

Resilience: 10 Contributing Factors (source: APA)

1. Make connections. Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support. Assisting others in their time of need.

Jewish Source:

Do not separate yourself from the community.

- Mishnah, *Pirkei Avot* 2:4

This is why the world was created: human beings must know how to give and receive. One who does not know how to do one as much as the other resembles a barren tree.

- Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Zhidachov (1805-1873, Poland)

2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.

Jewish Source:

Don't worry yourself about tomorrow, lest there be no tomorrow. As the world of which you worry is a world that is not yours.

- B. Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 100b

3. Accept that change is a part of living. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Jewish Source:

One should always be as flexible as a reed, not as rigid as a cedar.

- B. Talmud, *Ta'anit* 20a

The world is a narrow bridge. The most important thing is not to be afraid.

- Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav (1772-1810, Ukraine)

4. Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals.

Jewish Source:

It is not your duty to complete the work, but neither are you free to refrain from doing it.

- Mishnah, *Pirkei Avot* 2:21

5. Take decisive actions. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Jewish Source:

How wonderful that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

- Anne Frank (1929-1945, Germany)

If we are able to do something, yet we do nothing, we are responsible for the consequences.

- Midrash, *Tanna de-Be Eliyahu Rabbah*, 11

6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery. People often learn something about themselves as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.

Jewish Source:

Sometimes we must look into the ashes to find a solitary spark.

- Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch (1700-1772, Ukraine)

Our prayers are not answered when we are given what we ask, but when we are challenged to be what we can be.

- Rabbi Morris Adler (1906-1966, Russia & USA)

I believe in a God who knows how complicated human life is, how difficult it is to be a good person at all times, and who expects not a perfect life but an honest effort at a good one.

- Rabbi Harold Kushner (b. 1935, USA)

7. Nurture a positive view of yourself. Trust your instincts.

Jewish Source:

The Holy One, blessed be God, stamps each person with the seal of Adam, and not one of them is like his or her fellow. Therefore each and every one is obligated to say, "For my sake the world was created."

- Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 4:5

The human soul is a tiny lamp kindled from the Divine Torch; it is the vital spark of heavenly flame.

- B. Talmud, *Berakhot* 10a

8. Keep things in perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

Jewish Source:

Rabbi Zusya (1718-1810, Russia) said, "In the coming world, they will not ask me: 'Why were you not Moses?' They will ask me: 'Why were you not Zusya?'"

Each person only sees in a thing what he is capable of seeing.

- Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk (1787-1859, Poland)

When you climb the ladder, the lowest rungs are first.

- Leon of Modena (1571-1648, Italy)

9. Maintain a hopeful outlook. Focus on what you want, rather than worry about what you fear.

Jewish Source:

You cannot be anything if you want to be everything.

- Rabbi Solomon Schechter (1847-1915, Romania & USA)

Who is rich? One who is happy with what one has.

- Mishnah, *Pirkei Avot* 4:1

10. Take care of yourself. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Meditation and spiritual practices.

Jewish Source:

Thank You, living and enduring Ruler, for restoring my soul to me in compassion. You are faithful beyond measure.

- *Modeh Ani*, prayer upon waking

Praised are You, Lord our God King of the universe, who with wisdom fashioned the human body, creating openings, arteries, glands and organs, marvelous in structure, intricate in design. Should but one of them, by being blocked or opened, fail to function, it would be impossible to exist. Praised are You, Lord, healer of all flesh who sustains our bodies in wondrous ways.

- Prayer for the body

If your custom is to take walks, you should intend it for the sake of heaven – in order to be healthy for the service of God [Who is blessed]. Your thought should be that you are exercising so that your mind will be relaxed and vigorous, so that you will see how to act in all your affairs as is proper.

- *Avodat Ha-Kodesh, Moreh b'Etzba* 3-123



BULLSEYES

Beit T'Shuvah

Cheshbon HaNefesh Worksheet

Name: _____
Spiritual Counselor: _____

Date: _____

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
<p><i>What/How did I do well?</i></p>	<p><i>What made it right/ok?</i></p>	<p><i>Who was impacted?</i></p>	<p><i>How were they impacted?</i></p>	<p><i>What was learned?</i></p>	<p><i>What's the plan? (for enhancing, changing, growing, etc...)</i></p>



Beit T'Shuvah

Cheshbon HaNefesh Worksheet

Name: _____
Spiritual Counselor: _____

Date: _____

MISSED THE MARK

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

#6

When/how did I miss the mark?

What made it right/ok?

Who was impacted?

How were they impacted?

What was learned?

What's the plan?
(for not repeating, changing, etc...)

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The Spirituality of Imperfection

STORYTELLING AND THE
SEARCH FOR MEANING



Ernest Kurtz
and Katherine Ketcham

The paradox of “beyond the ordinary yet not spectacular” reflects a central spiritual truth: the importance of avoiding the dichotomizing, dividing-into-two approach that is the bane of all spirituality. We tend to like our reality divided into neat and distinct parts, seeing it as either one or the other: either black or white, good or bad, answer or question, problem or solution. But the vision offered by the spirituality of imperfection cautions against that tendency, pointing out that the demand for an absolutely certain truth—the quest for a single, unalterable answer to our spiritual questions—involves the kind of “playing God” that denies and ultimately destroys our human reality. Precisely because we are *not* either-or, *not* one-or-the-other, paradox and ambiguity reside at the heart of the human condition and therefore at the heart of all spirituality. For we are *both*: both saint and sinner, both “good” and “bad,” both less and more than “merely” human. In some strange (and not-so-strange) ways, our failures are our successes, our suffering is our joy, and our imperfections prove to be the very source of our longing for perfection.

Because paradox is at our very core, the spirituality of imperfection suggests that only by embracing the “dark side” of our ambiguous natures can we ever come to know “the light.” We find ourselves only by giving up our selves, we gain freedom by submitting to the will of others, we attain autonomy by not insisting on our own rights. Sages and saints throughout the centuries have maintained that it is in this willingness to give up the self and give in to others that the road to human wholeness can be found. And for those who would give up “self,” the first step is to give up certainty.¹⁸

A rabbi was asked to adjudicate a case. The first man presented his argument, and the rabbi, after hearing his evidence, said to him, “You are right!”

Then the second man presented his argument and the rabbi, after hearing his evidence, said, “You are right!”

At this point, the rabbi’s wife turned to her husband and asked, “How can both of these men be right?”

The rabbi thought for a moment and then said, “Darling, you are right!”¹⁹

Spirituality is not therapy.

Most people think of *therapy* as a modern concept, although the term originated in Homeric Greece, and its first connotation was of *spiritual* healing. In recent times, partially as a result of the practice of medicine being more and more transformed from art to science, most forms of therapy have also come to understand their "healing"—how they "make whole"—as other-than-spiritual. Therapy, in other words, has become *scientific*: attentive to measuring, demanding proof, relying on technique.

Although spirituality is not interested in measuring, proving, or manipulating, the boundaries between spirituality and therapy are often confused because both are concerned with *making whole*. We come to therapy and to spirituality when we are in pain, and therapy seeks what spirituality seeks: a mending to our brokenness, some soothing relief for our "torn-to-pieces-hood." Nevertheless, the paths of spirituality and therapy, while not in conflict, are divergent. A story told by an Episcopal priest relating her own experience may shed light on the difference.

Once, on her annual retreat, she sought out as confessor a Jesuit priest of long experience. In that context, she rehearsed

with him the behaviors that troubled her, especially those prominent in the past year—a dawning area of insensitivity, a tendency to domination, and so forth. Then, drawing on what she had come to know of herself from recent reading and especially from her participation in groups, she began to detail how these behaviors seemed connected to her experience of being related to an alcoholic.

At that point, the grizzled veteran confessor reached out and, gently patting her hand, asked: "My dear, do you want forgiveness . . . or an explanation?"²²

Therapy offers explanations; spirituality offers forgiveness. Both may be necessary, but one is not the other. The therapeutic approach looks to origins, to push forces that compel, as the psychological language of "drives" and the sociological focus on "the shaping environment" attest. Spirituality, in contrast, attends to directions, to the pull-force of motives, which attract or draw forward—the language of spirituality is the vocabulary of "ideals," of "hope." Therapy may release *from* addiction; spirituality releases *for* life.

Therapy relies, too, on the medical metaphor, using the lexicon of *illness*: Behavior is "symptomatic," situations are "dysfunctional," individuals are thought to be "sick" or "unhealthy." Spirituality prefers the language of *weakness* and *flaw*; choosing among various metaphors, it favors the ancient image of the archer's arrow falling short of its mark. Before the advent of Alcoholics Anonymous, alcoholics were taught to think of themselves as "orally fixated" or "latently perverted." One of A.A.'s great, freeing gifts to alcoholics can be found in its vocabulary of "defects of character" and "shortcomings."

Finally, therapy's goal is happiness, in the modern-day sense of "feeling good," while spirituality suggests that valid feeling follows being, and that the more realistic goal is therefore the time-honored one of "being good," of finding a real fit between self and reality outside of self. As the root of the word *good* hints—*gê*, the same root as in the words *gather* and *together*—*goodness* involves fitting rightly, "fitting" not in the sense of some mere conformity but in the sense of discovering and embracing the whole of which one is part.²³