

# Supernatural Resilience:

How to build and strengthen  
your inner warrior  
to weather any storm

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# If you're going through hell, keep going

~ *Winston Churchill* ~

Coping skills are sexy.

You know that calm, cool and collected mythological figure who keeps it together while standing in the middle of chaos and has been an ideal that we all strive for since the beginning of time?

Well, that's not necessarily me, all of the time, but it could be you, most of the time.

You don't think so?

Every underdog story you ever heard has thought the same thing at some point.

So, in case you missed it, the answer is yes. Yes, you can develop these skills and become a hero in your own, and maybe other people's, stories.

Whatever you're going through, and in this current world wide crisis, chances are you're experiencing at least one of the following stressors: a drastic drop in your finances, sickness, canceled major events in your life, confinement in four walls completely alone or with people who may not be the best for you, or a general sense of uncertainty about the future, and it may feel like your life is spinning out of control.

It doesn't have to be like that, though. There are ways to make the chaos less stressful and more likely ending on a positive note.

At some point, in this or any crisis, I'm sure you've tried all the breathing exercises, all the positive thinking you can handle, focusing on projects you've been putting off for months and/or caught up on your backlog of neglected Netflix shows.

And maybe, up to a point, it's been working for you.

But, now that your veins are starting to deflate from all the adrenaline that's been racing through them for the last few weeks, reality is setting in and you're not sure how to handle it.

What you do know is that starting a new distraction isn't the way forward.

So, what's the answer?

Well, as a friend once said to me, "Sue, you've been around the block a *few times*", and trust me, it's true.

And, while I've never been through anything quite like this surreal action movie come to life scenario before the great thing about resilience skills is that they're incredibly transferable.

The following is a combination of what I've learned on a personal level along with things I've learned through a formal study of resilience. I hope you find it helpful.

## **Before you start**

Take a deep breath. Exhale until there's nothing left in your lungs. Now, exhale a little more. Ok, now we're ready to start.

If you feel uncomfortable at any point, then take a break and come back to it later.

### **1) State your fear out loud**

You can also write it down. Better yet, write it down and then say it out loud. Saying it out loud subconsciously helps you to claim that fear for your own. It makes the problem concrete and it's easier to deal with concrete problems than vague undefined problems.

## 2) Ask yourself, "Is this true"?

Are my fears, thoughts and emotions fact? Or are they just that? Fears, thoughts and emotions.

Sometimes it feels like our fears are real and are going to kick our ass in the worst possible way.

Other times, we glue ourselves to our emotions and thoughts so much that they become our identity and reality.

Don't think you do that? When the last time you said, I'm worried, I'm overwhelmed, I'm angry.

But you're not any of those.

You're a complete, whole, perfectly functioning person who is *experiencing feelings* of fear, overwhelm and anger.

We'll take a closer look at this in the next step.

Oh, I can you now!

"But Suzaaaannne, sometimes our fears are real and valid!"

Ok, ok, I hear you. I've been there too. Actually, I've been there multiple times and that's how I know what I'm talking about.

Write down your circumstances. Just the facts though. The more information we have to work with, the better off we'll be.

After you've written them down and said your fear, list the potential resources you have, or may be able to get.

Write it out!

There are no right or wrong answers. All we're doing here is making a recipe list of what we have to work with.

From that, we'll create something delicious.

### 3) Reframe your circumstances

Hard truth - The only way you're going to get out of this in good shape is to take an honest look at your situation and see it for what it really is and not what you fear it is or want it to be.

Feels heavy, doesn't it? Don't worry, it doesn't have to be. Reality is often a lot more hopeful than we give it credit for.

Let's change that heavy feeling to something more hopeful with the following tools!

Remember that what got you to this point in life will probably not get you to where you want to go next.

In no particular order, here are some tools you can use to increase your mental strength and resilience.

Read them all and then choose the one(s) that you connect with the most.

~ ~ ~

#### (1) *Mindfulness and Self Awareness*

*"Self awareness is the ability to take an honest look at your life without any attachment to it being right or wrong, good or bad."*

*~ Debbie Ford ~*

It's time for you to file for divorce from that negative, depressing as f\*ck part of yourself.

You know the part I'm talking about. The part that tell you're worthless and not capable of anything good, much less great. Yeah, I know you know what I'm talking about...that part.

The day you decide to stop listening to the constant rambling Debbie Downer voice in your head is the day your life changes forever.

When you gather all the courage you have and make an effort to hear, and admit to, the words you've been telling yourself, only then can you begin to heal from the emotional abuse you've subjected yourself to for far too long.

This is the part of you that you have to break up. Make friends with the new and more encouraging voice in your head that talks to you like the best imaginary friend a person could ever want!

Like any friendship, it may take a while to say good bye to and find closure with the negative friend you're leaving behind.

It may take just as long to become comfortable with the new more encouraging and supportive friend you have in yourself.

Hang in there. Good friends like this are hard to find but always worth the effort!

Mindfulness is the tool that will help you create the awareness you need to separate yourself from your circumstances (you are not your circumstances) and accept them for what they are.

It will also help you become aware of your habitual thought patterns so that your self awareness grows.

With greater self awareness comes better knowledge of your strengths and possibilities available to you.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*How does my body feel right now? Where is the tension in my body? Outside of meditation, when do I feel this tension the most? What thought comes up the most when I'm practicing mindfulness and/or meditation? Are there other times in my life that I have this thought? Am I willing to listen to what I'm trying to tell myself?*

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*Pay attention to what your body and thought are telling you. When we become quiet, we can finally hear and see how we really think and*

*feel. It's important to pay attention to this so we understand what makes us happy and what doesn't.*

*Another thing that will happen is that we'll discover what thoughts we have a habit of thinking and this might lead to some pretty uncomfortable discoveries about ourselves.*

*We can practice mindfulness every day by naming things in our environment, focusing on how our breath feels as it enters and leaves our bodies and by naming our emotions.*

The more you practice this, the more you'll be able to separate yourself from your thoughts and the events going on around you.

The space between you and your thoughts/events in your environment is where the wisdom lies.

~ ~ ~

## (2) Self Regulation

*“Self-control is the chief element in self-respect, and self-respect is the chief element in courage.”*

*~ Thucydides ~*

Stop letting your emotions tell you how things are going to be! Remember this, your emotions don't control you.

You control them. You're the captain now.

Sure, you can't actually hear them, but you can feel them and you probably should pay attention to them because they offer valuable clues about how you're really feeling, but after that it's completely up to you to make choices on how you're choosing to react.

Emotions are there to let us know how we feel about a situation and that's all they're there for.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*Why do I feel this way?*

*That's not always an easy answer to come up with. You should still ask it though. With time and mindfulness and self awareness practice, you'll be able to get to the heart of the matter quickly.*

*Sometimes the answer is as simple as "Because I'm hungry or tired". Other times you may realize that what's happening in front of you is eerily similar to a bad experience from the past.*

*There is no right or wrong answer. It is what it is.*

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*When you feel overwhelmed by emotions say the word "Stop" to yourself. This break the chain of thoughts running through your head and gives you a chance to choose another direction you want to go in. It's in this gap, that you ask yourself, "How do I want this to end? What's the best possible solution?"*

*When you know how you want it to end, you're able to choose the most beneficial emotions, and subsequent actions, to guide the situation to a more satisfying conclusion.*

~ ~ ~

**(3) Mental Agility**

*"The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings."*

*~ Kakuzo Okakura ~*



Let me explain it this way.

When you shop for clothes and find something you like, you try it on before buying it, don't you?

You look in the mirror to see how it fits in the shoulders or stomach area. Or, do you look at it all over from many angles? Do you look at the price? The fabric it's made out of? The washing instructions? The return policy?

I'm willing to bet you look at from a few different angles and check all factors before buying.

Why don't you do that with challenges in your life?

The more you can look at a situation from all angles, the greater the chance you have of choosing the direction that will benefit you the most and master it.

By developing an ability to see the whole picture, instead of just that small part that personally affects us, we're able to develop mental agility and wisdom.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*How does this look for the person/people who are also involved? Is there something I'm missing or not considering? Is this the break I've been wishing for (albeit in a different form than I hoped for)?*

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

Imagine you're watching a movie of the situation you feel stuck in.

Describe the scene as objectively as you can.

Every situation has a worst case, best case and most probable outcome scenario. Which one are you going to write for yourself?

Remember you can choose your own actions in life and, each time you do that, you're writing your own story.

Be the hero you want to read about in a story.

~ ~ ~

#### (4) Realistic Optimism

*“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”*

*~ William Arthur Ward ~*

Hope the best and plan for the worst.

We're not talking about rah-rah believe in yourself blind optimism (although, in measured doses, that's also good). This is about choosing hope when it isn't immediately obvious where you can find it.

Learning how to see positive outcomes in chaos will turn you into the guiding light you always looked for in others.

Often when we're overwhelmed we put most of our focus on the possible negative outcomes. Of course, you need to be aware of these but you don't need to assume that the only possible outcome.

Remember that saying? Never say assume because you'll only make an **ass of u and me**.

#### **Questions to ask yourself:**

*Am I taking personal responsibility for what's happening? Do I see the part I play in my current circumstances?*

*Or, am I putting the blame completely on other people and outside forces? Sometimes it is outside forces beyond our control but a lot of the time, if you're being honest with yourself, it isn't.*

*Is what's happening affecting every area of my life or is it an isolated incident? Is there some way I can fix it or is it a lost cause?*

#### **Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*Make a list of the worst possible outcomes from the situation you're dealing with*

*Make a list of the best possible outcomes that can come from this situation*

*Make a list of the most probable outcomes of this situation you're dealing with.*

*While aiming for the best case scenario may seem like the best way to go, be prepared for the most probable one to actually work out.*

*Why?*

*Because.. well, it's the most probable. Expecting this will help to keep your emotions level and yourself grounded.*

~ ~ ~

## (5) Self Efficacy

*"Whether you think that you can or you can't, you're usually right."*

*~ Henry Ford ~*

Do you believe you have the power to affect your environment?

Or do you feel powerless against the forces at play in your life?

Do you give your power and control over what happens in your life to other people?

Or, do you recognize your ability to make things happen and get shit done for yourself and on your own terms?

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*Do I really have no power to take any action or am I just being a drama queen? What tools and resources do I have available now or where can I find what I need?*

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*Make a list of all the times you've gotten through challenging times before. Remind yourself that you're one strong mutha\*\*\*\*\*.*

*Take an inventory of what resources and tools you have available in your life. Even the smallest bit of help can provide an opening and propel you to where you want to go.*

*If you can't think of any right away, start looking. The answers will appear but you may have to look hard before you find them.*

~ ~ ~

**(6) Your attachment style**

*"In order to survive our youth, many of us became sensitized to which conditions we had to play to, to receive attention. No wonder we mistook this attention for love. We thought love came in finite quantities—it had to be competed for among siblings, or it had to be paid for with exacting dues."*

*~ Maureen Brady ~*

How you relate to people is often how you relate to problems in your life.

So, how do you relate to others?

Are you confident (you feel secure in yourself and reactions from others)?

Anxious (you seek approval and reassurance from others)?

Avoidant/fearful (you avoid close connection so that you don't have to risk negative feelings and fear of reliving old traumas)?

Our attachment style was learned as very young children and is directly related to how our caretakers treated us.

The good news is whatever your attachment style is now, you can learn new and improved ways to relate to people and literally improve every relationship in your life.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*What do I do when I'm faced with a situation that makes me feel uncomfortable? Do I stay and try to work it out in a win-win type of way? Do I win at all costs? Do I walk away and forget about it?*

*Answering these questions will give you an idea of your attachment style*

*Don't know which type you are - take the quiz and find out!*

[www.seemypersonality.com/Relationship-Test#q1](http://www.seemypersonality.com/Relationship-Test#q1)

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*If you usually run away from trouble, stay and work to find a win-win solution.*

*If you usually blow up and try to force the other person to go along with what you think is the solution, then learn to be quiet, listen and be willing to try someone else's suggestion for a change.*

*If you usually stay quiet and don't speak up for what you believe, what you want, and what you need, then learn to be assertive.*

*Remember that whatever your style, if it's not working for you, you can change it. We can, and should, always seek to improve our ways of relating to our world and the people in it.*

*You will have to be brave, vulnerable and willing to feel very uncomfortable while you try on new ways of dealing with conflict.*

~ ~ ~

## (7) Support Network

“Support and encouragement are found in the most unlikely places.”

~ Raquel Cepeda ~

In an ideal world you will have people around you that consistently raise you up. Having hopeful, supportive and encouraging people around you isn't just helpful for the obvious reasons, it's also because we experience something called emotional contagion when we're with others.

The short answer to to your question, “what is that?” is emotions are contagious and the strongest emotion in the room wins. You may have experienced it without realizing it when you were in a group, having fun and celebrating life when suddenly an angry, sad or otherwise negative person highjacked the group and brought everyone down.

If we're the sum of the five people we spend the most time with then it goes to reason that being around continually negative people will turn you into a negative thinking person and being around positive and loving people will turn you into someone positive and loving.

But, what if you don't have a support network or group of people you talk to on a regular basis?

Don't give up hope!

Now's your opportunity to become your own support network and create your own group of supporters.

Actually, who are we kidding?

We're not waiting for anyone to come and save us. We're saving ourselves!

The truth is, no matter if you have a solid support network or not, we always need to be our own support network. We have to learn to rely on ourselves and become emotionally resilient. This is where our strength lies and what will lead us through life.

You can build your own internal network of support by staying aware for signs and feedback in your environment.

Learn to rely on your intuition. Our environment gives us feedback and signs on whether we should keep going in one direction or make a change.

Keep your eyes, ears and heart open to what's happening around you.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*Is there anyone in my life, right now, who encourages me? When do I feel most supported and loved? When do I feel most discouraged and unwanted? What do I say to myself when things don't go well for me?*

*Do I show compassion and encourage myself? Or do I say mean things to myself that I wouldn't say to other people?*

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*Google is your friend. Whatever you need to find will be there. Use it to your advantage.*

*If after searching the internet and asking to people around you, for resources, you don't find the answer you're looking for then it's time to be bold.*

*This is when you sit down with your inner warrior and have a serious talk about what your next step will be and what the plan is to get there. Develop your intuition by testing it out in small steps.*

*When you have a feeling about something, follow through on it. See if your hunch was right. The more you do this, the stronger your intuition will become.*

*Time to throw off our fears about what others will think. Why do you care what people who weren't there for you other times, think about you now? They don't deserve your consideration. Leave them behind in the dust*

*Take a step. Any step because if you don't then life will push you in a direction that maybe you don't want to go in.*

*Isn't it better to choose the direction than to be pushed?*

~ ~ ~

## (8) Positive Environment

*"Before you diagnose yourself with depression or low self-esteem, first make sure that you are not, in fact, just surrounding yourself with assholes."*

*~ Unknown ~*

There's not much that I can say about positive environments. It's pretty self explanatory.

Ok, I'll back this up with one example.

There's a study that's been done many times over and has been made into books and Hollywood movies. It's called the Rosenthal or Pygmalion Effect.

The theory goes like this - high expectations lead to high performance and vice-versa.



This works with others expectations on you and your expectations for yourself (self fulfilling prophecy)

If this theory is correct then the opposite must be true as well. A negative expectation will deliver sub-par results.

Let's not forget how draining a negative environment can be. When's the last time you left somewhere and thought to yourself, "damn, those people make me feel so angry/sad/frustrated/fillintheblank?"

If you feel drained all the time, that 's a sure sign you need a different environment.

Watch your environment and watch yourself grow.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

*Do I feel supported by the people in my life? Do people make me the butt of their jokes on a regular basis? Do I feel drained by my personal or work life? Who supports me when I share my dreams and achievements with them? Who (person or group) "gets me"? Who puts me down? When do I feel most discouraged?*

**Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*It's your job to make sure you cut out negativity in your life. Do this as much as possible. Be ruthless. If you're surrounded by people who laugh at you on a regular basis and who try to discourage you from becoming a stronger, more productive, more creative person then it's time to make a change, cut them out and find an environment that supports you and your dreams.*

*If revenge is your sort of style then, don't forget, success is the best form of revenge.*

~ ~ ~

## (9) Compassion for self and others

*"Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die."*

*~ Unknown ~*

But, what exactly is compassion? It's not empathy although they're closely related. Compassion is understanding what it's like to be in someone else's shoes *and* wanting to help them.

Can you say that you do that for yourself? Or do you put yourself down most days? If you're saying mean things to yourself because you think you're not smart, enough, good looking enough, successful enough then I hate to be the one to break it to you but you're not being compassionate. You're emotionally abusing yourself.

Forgive yourself for doing it. Everyone does it and the good news is that you can learn another way to speak to yourself. Hey, if people can learn to date other people better then you can definitely learn to whisper sweet words and date yourself better.

You can't be mentally strong when you're carrying around anger and resentment towards yourself or others.

Listen to the words you use when you speak to yourself and others.

Emotional and verbal abuse are very real. So, show yourself some love today!

### **Questions to ask yourself:**

*What are the things I'm constantly saying to myself? Do I tell myself that I'm stupid, that no one likes me, that I'm ugly, that I'm a failure? Do I tell myself I should have tried harder? Do I treat other people like they're stupid and worthless?*

### **Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*Don't get dragged into the drama around you. Just like us, some people act out because they don't know how to deal with their emotions and so the emotions uncontrollably pour out of them.*

*Sucks for us. Sucks for them. Sucks for everyone.*

*Limit how much time you spend with that person until they learn how to treat you.*

*Show yourself some kindness and when you do that often enough, and you begin to be gentler with yourself, you'll naturally start being kinder for others too. And, if they aren't kind back, that means they haven't gotten there yet. You'll still be ok. Why? Because you have compassion for yourself.*

~ ~ ~

## (10) Assertiveness

"Control Your Own Destiny or Someone Else Will"

~ Jack Welch ~

Speak up! Ask for that last piece of cake! Ask for help!

A lot of us were taught that it's not ok to ask for things for ourselves and that we shouldn't be taking anything from anyone because that means that someone else is going to lose out.

Sometimes that may be the case but, more often than not it isn't.

Before you start running around and demanding things from people, let's get something straight.

Assertiveness isn't about demanding anything.

It's about asking for things in a non-threatening way.

It's about stating your needs, wants and desires in a way that shows respect to the other person.

### **Questions to ask yourself:**

*Do people react badly when I ask for things? Do people tell me I need to get a backbone? Do they tell me I need to let things go? Do I rarely get what I want?*

### **Answers/Suggestions to move forward:**

*Insulting or bullying someone in the process of asking for what you want is not being being assertive. It's being aggressive. Know the difference.*

*Start small by saying what you actually want at a restaurant instead of caving in to whatever everyone else wants. If you're not going to restaurants these days, the next time someone asks you "hey, do you want \_\_\_\_\_?" practice saying what you really want. If you want the fries instead of the salad, ask for it. If you want coffee instead of tea, ask for it. If you want the blue shirt instead of the red shirt, buy it.*

*Practicing with small steps will help you become comfortable with stating your wants, needs and desires. From there you can move onto bigger requests and missions in life.*

## **The Wrap Up**

There's no right or wrong way coping skills. If it works for you, and doesn't harm you or anyone else, then keep doing that.

The most important thing you can do when going through a crisis is to keep your parasympathetic nervous system in good working order.

What does this mean? So, do what you need to do first to calm down. Listen to music, watch comedies, read a book, exercise.

We're not judging you. Do whatever it takes to put you in a better mood.

Calm your body down so it isn't constantly releasing adrenaline and cortisol. These will make you feel more stressed which will release even more adrenaline and cortisol. It becomes a vicious cycle.

Remember what I said in the beginning of this guide?

Coping skills are sexy.  
And, they always will be.

Now go be sexy, you sexy beast!

If you're still overwhelmed and would like some help in developing your coping skills then please feel free to contact me either by email or Facebook. I'm making extra time every week these days to help people get through this and more.

Wishing you strength and happiness,

Suzanne xxoo

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