



Human Optimization

Pod Club Discussion Questions



E22 Improving Your Resiliency: How to Thrive When Life Gets Messy

Guest: Anjali Bhagra, MD MBA FACP, Professor of Medicine; Medical Director, Enterprise Automation and Belonging | Mayo Clinic

The three big questions explored in the podcast:

Question 1

What exactly is resiliency, and why does it matter so much for health, happiness, and performance?

Question 2

What is the audience's struggle: Why do so many of us struggle to be resilient, and how does that impact us personally and professionally??

Question 3

What is the solution: What steps can we take to become our most resilient selves?

Discussion Questions:

1. Dr. Bhagra defines resilience as "the ability to adapt or bounce back when faced with adversity." She also describes it as personal "silent energy" and "resolve." How do her definitions (scientific and personal) change your understanding of what it means to be resilient?
2. The podcast debunks common myths about resilience, such as resilient people just being unemotional, it being a fixed trait, or having to "go it alone." Which of these myths (or others) have you personally believed, and how might letting go of it change your approach to challenges?
3. Dr. Bhagra introduces the "resilience audit" (assessing physical, emotional, and spiritual resilience). Perform this 60-second audit right now. What are your scores? How does that reflection help you understand what you are feeling and put it in its appropriate place? Considering your results, what areas might you need to focus on?
4. Ignoring problems doesn't make them disappear, but instead it makes them "come back stronger." How do you typically deal with stressors or emotional distress? How might organizing problems and feelings (e.g., "parking lot" strategy) be beneficial?
5. Resilience is a dynamic, learnable attribute, not a fixed trait. What is one specific area of your life where you want to cultivate more resilience? Name a small, intentional step you will take this week to begin that process.
6. Dr. Bhagra's strategy for building resilience includes prioritizing, simplifying, and delegating to create "brain space," and then focusing on emotional awareness (gratitude, acceptance),

alignment with meaning/values/purpose, and connections. Which of these tactics do you want to strengthen? How might you begin to do so?

7. In this episode, Dr. Bhagra stresses the importance of social connections, stating, "Don't do it alone." Can you identify someone in your life with whom you could intentionally strengthen your connection this week?
8. Dr. Bhagra reframes resilience as "bouncing forward with joy" rather than just "bouncing back." How does this proactive and positive mindset on overcoming adversity make you feel? What does "bouncing forward with joy" look like for you? Name a specific area that has you feeling a bit knocked down. Discuss with your group how you can use that as an opportunity to "bounce forward."
9. Based on this episode, what is one small change you are going to make to help improve in this area. How are you going to keep yourself accountable to that and measure your success? (Be sure to keep it simple, start small, and make it very clear).