

What's It Going To Take?

By Amy G. Martin APRN, RhD

How much emotional pain does one person have to go through before they're ready to say "enough?" What does it take to feel strong enough to stand up for yourself and know that no matter what happens, you will survive? Is survival an innate aspect of the personality or is it something that can be nurtured and developed?

When one's history is filled with neglect, abuse and victimization, it would make sense to think that person might have a more difficult time remembering their strength; at the same time, when one has been overprotected and never challenged, this person too, might not be able to feel their own hardiness or resilience.

So no matter your circumstance or 'story', what's it going to take to build that tenacity needed for emotional health? How does mental toughness develop? The only way, in my experience, to develop that fortitude, or resolve, is to set your intent to change your thinking. This may be easier said than done, but the result of changing your thinking is truly, a different life. Someone accustomed to being unhappy, or used to stifling limitations, may complain about their life, but have no idea how to change it. Also they may be completely unaware of their own responsibility for their sustained unhappiness.

If you think about limiting thoughts, simply believing that you can't do something makes a job so much more difficult. What if you believed you could do whatever you set your mind to? What if you told yourself you could handle whatever came your way? Knowing you have inner resources will strengthen your character, and give you the buoyancy needed to get through any hardship. This is more than simply "positive thinking," it is being brave enough to look at yourself honestly and admit your fears and doubts about life and yourself.

Building courage and emotional stamina is just like building physical strength. Because of decreased physical conditioning in the general population, the new push is "Core Strength Training," where the focus is on the trunk and abdominal region, which is our center of gravity. This same idea applies to our inner world, where what is needed is a sense of strength and basic belief in oneself. We can call this "Inner Light Core Training;" daily exercises to strengthen our sense of purpose and determination.

What unhelpful thoughts do you hear inside your head so often that you believe them? Is it, "I can't do it," or "Things will never change," or "I'm not worth it?" All these negative thoughts take away hope, removing that sense of lightness from our being.

Here are some daily exercises to help strengthen your core.

1. Name 10 good things in your life
2. Speak aloud your good qualities
3. If you could describe your best life, what would it be?
4. In that best life, how would you feel?

5. What one thing do you need to let go of, to be happy?
6. Who do you need to forgive to finally be free?
7. What is the one thing (inside of you) stopping you from living your dream?

Choosing to focus on our blessings, dreams and hopes actually causes a change in our chemistry. Books have been written about this, from Norman Vincent Peale's Power of Positive Thinking, James Allen's As a Man Thinketh, to Wayne Dyer's Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life, all elaborating on the transformational power of our thoughts.

So when do you say OK, I'm ready to change my experience from this day forward, telling yourself, you have the strength to face everything that comes your way. You have survived thus far and can continue to grow stronger from your challenges. When your core of self love and esteem is strong, anything is possible. So, what will it take for you to start your best life? Simply decide it's time.

Please send your thoughts, questions or ideas for future subjects to me at amymartin@time4healing.com and please include "Time For Healing" in the subject line.

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