



# Resilience

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Resilience is the ability to bounce back, recover from or adjust easily to stress, challenge, misfortune or change. Resilient people are able to turn to their internal resources, scan them and choose which is the best way of addressing specific situations integrating the mental, emotional and behavioral possibilities. This requires awareness, a higher-level executive function and is dependent on the status of the central nervous system.

When exposed to Big T trauma, the inherent intelligence of the central nervous system works to divide or split to ensure survival. This split allows for physiological survival. The basic physiological functions of respiration, heart beat and other biological imperatives continue to work and are on hyper-alert to scan and be ready for further threat. This is essential to avoid physical death and at the same time keeps us from accessing internal resources which permit higher level executive functions such as discernment, seeking social support, prioritizing, finding meaning, engaging in meaningful relationships, accessing innate vitality and differentiation. Big T trauma impacts all the domains of our existence. Our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual life are impaired.

After a Big T trauma, our ability to move from mere survival to thriving depends on our ability to access the skills of resilience. The good news is that resilience skills can be learned.

## **The following are six key resilience skills:**

- Self-awareness, cultivating your inner observation
- Noticing where attention is placed – flexibility and stability of focus
- Calming the CNS and finding ways to return to the calm
- Emotional regulation
- Accessing higher mental capacities
- Integration

Through our study of the Enneagram, there are specific resilience attributes associated with each of the centers. In addition to the centers of intelligence, spiritual resiliency



attributes apply to the essential qualities we each possess at birth, prior to the formulation of our character structure.

- ✚ Some of the resiliency skills associated with the **body or gut** are existence, identity, grounded presence, confidence, action orientation, endurance and strength.
- ✚ Some of the resiliency skills associated with the **heart center** are connection, love, empathy, comfort with relationships, positive outlook and emotional self-regulation.
- ✚ Some of the resiliency skills associated with the **head center** are remaining calm, dispassionate observation, objectivity, situation specific reasoning and logic, capacity to plan for the future, sustaining attention and clarity and focus.

Some aspects of spiritual resiliency are the ability to find meaning and purpose, feeling connected to a Power greater than us, and experiencing unity and oneness.

The character structure and personality that ensues for each Enneagram type offer patterns that overlay each experience of trauma and are important to consider in trauma resolution for that type.

Generic additional factors impacting resilience are age, environment, culture, previous parenting, individuation, social competence and support, cessation of traumatic events and access to additional resources.