



RETURN TO “NORMALCY”

Keep in mind: The idea of what is “normal” is difficult if not impossible to define and it often changes as quite often there may be a “new normal”. For the purpose of this exercise, we are referring to situations when there is a serious change, and then things go back toward the way they were, even if a true sense of things being “normal” or the same again is not possible.

Situations that would be examples of a “return to normalcy”:

- Return from quarantine/social isolation as in the COVID-19 pandemic
- Return from incarceration or rehab
- Coming back from being sick or recovering from a medical procedure for an extended period

Questions for thought and discussion:

What happened? What has been your experience with this “return to normalcy” situation for you?

What is different about you now?

- Physically?
- Mentally/emotionally?
- Spiritually (Your beliefs, how you view the world, the future, your place and purpose in the world, etc.)

What will you take with you from the experience? (Things learned, new viewpoints, new attitude, etc.) – Consider some of the following life areas and if you have learned or gained anything in these areas:

- Attitude
- Perspective
- Goals
- Relationships
- Positive Qualities – *Review this list and discuss if you have changed or grown with any of these:*
 - Endurance
 - Persistence
 - Patience
 - Faith
 - Hope
 - Courage
 - Gratitude
 - Other?



What do you still need right now? Consider what you still may need in the following life areas:

- Physically
- Mentally/Emotionally
- Socially
- Family related
- Financially
- Other needs?

PLAN – After reviewing all of these areas – What is the plan for the return to normalcy in the following areas:

- Immediate plan- What are you going to start working on right away to adjust?
- Short term plan – What are you going to focus on for the next month or two?
- Longer term plan – Where do you see yourself when things are back to “normal” for you (When you are back to where you want and need to be, or at least closer to it if that is not possible)





Final Discussion- RESILIENCE

We need **resilience** for all of this to work and to return to some semblance of “normalcy” – Not everyone has the same amount of resilience. What are some qualities of resilient people?

Rate yourself – Do you have these qualities of resilient people?

- A** – I feel like I have this quality
- B** – Working on it, making progress
- C** - I need more of this

- **Emotional Awareness** – Resilient people can identify and express emotions which helps us effectively manage the emotions that come out during times of challenge
- **Self-Control** – Resilient people are often better able to manage behaviors, schedules, routines, habits, timelines, and other areas of structure in order to successfully recover during times of challenge
- **Optimistic but Realistic** – Resilient people can “look at the bright side” (Optimism) but still keep things in a realistic perspective to avoid just being in denial or experiencing “toxic optimism” (Trying to be so positive that you are just unrealistically ignoring the bad like it doesn’t even exist)
- **Proactive and Action-Oriented** – Resilient people often focus on being prepared ahead of time for challenges and then doing what can be done in order to be ready before these situations come up as opposed to being passive and reactive and just responding to problems when it is often too late. Resilient people take action
- **Inner Strength and Drive** – A resilient person can still feel depressed, anxious, overwhelmed, or confused at times, but the resilient person has the inner drive to keep on trying to do their best to push through (*to the degree possible**) in spite of any of these negative emotions and mood states. Sometimes you have to “fake it until you make it” (**In cases of severe clinical depression or other severe mental illness this may not be possible for a time until the right professional help is involved*)
- **Sources of “Outer Strength”** – Having trusted relationships and connections are essential when it comes to resilience. Having belief in something greater than yourself is not required but can also be extremely upbuilding. Also, having outlets such as hobbies, interests, supports and belonging to larger groups are also resilience-builders

How are you doing with resilience?

After reviewing this, discuss:

- What are your strengths?
- What are you going to work on going forward to build resilience?

“Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good.”

— Elizabeth Edwards