

# FACT SHEET #4

## MINDSET MASTERY THE RESILIENT MINDSET

*"It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it"*

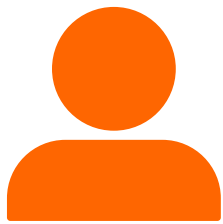
– Lou Holtz

As we know, people who are resilient have many different characteristics, however, throughout all of them, there are three consistent qualities that are found in resilient individuals. These qualities are a strong **internal locus of control**, **realistic optimism** and **finding meaning**.

### WHY IS UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITIES IMPORTANT?

Understanding the qualities of resilience is an essential step in building, developing and becoming resilient. Much like understanding mindfulness, stress management and reframing, understanding the qualities of resilience helps give insight into how to use it, how it will benefit you, and how it will affect you.

### SO, WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES?



#### Internal Locus of Control

Resilient individuals have what psychologists call an "internal locus of control" when facing life's challenges. People with an **internal locus of control** believe that they have control over their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in response to any situation. This is in contrast to having an "external locus" of control where people believe they don't have control or personal accountability and responsibility for how they respond to life's challenges.

Having an **internal locus of control** is about understanding what you can and can't control and influence. Resilient people understand that while they cannot always control what happens to them, they can control how they respond to what happens. Consequentially, resilient people will then be able to focus their energy on what they can control and influence rather than what they cannot control and influence. Importantly, they know that in life, there are only four things that are truly in their sphere of control: what they **think, feel, say** and **do**. This can help lessen the stress around things that are not in your control, instead, it changes the focus and empowers you to focus on what you can do, rather than what you can't do!



#### Realistic Optimism

When faced with a difficult circumstance, a resilient person can make a realistic assessment of the situation, while at the same time having the belief that they will be able to overcome the challenge. This is **realistic optimism**: the ability to combine realism with optimism. In other words, **realistic optimism** is about being optimistic, without setting yourself up for failure, falling into toxic positivity or becoming overly negative or cynical.

More importantly, having **realistic optimism** the face of adversity is not about pretending that your difficult situation is a good thing to have occurred; it is about acknowledging that while your circumstance isn't great right now, it's about knowing you will prevail in the end. After all, resilience is about facing the challenge (the brutal facts) and carrying on (your sureness of success)!



## Finding Meaning

People who are experiencing adversity learn to harness their resilience by working to make sense of the difficulties through finding the value or significance in something. That is, **finding meaning** is about searching for the opportunity or value from your own difficult experiences.

For example, a difficult relationship with a work colleague can be an opportunity to apply conflict resolution skills, practice patience, or start actively exploring new job opportunities! When we **have meaning**, we have options. When we have options, we have control of our thinking and behaviours, and we are more motivated to mobilise our resources into positive action.

# HOW DO I DEVELOP THESE QUALITIES TO FOSTER RESILIENCE?

We now know that the qualities of having an **internal locus of control**, **realistic optimism** and **finding meaning** can make us resilient, but how can we develop these qualities to foster resilience?

A great way of developing the qualities to foster resilience is through asking ourselves questions about the challenge and adversity in our lives.

A resilient mindset can be developed through the use of these questions. It's all about creating the habit of asking ourselves these questions when we encounter the most significant challenges and hardest times in our lives.



To learn more and start practicing these questions, refer to **Mindset Mastery - Tip Sheet #2 "QUESTIONS AND RESILIENCE"**

If you or someone you know needs help contact **TIACS** on 0488 846 988 or your organisation's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), your GP or call: **LifeLine** on 13 11 14, **Kids Helpline** on 1800 551 800, **MensLine Australia** on 1300 789 978 or the **Suicide Call Back Service** on 1300 659 467.