you have with others and build new bridges.

The first thing to think about when it comes to communication is listening. Talking is important, but nothing will get done if someone isn't a good listener. Actively listen to those you're engaging with. You can do this by making eye contact with them, facing them, and really listening to what they're saying.

If your mind is wandering, that means you're drifting from the present moment. Bring your attention back to your conversation.

Be aware of your body language when you're with others. Much of what we say is said with our body language. Relieve any unnecessary tension in your body, relax your arms and shoulders, and ensure your arms aren't crossed.

Closed-off body language sets a negative tone. Open and positive body language is better for conversations.

Show confidence when speaking to others. If this is something you struggle with, that's okay. Practice is the only way to get better, and you'll become more comfortable. You can increase confidence by standing tall and being aware of what you say. Speak thoughtfully and listen carefully.

Having confident body language will help you become more confident mentally.

Remain Accountable

When you have a community, you have a group of people who can support you through rough times. When you're struggling, they will help you to help yourself up. When you're celebrating, they will celebrate with you.

These kinds of connections add a stronger sense of purpose and meaning in life. If you're hoping to implement some changes in your daily routine, you can call on people in your community to hold you accountable. You can do this by letting your friends know what your goals are and when you would like to complete them.

For example, if you're hoping to go to a yoga class by Wednesday, let some of your friends know your goal. Once Wednesday rolls around, they can ask you how your yoga class was. If you're nervous to attend a yoga class, you can ask one of your friends to join you to ease the stress that trying something new can bring.

Having a strong community builds resilience by ensuring that you have people who have your back.

If you're going through a difficult time, you can rely on your support community to provide encouragement and guidance. If you're stuck in a rut and are not sure what to do next, you can consult your community. They can offer new perspectives and give you ideas for solutions you had not thought of.

You never have to worry about being a burden on your support system. They can offer a light in times of darkness, and you can do the same for them when they're struggling.

The purpose of a community is to have a place where you feel accepted. By feeling accepted, you'll find a stronger feeling of hope. Others can help bring you back to reality when you have tunnel vision during a difficult situation.

Skill #5 - Practice Gratitude and Forgiveness for Yourself and Others in Your Life

Practicing gratitude brings about positivity, even when it's hard to stay positive.

Make a gratitude list each day and see what happens in your attitude. You don't have to come up with grand things to be grateful for. If you like the pen you write with, be grateful for that pen. If you're having a bad day and can't think of anything, practice being grateful for the oxygen or your pet or your favorite meal.

Express gratitude for the people in your life. Even if you only have a few, you can build your relationships by letting them know how much they mean to you. It can be difficult to find good friends, and expressing gratitude is a great way to allow even more friendship.

Be authentic. Authenticity breeds joy and stronger relationships with those around you. Check in with yourself and ensure you're allowing yourself to be seen.

You can change your current outlook by balancing your negative thoughts with some positive thoughts.

For example, if you're thinking, "I will never understand this," you can replace that thought with, "I am excited to keep learning." This offers a shift in perspective that will help with tolerating emotional distress.

Apologize when you need to. This takes humility and courage, and it will strengthen all of the relationships in your life.

Let go of resentment. It can be difficult to move forward when anger is weighing on your shoulders. You do not have to carry this around anymore. You're capable of letting go and forgiving.

Forgive Others

Sometimes people wrong us in big ways that impact our lives. Sometimes we feel resentment toward someone for something small, but we just cannot seem to shake it. Regardless of the situation, there are things you can do to forgive.

Others don't always live up to our expectations. They disappoint us, or they intentionally interfere with our lives. Once trust is broken, it's easy to place high expectations on what that person must do in order to prove their worthiness for your forgiveness.

Believe it or not, you have control on when and who to forgive. You can decide to forgive someone right now, if you want, without them doing anything in return for you.

The process of forgiveness can be long, especially if you've had resentments for a long time. However, by repeating a forgiveness exercise over and over, you'll ease the weight that resentment puts on your shoulders.

Skill # 6 - Strengthen Your Relationship with Yourself with a Morning Routine

Begin with the basics. Take care of your body, brain, and environment.

Pay attention to the patterns of critical self-talk you play in your head. Replace these negative phrases with positive affirmations.

You are allowed to care about yourself. It is not selfish to prioritize yourself. It is necessary.

All too often, we ignore and criticize ourselves when what we need most is self-compassion. Self-compassion involves having an accepting and non-judgmental attitude toward ourselves, no matter what. Part of building resilience is building your ability to care for yourself.

Self-Care Basics

The first step in creating a self-compassionate outlook is taking care of the basics. It may seem small but doing intentional things to take care of yourself can alter the way you see yourself.

Start with hygiene. This is where you can make the quickest adjustments and begin to feel feelings of success.

Ensure you brush your teeth each day, for example. Your dentist will be happy, but even more happens. You can spend your time brushing your teeth by thinking of it as dedicated time where you're taking care of yourself.

When you take a shower, be mindful and notice how the shampoo smells, how clean you feel, and how nice the water feels. Being mindful in this way will increase your ability to care for yourself.

A great step to building small successes is making your bed each day. This has been widely seen as an effective way to start the day because you get to start off your day with a success. Even though this may seem small, the best way to start being successful is by achieving small successes along the way.

If you're having an off morning and you make your bed anyway, you're showing a commitment to yourself and your life. That is resilience in action.

Pay attention to the food you eat. What we eat affects our brains, so it's important to nourish your brain and body with nutritious food. You don't have to change your whole diet - you can simply add a few vegetables to your dinner or eat fruit throughout the day.

Get to know what your body needs more of and give that to yourself. This is a great path to self-care.

Schedule a time each day, or even once per week, where you tidy up your home. Clean the countertops, put away the dishes, sweep the floors, and do laundry. If you can keep up with small cleaning times, you'll find that your living space feels lighter and happier.

It's important to have the environment you live in reflect your needs and who you are.

If you're having a difficult time, your house may get messy. This clutter will hinder your growth. If it's hard to get the motivation to clean your house, ask someone in your community to help you get started. Often, having someone there with us when we need to do difficult tasks helps us get the job done, even if they aren't a huge help.

Just knowing you have that support can make all the difference.

Addressing Critical Self-Talk

How do you talk to yourself? Spend a couple of days noticing what you say. Start by simply observing the phrases you tell yourself.

What do you think when you've succeeded at something? Are you proud of yourself? What do you think when you've made a mistake? Do you beat yourself up?

Some people have critical self-talk regardless of their success. If they gain a success, they think, "I have to be perfect forever," or "I could have done better." And when the mistakes happen, that critical talk gets even worse. They might say things like, "I am worthless," or "I will never get anything right."

A common misconception is that critical self-talk is a good motivator.

Sometimes, saying, "I love you" to yourself is seen as something to be embarrassed about. It can even be perceived as conceited.

However, positive self-talk isn't conceited. Negative self-talk isn't a good motivator. If you thrive off critical commentary, try changing your thoughts to self-compassionate ones and see what happens.

It may appear difficult to change your thoughts. Thankfully, it isn't too difficult when you commit to changing your thoughts and have willingness to do so.

After you spend time learning the negative things you say to yourself, balance those things out with positive thoughts about yourself.

For example, if one of your phrases is, "I will never reach this goal," you can turn that phrase around by balancing it out. Instead, you can say, "I am a hard worker and capable of reaching all of my goals."

Having the feeling that you'll not be able to do something is a great opportunity for some self-motivation. If you're struggling to achieve something, that's also a good time to ask for help from someone who can provide encouragement.

You can give yourself permission to praise yourself.

When you've had a long day of hard work, you can look in the mirror and say, "Wow, you really worked hard today. Thank you." Talking to yourself in the mirror may seem strange or uncomfortable. Try saying nice things to yourself in the mirror once a day for a continuous period of time.

You'll notice that your self-talk gets nicer throughout the rest of your day and you begin being kinder to yourself.

Take Time to Care

It's important to take hold of our thoughts when we're noticing critical self talk. Thoughts are simply words, they are *not* facts. You can watch them float by, you can replace them with positive affirmations, and you can ask for help to get over them.

Taking action to love yourself is just as important as changing the way you talk to yourself. You can do this in small ways. These self-care routines go above the basics and encourage you to get a bit more creative with doing things that will nourish you.

Do these activities to practice self-compassion:

1. Write yourself a nice note. The note doesn't have to be long but it can be if you want. Start with just two or three sentences. Write something encouraging like, "I am glad you exist, and I am proud of the work you do." You can give yourself the words that will help you heal.
2. Spend an hour outside. Get some fresh air and mindfulness while you spend time at a local park, in the forest, at the beach, or anywhere else outside. Nature is a natural healer, so being in the open air can offer a new calmness to your brain.
3. Turn off your phone and pay attention to you. Take a break from social media, emails, and other notifications that take you out of the present moment. By truly immersing yourself in your own time, you'll build a stronger connection to yourself. If this time feels uncomfortable, use it to say positive things to yourself.
4. Write it out. Keep a journal or notebook for positive, encouraging thoughts about yourself. Write out some critical self-talk phrases and then come up with balancing thoughts that work for you.
5. Take yourself out to dinner. It may feel uncomfortable to go to a restaurant by yourself, but it's a great practice for enjoying the time you spend with yourself. Sometimes spending time alone can feel like loneliness. Go out to eat your favorite meal in order to intentionally do something kind for yourself.

Take the time to take care of yourself. By strengthening the relationship you have with yourself, you'll see other parts of your life improving, too. Your relationships will be more authentic, you'll feel more motivated, and mistakes will not feel like total failures.

These habits will improve resilience by helping you self-motivate when things are difficult. By practicing self-compassion, you're strengthening yourself to handle everything life throws your way. If you can face difficulty without berating yourself, you'll stand tall and remain hopeful.

Skill #7 Move Your Body Throughout the Day to Keep Blood Flowing to Your Brain

Exercise is excellent for your short-term and long-term physical health.

Get your body moving to reduce your anxiety, depression, and stress. This is a great coping skill because it builds confidence and self-worth by changing your neural pathways in your brain.

There are many ways to exercise. Pick an activity that you enjoy.

The best way to get started is to get started. Go easy on yourself by setting goals that are achievable. You can always make these goals more difficult as you progress.

Exercise increases resilience. Part of nurturing your body is exercise, which also strengthens your mental capacity. When you exercise, you're training your brain to respond to stress in a new way.

Benefits of Exercise

The first thing we think of when we think of exercise is how it affects the body. It helps with weight management, muscular health, and body functioning. Exercise also reduces risk of heart attack and lowers high blood pressure.

Physical activity is important to maintain throughout your life. It helps with health risks that come with getting older and it ensures good health long-term.

There are physical benefits galore. What really makes an impact, though, is what goes on inside your brain when you make exercise a regular part of your life.

Consider these benefits of exercise:

1. Exercise acts as a natural antidepressant. If you're struggling with depression, exercising can help relieve the depression and give you energy to take care of the

things you need to take care of. If you're not currently depressed, exercise will help decrease your risk of falling into a depressive state.

2. Exercise eases anxiety. It naturally calms the brain and builds new, positive neural pathways. Be mindful while you exercise. How does your body feel? Where can you relax? What are the sounds you hear? By paying attention to the details of your moment, you're benefiting from mindfulness and easing anxiety.
3. Exercise builds resilience by providing an excellent outlet for stress. When life is chaotic and out of control, you can participate in exercise and begin to feel better, even if for an hour. Exercising consistently reduces overall stress and helps you handle stressful situations more effectively.
4. Exercise releases pent up energy. By moving your body and appreciating what it can do, you're clearing out negative emotions and allowing new ones to come in. While you're exercising, it's easier to put some distance between you and your struggles.
5. Exercise helps you cope. You can allow yourself to feel proud of what your body can do. You can feel proud of your hard work and your progress. Giving yourself that positive attention will help you build your relationship with yourself.
6. Exercise increases confidence and self-worth. This occurs not only because your body is getting healthier, but also because your brain is, too. Your brain is yours to nurture and care for. A great way to do that is by getting your body moving.

Ways to Exercise

There are many paths to a healthy exercise routine that works for you. When people mention exercise, it's easy to imagine a gym or running shoes. If that doesn't sound like the right mode of exercise for you, there are many other forms of exercise that you can utilize to improve your wellbeing and resilience skills.

Try these ideas:

1. Think about outdoor activities other than running. Going on a nice walk is a great way to get in some mindfulness while moving your body. You can also go on a hike, go surfing, go parasailing, or partake in your favorite outdoor activity. You could even go fly a kite on a windy day.

2. Try something you've never tried before. It may seem intimidating but taking up a new hobby is a great way to expand your horizons. Going with a friend can be a fun memory, and taking a new class is a great way to meet others. Try rock climbing, surfing, dancing, or whatever activity interests you.
3. Join a team sport. We're never too old for recreational sports. Whether you like tennis, soccer, or Frisbee, there's a team for it that will be happy to have you. If you're just beginning, don't worry. Joining a team is a great way to strengthen skills because they provide accountability and encouragement.
4. Exercise in your own home. Jump on a trampoline for 15 minutes in the morning to get a great start on your day. Use a stand-up desk and balance board while you work at your desk. Take a dance break, listening to your favorite music and dancing with lightheartedness and fun.
5. Exercise indoors. Sometimes, it's too hot or cold outside to do an activity that requires being outside for too long. During inclement weather, swim at an indoor pool, take a yoga class, or do Pilates.

Skill # 8 Challenge Yourself Regularly with New Skills and Projects

Take action in your life and empower yourself. Recognize your strength and let it guide you through your actions.

Set goals with your wildest dreams in mind. Use these dreams to influence your short-term weekly goals. Ask your community to hold you accountable as you reach for these goals. Use your values as a lighthouse. Look to them when it is dark and you're not sure which direction to go. Use your values to help propel you forward by thinking about what they look like in action.

The only way that anything changes is if things change. If you want your life to look differently, you can take positive action to build the life you want.

First comes willingness and then comes action. If you're willing to make the changes you want to make, you're halfway there.

Taking action requires commitment. Making this commitment in a way that can hold you accountable (to your community or family) is an excellent way to ensure your follow through.

The only way to get better is through continuous practice. You can achieve goals and make progress. You don't have to be the best. The most important thing is that you gain enjoyment.

Seeing yourself get better at a new hobby is rewarding and motivating. So, set yourself up for success by setting goals and overcoming small challenges.

Building resilience happens when you challenge yourself. Challenge yourself to be more compassionate, more mindful, or more active.

Set Goals

The best place to start challenging yourself is by setting goals. Goals are a necessary component because they help you track progress and stay motivated.

You can start your goal setting by thinking about your wildest dreams. What would your life look like if you had no limitations?

Create some long-term goals based on what you want your life to look like. Then, set short-term goals that support and lead up to these long-term goals. Setting these short-term goals enables you to take one step at a time toward a fulfilling life.

A large part of resilience is seeing the bigger picture. Think about what you can learn and move from there.

How to set short term goals:

1. Make your goal specific. For example, instead of saying, "I want to do a lot of push-ups," you can say, "I want to be able to do 45 push-ups in 6 months."
2. Set yourself up for success by setting reasonable goals. If you set a goal that isn't realistic for you, you're less likely to achieve it. You can get to know what you're capable of by starting small and working your way up from there.
3. If your goals are time-oriented, you're more likely to get moving on them. It's a good practice to set two or three small goals each week. Your goal can be, "Make my bed 6 days this week." If you want to have a project done by a certain time, set small goals to help you take it bit-by-bit.
4. When you vocalize your goals to someone else, you're more likely to achieve them. This is helpful because you have someone on your team rooting for you. You also

have an opportunity to share your success with someone and have encouragement you when you need it.

5. Acknowledge your effort. If you don't meet a goal one week, think of it as a good opportunity to practice positive self-talk. When you achieve your goals, no matter how small, celebrate! Take yourself out to a nice dinner or watch your favorite movie. Tell your community, and they can celebrate with you.

As you think about your goals, keep your values in mind. What are the things you value most? How can you live by those values?

Live According to Core Values

Using values as a guidepost is a great way to motivate yourself toward your goals. This is an important tool to implement because it will help during times of stress, confusion, and decision-making.

Your values help you determine the way in which you want to live your life.

For example, if you value your community, you may invite your friends over for dinner once per week. Or if you value education, you might take a class at a local community college or read interesting books.

By having a consistent set of values, you are moving towards consistency and meaning in your life. Values promote self-motivation and confidence. Your life is more fulfilling when you know what's important to you.

Values can help light the way when you're not sure what to do.

For example, if you apply for two jobs, and one of the jobs requires moving away from your family, you might choose the job that enables you to stay closer to family if that is what you value.

If you value financial success, you might choose the job that pays more. Values are a concise guide to living your life.

When you're visualizing your values, it's important to visualize what they look like in action. It's one thing to value kindness, but it's another thing to use that value to help you be kind when you don't want to be.

It may be helpful to write down various scenarios in which you might be able to apply your values.

For example, the value of honesty might look like speaking up when you're nervous or taking responsibility for behavior. The value of safety might look like evaluating risks carefully or putting on your seatbelt. If you value health, you might get yearly check-ups and eat your vegetables.

Follow this process to determine your values:

1. Begin by making a list of ten things you value.
2. Next, shorten that list to 3 - 6 values and begin visualizing them in your daily life.
3. Write down each value and put them somewhere where you see them each day.
4. Refer to your values frequently and check in with yourself to see if you're living up to them. If you're astray, non-judgmentally bring yourself back to your values.

Setting your values helps during times of stress because they give you a guideline for how you would like to live. Before you make any big decisions, pause in a moment of mindfulness and consult your values. They often offer a stronger perspective.

It is my sincere wish that you will go through this Special Report at least once more and implement some of the strategies and suggestions into your own life. I would love to know more about you and your goals and perhaps I could serve you in some way as we both continue our life's journey.

To Your Inspired Success!

Connie Ragen Green

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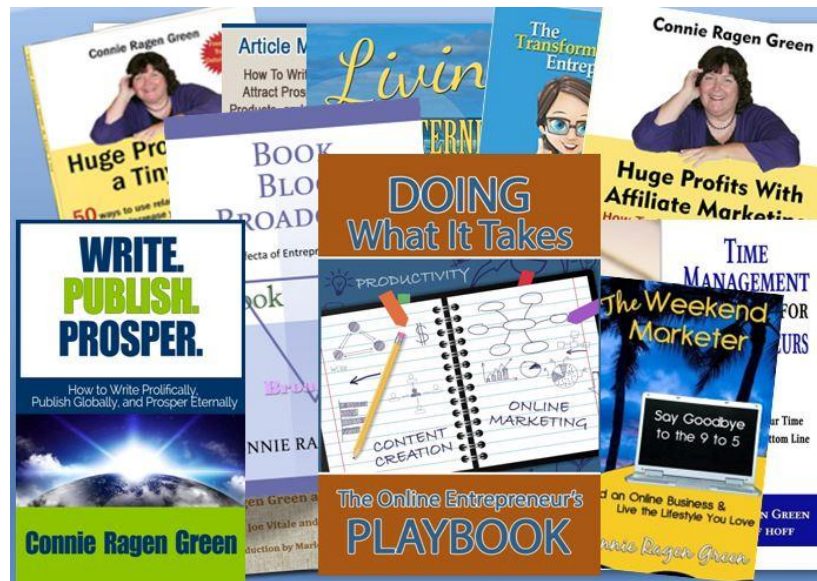
About the Author

Connie Ragen Green is a bestselling author, international speaker, and online marketing strategist who is dedicating her life to serving others as they build and grow successful and lucrative online businesses. Her background includes working as a classroom teacher for twenty years, while simultaneously working in real estate. In 2006 she left it all behind to come online, and the rest is history.

She makes her home in two cities in southern California; Santa Clarita in the desert and Santa Barbara at the beach. In addition to her writing and work online, Connie consults and strategizes with several major corporations and some non-profits, as well as volunteering with groups such as the international service organization Rotary, the Boys & Girls Clubs, the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, the women's business organization Zonta, and several other charitable groups.

As the 2016 recipient of the Merrill Hoffman Award, presented to Connie by the Santa Barbara Rotary Club, being honored with this award has strengthened her resolve to serve others around the world in any way she is able to by using her gifts, talents, and experiences in a positive and sincere manner.

Please [pick up one or more of my books](#) as a way to get started on the path to online entrepreneurship. If you're not sure where to begin, simply hit "reply" to any of my email messages and I will respond to your questions promptly.



NOTES - THOUGHTS - MUSINGS