

# 30 Days of Resilience Building Activities for Adults



## Resilience:

Recovering from or adjusting easily to misfortune or change: identifying problems, finding ways to address challenges, recovering quickly, and moving on.



## Relationships:

The mutual, strong, and long-lasting, back-and-forth bonds we have with other people in our lives.



## Internal Beliefs:

The feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and how effective we think we are at taking action in life.



## Initiative:

Your ability to make choices and act upon them.



## Self-Control:

The ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using words and actions that society considers appropriate.



<p>1 "I have good friends who support me." Think about the people in your life who surround you with comfort. What words come to mind when you think of these people or this person? Think of at least six words and create your relationship quilt. Write them down in six separate squares. Then, take some time to share some of these words with the special people or person in your life.</p>	<p>2 "My role as a caregiver is important." Take a few minutes and find a quiet place. What are all of the things that you do in your role as a caregiver of a young child? You probably give lots of hugs, wipe noses, and clean up messes. What else do you do? Write some down. Next, take a look at your list of things you do as a caregiver, and think about what the positive payoffs are for you. What do you get out of your role? How does it make you feel? Do you feel loving, nurturing, joyful, and helpful? Write some down. Caregiving counts and is important in the lives of children. What personal gains or benefits does it give you? Write down your top four benefits and title them "Caregiving Counts". Post them somewhere important.</p>	<p>3 "I communicate effectively with those around me." The word effectively is key here. Many of us communicate often throughout our day—in our homes, in our neighborhood, in our community, and in our work environment. If we were to replay all the different ways in which you communicate (both verbally and nonverbally), just how effectively are you communicating? Is there one particular person with whom you find it very difficult to communicate? Why do you find it difficult? Is it because you feel that he will not listen to you? Is it because you have tried before and you feel the person did not hear you? Or is it because such strong feelings and emotions surface that you would rather just not try? Whatever the reason, spend some time reflecting and identifying why you find it difficult to communicate with this person.</p>	<p>4 "I express my emotions." For many of us, talking about feelings and emotions does not come easily. However, emotions are an important and valuable part of life. They guide us and connect us to others. Our emotions often give us energy and hope. When not channeled appropriately, our emotions can also cause us to behave in an inappropriate manner. We often don't stop to think about how we express our emotions; we just do it. It can be very helpful, however, to name our emotions and to think about how we express them. For some of us, our emotions seem to get out of control. We may cry easily or get angry quickly, or we may sometimes become numb, unable to feel any emotions. If you find yourself having a hard time labeling a feeling, spend some time focusing on yourself and the feeling. Pay attention to how your body is responding to that feeling. It can take some thinking, but try to name the feeling. Naming a feeling helps us understand it. What label would you use to identify this emotion?</p>
<p>5 "I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way." Think about people in your past who have helped you grow. Write their names down. Mentors can be like branches of our life, helping us grow and move in new directions. Take time to appreciate these people as an important part of your life's development.</p>	<p>6 "I have personal strengths." By recognizing and remembering our strengths, we can build ourselves up and use our strengths to solve problems. Take a few minutes to write down your talents and gifts. What are you good at, and what do you love to do? Write down 3 of your gifts. Now, estimate how much time each week you do one of these 3 things and jot the time down beside your listed gifts. If your time is more than 1 hour a week of these activities, good for you! If you are not spending enough time on these, what can you do to bring these activities to the forefront? Start small. What is one thing you can do tomorrow? Then, what is something you can do next week?</p>	<p>7 "I try many different ways to solve a problem." If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. When we try many ways to solve a problem, we empower ourselves. If you find yourself saying, "I can't," change this negative talk to something more positive. Try saying, "I am having a hard time with this." If you say, "I can't," this is the message you are sending to your brain. You can address your problems head-on when you face them with a can-do spirit as opposed to a self-defeating "I can't" attitude. "Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens." -Kahlil Gibran</p>	<p>8 "I set limits for myself." It is important to be able to set priorities. The 21st century has come to mean constantly being on the go and trying to do it all without adequate time or support systems. Setting limits will help you restore and maintain the balance you need to be more emotionally healthy. Reflect on your successes. Give yourself time to daydream or spend time with a book or someone you enjoy. This time will help you recognize and live life in a more meaningful and purposeful way. Write down these successes so that you may reflect back.</p>
<p>9 "I provide support to others." Helping others is a benefit to them and to you. When you lend a helping hand or a listening ear to someone, you can experience increased energy and warmth. Supporting others can open our minds and can bring self-worth, greater happiness, and optimism. Choose a family member of the week, and ask everyone else in the family to do special things for that person every day, such as make her favorite dessert, leave him a nice note on their nightstand, or give her extra hugs.</p>	<p>10 "I am creative." Creativity is a form of self-expression. It doesn't mean you have to be a good painter or a great creative cook. It means you find a way to express yourself openly and without judgement. By taking time to fulfill your creativity, you may feel energized and understood, bolstering your internal belief that you are unique and special. Many of us face problems every day. We can practice using creativity to help us solve everyday hassles. Think about 1 problem you are having today. Write your problem in the center of a circle. Brainstorm ways to solve the problem that you haven't tried yet. It's okay to dream or write ones that seem unrealistic. Write these in separate circles around the problem circle. Look at and think about these solutions. Are you willing to try one? When we can come up with ways to solve problems, we tend to feel more self-assured.</p>	<p>11 "I have a hobby that I engage in." Why? When you engage in a hobby, you release your passion. Released passion affects the children, parents, co-workers, and your family. Use your talents and gifts to benefit others, and this will make you feel wonderful on the inside. Close your eyes for a moment, and think about those activities in life that make you smile or bring joy to your heart. Jot down "I love to ____." We all have something in life that puts the sparkle in our eyes. Finding your passion takes time and effort. Take a closer look at what you have written. You may have just uncovered your passion or your hobby.</p>	<p>12 "I am flexible." When interviewed by Oprah Winfrey, Poet Maya Angelou remarked about growing older and said, "I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow. I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he or she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas lights." Sometimes in life, we can't control what happens to us, but we can control what we will do about it. You may not be able to control everything that is happening in your life, but you have the power to choose your response to life. How will you choose to respond? Laughing, asking others to help you adjust, or being open to new ideas? What will you do?</p>
<p>13 "I am empathetic to others." Empathy is when we accurately recognize and can understand what another person is feeling. It does not mean we feel the same way—that is sympathy. Empathy connects us at a deeper level in relationships. Next time you are listening to a friend tell a story about something that happened to him, make an effort to relate versus debate about how you are different. Relating to others can bring us closer.</p>	<p>14 "I have strong beliefs." All adults face hardships. Somehow we need to find hope, peace and gratitude in everyday life. Where we find our hope varies—maybe through religion, dear friends, or nature. Some say having meaning is the "bounce" in "bouncing back". A belief or faith in something gives people greater coping resources and resolve. Take some time to think about what you strongly believe in. Fill in the blanks: Thank goodness for ____ when something difficult happens. I could not live without ____ . I am most grateful for ____ . You may already feel you have strong beliefs. If you do not, take time to think about the way you filled in these blanks. Do these things in your life support your sense of peace and hope?</p>	<p>15 "I seek out new knowledge." When was the last time you tried something new? As a caregiver or parent, you may find yourself growing tired of the same routine. By seeking out new knowledge, you reignite your spirit. Life will become more interesting. Pick up your local newspaper or visit the paper's website. Scan the headlines. If you come across an article that interests you, read it. Maybe it is an article about schools and businesses in your area that are going green or an article about a new fashion trend. If any of these topics interest you, continue to learn more and read more about them.</p>	<p>16 "I can calm myself down." There are many techniques you can use to calm yourself down. Finding the strategy that works for you is what is most important. When you are not in a state of calm, this affects both your mental and physical health. Therefore, it is very important to take time to learn and apply strategies that will help you calm down and refocus. Deep-breathing strategies can help you return to a state of calm. It is important that you follow proper techniques to ensure that you get the maximum benefits. Deep breathing involves: 1) Getting comfortable; loose-fitting clothes work best. 2) Beginning breathing by inhaling the air slowly and deeply through your nose and count to three. 3) Slowly exhaling the air out through your lips. 4) Repeating the steps several times until you feel relaxed.</p>
<p>17 "I trust my close friends." Trust begins at home and is a cornerstone of healthy relationships. We tend to trust people in our lives who treat us well and give us positive feedback. People often show their true selves to those who love them the most because it is safe. Love does not waver because you are having a bad day. Think about the people in your life you can tell anything to, the ones you call after a hard day and who listen without offering too much unsolicited advice. Jot down their names inside a circle, forming your "Circle of Trust". Remember that these people are special and will be with you through thick and thin. Think about how often lately you have listened and been a support to the people in your circle. Can you reach out more?</p>	<p>18 "I am hopeful about the future." Having a sense of hope brings positive feelings about the future, and you tend to look at life more optimistically. Then when negative things happen but you are feeling hopeful, you can bounce back more easily and look for ways to get the support and help you need. "A problem shared is a problem halved." When life brings challenges and we share our fears and thoughts with someone we trust, we lighten the load. The person listening also benefits by feeling helpful and trusted. When feeling discontented or restless about something in life, find a trusted person to share your feelings with and lighten your load.</p>	<p>19 "I am open to new ideas." There is one constant in life, and that is change. Day in and day out, you will be faced with change. When you embrace a spirit of resilience, you are able to adapt successfully to these changes. Resilient individuals are flexible and seek out new experiences and opportunities. When you are open to new ideas, new results may develop. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. Draw 9 small circles in a 3x3 pattern. In 60 seconds or less, connect the 9 circles with ONLY four straight lines without lifting your pen or pencil from the paper. Can you do it? HINT: You must go outside the box.</p>	<p>20 "I express my emotions." After you label an emotion you're experiencing, take a moment to reflect on where the feeling actually came from. What, exactly, has caused you to become so angry or frustrated? What, exactly, caused you to feel such joy? The feeling of ____ (enter labeled feeling) I experienced was brought about because ____ . When you learn to acknowledge and label your emotions (and where these feelings come from), you begin to grow from the inside out. Practice recognizing and labeling your emotions. You will find yourself happier, healthier, and more in tune with your emotions.</p>
<p>21 "I have good friends who support me." Sometimes we may find ourselves in a place where we don't feel supported, or maybe we move to a new place and do not have many good friends. Take time to create a personal want ad for a relationship. Fill in the blanks for the following: In a relationship, I need a person who is ____ . I want a person in my life who accepts me when I ____ . When I am with this person, I expect to ____ . Take this list out once in a while and reflect on the information. Do you need more of this in your life? How might you go about it?</p>	<p>22 "I am lovable." When we are aware that people like and love us, it allows us to do thoughtful things for others. It also helps us to build relationships with someone. Think of people in your life who bring happiness. Write down all of their characteristics. Are they good listeners, funny, empathetic? Now put yourself in their shoes, in their minds and eyes. Look at yourself. How would they describe you? Chances are, how they describe you is positive and loving. Can you see these things in yourself?</p>	<p>23 "I laugh often." You've probably heard, "Laugh and the whole world laughs with you." One of the greatest joys we have is laughter. It is a marvelous gift that also releases chemicals in your brain that can enhance your day and reduce your stress. Laughter is a wonderful gift to share, and this partnered with a sense of humor have also proven to be great protection in times of difficulty. Get a few co-workers, friends or family members to join in this with you: exchange a joke or funny story or situation each day that will make everyone smile. Once a week, identify the person who will post a joke, funny image or story in a common area. Bathrooms and kitchens make great places for this humorous addition.</p>	<p>24 "I set limits for myself." Remember that the best bridge between despair and hope is often a good night's sleep. Without enough sleep, it is difficult to effectively deal with the stresses of daily living. Tips for getting a good night's rest include: creating a relaxing environment (Is it cool/warm enough? Do you need white noise?); exercise earlier in the day versus right before going to sleep; keep a notebook next to your bed to jot down things that are keeping you awake; develop a routine of going to sleep at the same time each night; try reading a book before sleeping versus watching TV or getting on your tablet or handheld electronic device—these can stimulate the brain and keep you awake.</p>
<p>25 "I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way." Imagine you are going to meet with a new mentor. Imagine yourself walking into a coffee shop and sitting down at an empty table, and then you set eyes on your new mentor. What do you see? Then, the person sits down, and you start talking. You are smiling and the other person is listening to you talk and then talks to you with a smile. What are you talking about? The meeting ends with a handshake and some laughter as you make plans to meet again. What are your hopes for the next meeting? Choosing someone to mentor us in life takes careful thought. We need to know what we want, why we want it, and this person should inspire you.</p>	<p>26 "I am lovable." Sit down with a child in your life and together create a book about the things you cherish in yourselves. Take turns creating pages and talking about what you love about yourselves. Use the book I Like Me by Nancy Carlson as inspiration.</p>	<p>27 "I can ask for help." When you are not comfortable asking for help, you tend to suffer in silence. This attitude does not allow you to be the best person you can be. Healthy initiative involves being able to ask for help when you need it. Remember, it's okay to ask for help! This actually shows strength. Sometimes we just don't feel comfortable asking for help. Seek out individuals you trust and on whom you can depend. Also, trust yourself to make decisions that will be beneficial for you and your life. Write down your "Helpers" so you can remind yourself who you can go to for help.</p>	<p>28 "I am flexible." We sometimes feel the urge to blame someone else for the things in our lives that don't make us happy. Instead of taking time to place blame on someone else, why not take time and energy to focus on the solution? Remember, no one gets up in the morning and wants to do a bad job. How will you take responsibility?</p>
<p>29 "I provide support to others." Write a short thank-you note to a mentor or someone who has influenced your life in a positive way. Let her know how you are doing and what role she played in your life.</p>	<p>30 "I am hopeful about the future." Gratitude helps us take notice of all the things that happen each day that are special and rewarding. These moments are priceless, and when we pay attention and feel the gratitude, we are filled with joy. This in turn helps us to weather the hard times in life a little more easily. What are you grateful for? List a few things. How does it make you feel inside to think of these things or the people you listed? Take a few moments to generate a mental or written list of 2-3 things you are grateful for. Keep it somewhere convenient like your bedside to reflect upon.</p>	<p>Taking time to address your own adult resilience is extremely important. It takes a fair amount of reflection and practice to change any negative thoughts we might have and to integrate new behaviors that are good for us. You are worth it! Even if you are already a strong, happy person, you will want to continue building yourself up to maintain or increase your level of well-being. The strategies here come from Building Your Bounce: Simple Strategies for a Resilient You published by the Devereux Center for Resilient Children.</p> 	