

Dear Class,

Remember, resilience is the ability to overcome adversity. Resilience allows us to handle the discomfort inherent in adversity and move on. It is the ability to accept what is beyond our control and work around it. As I've said before there really isn't much we can do about what life has sent our way, but there is a **WHOLE** lot we can do about how we choose to deal with it.

As I've also said before I believe one of the most important resilience skills is an awareness of our thoughts. Remember our thoughts are just beliefs we make real. Unfortunately most of us are sorely unaware of what we are telling ourselves, which can be problematic especially during times of adversity. Theory tells us that anxiety comes from thinking about the future and depression from thinking about the past. So, for example, when you start to think about what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, or next fall, you will start to get anxious. When you start to think about what you should or should not have done, the regrets of the past you will most likely start to get depressed. Where does that leave your thoughts, you ask? It leaves them in the present, in the moment, in the here and now. So when you find yourself feeling anxious or depressed the best way to help yourself out of those feelings is to pull your thoughts into the moment. How do you do this, well that's where all the previous skills we've talked about come in as well as the title of this email. When you find yourself in need of diverting your thoughts, when you are anxious or depressed and don't want to feel that way, use any one of the resilience skills you have learned about, to pull your thoughts into the present. Remember **flexibility** is critical to well-being and resilience.

So for example **self-compassion** is a great way to pull your thoughts into the present. When you are anxious or depressed being kind to yourself, as opposed to beating yourself up (which is what most of us tend to do), is a very effective way to bring your thoughts into the moment. Acknowledging your anxiety or depression, not judging yourself for feeling the way you do is a great beginning. Then instead of saying to yourself, "Why am I feeling this way!" saying to yourself, "I bet most people are(would be) feeling this way, I'm really not alone in how I'm feeling," brings your thoughts further into the present. And finally being able to tell yourself I feel X right now but these feelings will not last forever, further brings your thoughts into the present.

Focusing on your **character strengths** is another great way to bring your thoughts into the present and to **make good happen**. So when you are feeling anxious or depressed deploy some of your **signature strengths**. Remember character strengths are the traits we all have which allow us to be at our best and being at our best makes us feel good and feeling good brings us into the present. So, when you are about to undertake anything, it doesn't matter what, consciously channel some of your strengths to help you do it. Channeling a strength takes your mind off the past or future and brings it into the present, it allows you to attend to the activity at hand. So, for example, when I write these emails, sometimes I wonder, will this email be good, will it help, will it..., when I deploy humor, perseverance and kindness (some of my signature strengths) I am able

to simply focus on writing the email at hand, no wondering about all the wills (the future) and I feel less anxious.

Now for **gratitude**, well, where do I begin! How I love gratitude let me count the ways... Gratitude is one of the most simple, elegant and effective ways to bring your thoughts into the present. Count your blessings, think about what life would be like without something wonderful, or just plain and simply give thanks to someone - phone a friend, grab an offspring, reach out to a family member, tell them how grateful you are to them for... Gratitude is an amazing way to bring your thoughts into the present, it's a win/win for everyone.

So, in summary, when you feel anxious it is because you are probably thinking/worrying about the future. When you feel depressed it is because you are probably thinking about the past. If you drag your thoughts into the present, into the moment you will help yourself feel less anxious or depressed. Remember we aren't going for elation we are going for less of what we are already feeling.

Wishing you clarity of thought,
Susan

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