

## Ep #19: Building Strength and Resilience



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Nicole Symcox**

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## Ep #19: Building Strength and Resilience

When you know what's in your closet and you have solutions for those things that are in your closet, it makes you strong because you know what you're dealing with, okay, and you're not so vulnerable anymore. Facing your fears makes you strong. Managing your mind and emotions in healthy ways makes you strong. And let me tell you, getting your mental health in a good place will make you more productive in your life.

Welcome to *Mental Health Remix*, a show for ambitious humans who are ready to feel, think, and be different. If you want to stop struggling with perfectionism, build better relationships, and connect with yourself and your potential, this is the place for you...

Here's your host, educator, coach and licensed psychotherapist, Nicole Symcox...

Hey, hey, everyone. We are talking about building strength and resilience today. Alright, let's get into it. So, Carl Jung, he is one of the godfathers of psychology. Like, he worked with Freud back in the day and just was kind of one of the founders of psychology. And one of his quotes is, "What you resist not only persists, but will grow in size."

And you may have heard the shorter more condensed version of this, which is, "What you resist persists." This is so important, my friends. You have to understand how important this is to your mental health. It is incredibly valuable to learn how to work through hard things so we can be strong and resilient and when the hard stuff happens in life, we're not afraid of it.

Your strength is not in avoidance. It is in learning how to have grace for yourself while you persevere and learn the skills you need to have in order to work through hard times, hard situations, and hard people. Because the world is full of those things and your best shot is to be equipped and prepared and ready for it in healthy ways. And this is possible; very, very possible.

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And so I think that there is still a pretty big stereotype out there around what strength is, and I think it's still largely misunderstood. I still hear time and time again people think strength is not being emotional, not being in touch with your emotions, and not really paying attention to that side of your life that really what people value as strength is not being emotional, not being reactive, and just working like a dog all the time and achieving goals left and right.

That is what we're like, wow, she's so strong, she has it all together, and she's doing so much with her life. So that's not really strong. Sorry. So we need internal strength, okay? It's really cool to be able to accomplish great things out in the world. I support that. I want you to do that. Please be goal-oriented. It's awesome. I love it.

But you have to honor your internal world too. You have to strengthen your internal world because it will fuel every single thing you do. It's going to fuel how productive you are, it's going to fuel the connections in your relationships, and it's going to contribute to how you feel about yourself. So your internal world is the gasoline that keeps your car going or the electricity, if you drive an electric car. But I think you get the metaphor here.

Because here's the deal; when we stuff emotions and painful things down and we don't deal with them, they actually have an enormous amount of power over us, but because it's unconscious, we don't acknowledge it. And it actually becomes or has the potential to be hidden triggers. So in other words, it doesn't go away.

It's just there, stuffed in a closet. And so just like in your house, if you stuff stuff away into a closet, it's going to make the rest of your house look clean because the shit's not everywhere. But it doesn't change the fact that you have a closet full of stuff from the past that needs to be cleaned out and dealt with. Or else, one day, you're not going to be able to fit anything else in there.

And the door to the closet is just going to burst open, all that shit's going to come out and let me tell you, it will happen at the most inopportune time.

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And since we're working in a metaphor right now, more likely than not, it's going to be when you have the most important guests over at your house that you really want to impress.

And again, this is all just a metaphor that what we're talking about, but you have to deal with it or it will deal with you. And it will happen when it decides it wants to happen and it's not going to ask permission. I mean, you guys have seen this time and time again when people have nervous breakdowns or they just lose it, and sometimes it's in front of people but it's rarely in private because when we're done, we're done.

And so it's really important to take care of our lives and take care of our mental health. So avoiding this stuff, in other words, is not what makes you strong. It actually makes you weak because it makes you incredible vulnerable. When you know what's in your closet and you have solutions for those things that are in your closet, it makes you strong because you know what you're dealing with and you're not so vulnerable anymore.

Facing your fears makes you strong. Managing your mind and emotions in healthy ways makes you strong. And let me tell you, getting your mental health in a good place will make you more productive in your life, and it's going to give you a greater capacity to achieve your goals and allow you to have healthier connections in your relationships with people.

So I hope you get what I'm saying. This is what is good for you. Stuffing and hiding stuff away doesn't make it go away. It's just going to show up on another day. So when we put our pain away and we hide it and we don't deal with it, we are actually unconsciously governing our life by fear.

Because unconsciously, we know that there is a part of ourselves we are terrified of, and that fear will actually play out in ways you won't understand until you get some clarity on it. So I know this is some deep shit here. And so going back to the quote at the start of this episode, what you resist persist, if you resist an entire piece of yourself, it will grow.

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It seems like it would be the opposite effect, but it isn't. Avoidance can be one of the biggest factors in making fear grow and making your anxiety grow because the more you avoid what you're afraid of, the more it grows. And this is actually a key element in anxiety management.

When you think about anxiety, it is largely a worry response that is either triggered by something or it's just ongoing and it's nonstop. That's what generalized anxiety disorder is. It's constantly feeling anxious. And anxiety disorders are based on fear.

And so there's a lot of variations to anxiety disorders and there's a lot of different types, but one of the key elements in the healing process of anxiety is to have corrective experiences that teach your brain not be afraid. But without therapy, people tend to avoid the thing that they are afraid of, or they overexpose themselves.

And when you overexpose yourself before you're ready, you can actually traumatize yourself. So this is why it's important to do this kind of work with a mental health professional because you're going to need to do this in a supportive way so the brain gets a healthy opportunity to correct the fear response.

Your brain is always working for your survival. So if it feels threatened by an anxiety response and you avoid the thing, your brain will mark the solution as run, avoid, get the hell out of there. But the problem is because now the brain is going to that as a solution, but it's not actually a solution, your anxiety's going to grow. The fear is going to grow.

So here is the hope in the whole thing. Your brain is a wonderful learner. It is going to learn from you. And so if you start to teach it something different, it will start to do something different. Otherwise, if you are defaulting to this fear and avoidance strategy, the brain is going to keep getting louder, meaning your anxiety is going to continue to increase, your fear response is going to increase because your brain's trying to get your attention.

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It's trying to say give me a better strategy. Help me find a safe solution. I don't like this one. This one isn't helping me. It's not a real solution here. So that is some of the hope in the thing. Building resilience is one of the best life tools you can create for yourself and for your kids.

So I know I don't talk about this very much, about kids, but too many times do I talk to parents who tell me explicitly, they want their kids to be strong and resilient. But they're snow plough parents, or they're helicopter parents, and they're doing everything for their kids. And this is unfortunate because when kids don't have an opportunity to work through struggles or work through hard times, they do not learn the skills to lean on their own strength.

They learn the skills to lean on their parents' strength, and it leaves them vulnerable to anxiety disorders. When we don't learn how to believe in ourselves, that we are capable of persevering through hard things, it robs us of resilience, and resilient is a key thing within ourselves to know as humans that we can do hard things.

It actually builds self-esteem and it builds security within ourselves. But if kids are only learning that every problem that comes my way I rely on my parents, they don't have the opportunity to build the skillset and resilience is not given to us. It is something we learn how to create.

So these are like, really, really important things. Because going through hard times, handling struggles and moving through them is what builds resilience. We learn so much about ourselves in the process of going through and healing from pain.

So this is again why stuffing it down or choosing not to work on yourself is robbing you of the potential good that's on the other side of it. And yes, let's be real here. Working through pain sucks. It's not fun. I don't enjoy it. I haven't met a person who does enjoy it.

But what they do enjoy are the benefits that come on the other side of it when you're like, wow, I really like myself now, or wow, I'm finally able to

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connect with people in fulfilling ways, or wow, I'm finally able to be productive and reach my goals. And I got there through working through my pain. I got there through facing my fears. I got there through perseverance.

So we want to have a balanced perspective on this. Like, let's not pretend healing is fun. It's not. It's painful. It hurts. It sucks. We don't like it. But there are benefits that by far outweigh avoiding. So here's my challenge to you this week.

If you're curious about building resilience within yourself, here's my challenge for you. Where can you challenge yourself to grow this week? And if you've listened to any of my podcasts, you know how I feel about this. Do not pick something huge. Pick something small first. Succeed at it, and then try something else. But don't try to change your whole life in one swoop.

Pick one tangible thing because your brain will record it as successful, and you're going to start the building blocks of being able to build more success for yourself. So let's use an example of something I think that's just really tangible and easy to understand.

So for example, let's say you want to exercise four times a week this week because that would be something that would be challenging for you, but you also think it will help your mental health and it's going to help you manage stress and just feel good all the way around.

So in your brain, before you have to actually follow through, you're like, yes, I'm going to exercise, it's going to happen, you're all pumped and you're ready to go. But of course, when your alarm goes off at 6am the next day, all that motivation all of a sudden isn't there. You're like, it's cold, I don't want to get up, do I even care about exercising? Not really. I really don't.

So these are some of the resistance that pops up when we're trying something new or when we're trying to work through. So this would be an obstacle. And so instead of hitting snooze, I want you to get curious about

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what you need to put into place to make yourself successful. Don't just commit to the exercise. Commit to being successful and working through the obstacle because this builds resilience.

When you start to do good things for yourself by working through the hard part, you're going to build a new skillset in your brain. And in this case, it's actually trust and follow through. I know, you thought we were talking about exercise. You're like, what the hell? What is she talking about now?

I am talking about exercise. I'm using it as a very tangible example. But what I'm breaking down for you are the added benefits of working through the obstacle, going through it, and getting to the other side of it. Because one of the foundational concepts to making us feel good about ourselves is knowing we can trust ourselves.

And we have to do this in really small tangible ways at first, such as getting up and persevering through the resistance of not wanting to get up to exercise. Because let me tell you, learning how to trust yourself is an amazing feeling. It supports resilience and it's one of the foundational concepts to feeling good about ourselves.

Because one of the biggest things we need to learn as humans is that we can trust ourselves to make good decisions and follow through on them. This puts us in alignment with ourselves. So while this may seem like a silly or minor example of how to build trust, it's not. You have to start with the small stuff so that you can get to the bigger stuff.

If you jump to the bigger stuff right away without the proper things in place, you're going to feel defeated and a negative story will start and then you're not going to want to try again. But because we're talking about strength and resilience, you absolutely are going to try again. Because you have to keep in mind, whenever we set out with new goals or we're trying something new, many times it doesn't go as planned.

Like, almost just plan on that. Just get your head around like, this is my plan but there's a strong chance it's not going to work out and that's okay.

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It's okay. It's okay to mess up. It's okay to fail. It's okay not to get it right. It's part of being an imperfect human in an imperfect world and learning how to grow and be who you want to be.

And you can't develop that without failure and without perseverance and without developing resilience and the life skills to get through hard stuff. There's going to be ups and downs. And hiding from it and pretending like oh, if I just hide in my safe little corner, life won't happen to me, is not really healthy thinking.

Just take life as a learning experience and a chance to learn about yourself and be better and to build resilience and persevere it and create something better for yourself. Alright my friends, so I hope you take me up on my challenge this week.

Find an area, pick something small that you need to persevere through and build some resilience in and it can be as simple as exercise. It can be as simple as trying something new that you don't really want to do. Pick something simple and easy to start with and work through the hard part of it. Don't give up. Keep going. Reach out for support. Make a plan. Be smart about it, but keep going.

Alright my friends, if you liked today's episode and you never want to miss one, make sure you get on my email list. It's [nicolesymcox.com](http://nicolesymcox.com). You can sign up there. and we will for sure let you know what episode is coming up and what it's going to be about.

And lastly, as always, if strong emotions come up for you when you're listening to these podcasts, triggers, emotional responses, please, please, please seek out mental health support in your local state of residence, especially if resiliency is something you are learning how to build or you're going through a hard time and you need support or you have an anxiety disorder.

Get mental health support. Learn the tools and what you need to be the best version of yourself. There's no shame or blame in that. Take

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ownership of your mental health and be the best version that you can be. Alright my friends, I hope you have a great week and I will see you next time.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Mental Health Remix. If you like what you've heard and want to learn more, go to [nicolesymcox.com](http://nicolesymcox.com).

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