

RESOURCEFULNESS: TOOLS THAT GET US THROUGH

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What is resourcefulness? It's what helps us find solutions to the problems in front of us, lean into our support systems, and adapt to challenges in front of us in a way that we can regain a sense of control and agency.

As I mentioned in the book, my resourcefulness is what got me through the worst years. Most importantly, it got me through the time period after I had my breakdown at the VA, when my PTSD and anxiety spiked and I felt lost and untethered. At the time I did not think about it. I just knew that I *had* to get in my van and keep driving until I was done. It took over a year, and I did not necessarily know in that moment that I was healing, but looking back, that trip was my healing.

What are some examples of resourcefulness?

1. Engaging in self-care activities, whether that's yoga every morning or a one-year road trip.
2. Accessing available tools to manage in the moment. Examples of these tools are online support groups and apps.
3. Identifying those things that trigger us so that when they come into our path, we are prepared and better able to manage them.
4. Self-advocacy. Sometimes, especially as survivors of interpersonal violence, we may struggle with advocating for ourselves, navigating health and behavioral health systems, finding therapy that works for us, or setting good boundaries. An example of how you might do this: if you suspect that your visit to the doctor might be difficult (maybe they are not good at listening to you?), write down

what it is you want to say so that you have that in your hand and mind. While there, do not hesitate to look at your note and read that to the doctor. Reading it may make you feel less nervous.

5. Work on your resilience building via the tools you have or have been given. This helps you find solutions to challenges and trigger events and helps you rebound more easily during difficult times.
6. Learn relaxation techniques like breathing, yoga, and mediation. Maybe it means escaping for the day to go fish somewhere or sitting in a dark theater eating popcorn with a lot of butter. Find your happy place and use it.
7. Creative problem-solving. Figure out the ways that work for you, especially when you feel overwhelmed. Perhaps it's sitting alone and thinking about it, maybe it's driving with loud music playing in the background, or even just sitting and writing out a list that includes pros and cons.
8. Embrace your support systems. Sometimes you just need someone you can talk to, whether it's your mom, your best friend, someone you met at an event and found a connection with, or lunch at the community center. No matter who or what, know who your battle buddies are and connect when necessary.

These tools are not set in stone: there is no right or wrong. Think about what works for you, and then do that. If you want to learn more about resourcefulness and recovery, you can find more information online or talk to your therapist about tools you can add to your toolbox.