

## Ask Your Therapist

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### Resilience

After speaking with many people about their experiences during the December power/phone/internet outages I kept thinking of the word that best describes a compilation of courage, stubbornness, Yankee ingenuity, resourcefulness, humor, community connections and quiet heroism: resilience.

First, a definition from the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary:  
Resilience: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

To that I would add: an ability and willingness to sustain one's courage in the face of adversity or lack of external encouragement or change.

In thinking of all the stressors in our lives today; job loss, marital discord, disconnection from loved ones, low income to high debt ratio, overwhelming problems of daily living, it is easy to see how people can become disheartened and depressed. It then seems even more important for people to reach deep within them selves and find their courage and their resilience.

Where is the source of your resilience? Is it in your sense of humor? Is it what happens to you after you connect with nature? Work out? Give someone else support or help? Can you find it when you take time to be quiet and connect with your faith? Or when you do your crafts or your hobbies? Or do you find it when the new green shoots of the tomato plants you are starting in the house first peek through the soil? Or when you turn the volume up on your favorite music and dance yourself into a zone?

I used to have a photo of Meher Baba with the words "Don't Worry, Be Happy" on it and it reminded me of a basic life truth: almost all of the time, in this very moment, we are actually fine. We are actually safe, sane and able to cope. It is when we worry about the future or obsess about the past that we bring ourselves out of the moment of "OK-ness" and torture ourselves with that over which we have no control. Why do we do that? Because we have not mastered the art of controlling our thoughts and so they control us. The "could have, should have and would haves" stay center stage in our minds and keep us from being in the present moment where we are fine.

There is something about natural disasters that push those thoughts aside and allow us to be focused in the present and able to cope with "what is" rather than what was or what might be. The gift of those experiences is that we rediscover and access our resilience. It is a gift we need to bring into daily life and not just reserve for emergencies and natural disasters.

To read all the prior Ask Your Therapist columns go to [www.krishnabai.com](http://www.krishnabai.com) where you can also send Krishnabai a general question for her column.

Krishnabai, MSW is a therapist in Ashby and Wellesley Hills where she sees adults, older teens and couples. The core of her work is the discovery and expression of the Authentic Self. She focuses on the identification, expression, and resolution of emotions, commitment to honesty and the use of remedial education and information. The Ashby Center for Counseling 978-827-1181.