

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESILIENT PROCESS

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Abstract: Resilience is the ability of the subject to bounce back, to recover after illness, after changes or past misfortunes, provided that the damage to the present state is not exaggeratedly large, not exceeding a threshold considered critical. In the event of problems that have a major impact on the subject's life, the vital energy is blocked internally, accumulating in the individual's ego. The accumulated energy is transformed *ad hoc* into a resource of strength, leading to the phenomenon of resilience. The resilient process means the development of a sustainable capacity, directed towards successfully counteracting stress and adversity factors and regaining the level of the individual that was held before the past misfortunes were instituted. This is possible because the potential of the defense mechanisms will be preserved by building an inner strength that will enable future self-protection against stress or misfortune. Individual resilience will function by bouncing back from failures, keep energy under constant pressure and cope with the challenges of life, receiving disturbing phenomena (in itself) with a positive attitude, serenity and smile.

Therefore, resilience prioritizes the removal of blockages that stop the process of natural healing and natural balancing of the body. The resilient subject will have to eliminate patterns of negative thinking and tension, distrust and doubt. It will manifest an attitude of understanding, compassion, empathy towards the surrounding social framework as a permissive state of healing.

Keywords: resilience, resilient phenomenon, resilient process, standard of living, individual resilience, societal resilience, impact, self, stress, mentor, circle of relationships, organization, psychotherapy.

DOI [10.56082/annalsarscimilit.2025.4.57](https://doi.org/10.56082/annalsarscimilit.2025.4.57)

1. Defining Resilience

We can recognize that resilience can be considered as emblematic for society in the times we are living in. We believe that the process of survival must be constantly optimized, updating the complex effort paths of social life, punctuated by the bureaucratic jungle and the systemic corruption, all in the conditions of the strong affirmation of the individual ego, the internal intrapersonal development of the subject forced to resist.

The term 'resilience' comes from the Latin word 'resilio', which has the meaning "to be able to recover, to recover, to return to one's original

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form".¹ The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language records its origin from the French term "résilience", with the meaning of "characteristic measure for the behavior of materials under shock loading, equal to the ratio between the mechanical work performed to break the bending of a specimen by shock and the initial value of the cross-sectional area through which the breakage occurred".² Similar explanatory content can be found in many other dictionaries, such as the *Small Academic Dictionary*,³ the *Illustrated Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, the *Small Universal Dictionary of the Romanian Language*,⁴ the *Essential Dictionary of Neologisms*,⁵ etc.

Thus, the term has a dual meaning: 1. *the capacity of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation, especially due to compressive stress*; 2. *the ability to recover or adapt easily to an adverse situation*. Categorically, it should be stated that the current meaning of the term "resilience" constitutes an essential part of the field of psychology, a domain well known for its extreme complexity and nuance.

2. Scientific Opinions on the Generation of the Resilient Phenomenon

The psychological and social interpretations refer to the individual's ability to adapt positively and overcome difficult moments and situations by strengthening the subject's capacity to continue on the existential path. Emmy E. Werner, in 1995, considered that the term refers to three areas of favorable use:

- restoring the individual's capacity, post traumatic phenomena;
- natural development of the subject, intervening also the numerous unfavorable conditions of the surrounding social environment;
- the preservation of one's own skills, even in the event of the continued existence and impact of permanent stressful phenomena.⁶

Nuanced views have been inserted in the future.

¹ Arielle Essex, *Miracole la îndemână. Alegeri care vindecă și construiesc reziliență*, București, Curtea Veche Publishing, 2017, p.56.

² Romanian Academy, Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, *Dictionar explicativ al limbii române*, Bucharest, Univers Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2009, p. 953.

³ Romanian Academy, Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, *Mic dicționar academic*, Bucharest, Univers Encyclopedic Gold Publishing House, 2010, p.706.

⁴ Ioan Oprea, Carmen-Gabriela Pamfil, Rodica Radu, Victoria Zăstroi, *Mic dicționar universal al limbii române*, Bucharest, Litera Internațional Publishing House, 2008, p. 1362.

⁵ Monica Mihaela Busuioc, Maria Păun, Zizi Ștefănescu-Goangă, *Dicționar esențial de neologisme*, Bucharest, Corint Publishing House, 2009, p. 797.

⁶ Emmy Werner, *Resilience in Development*, in American Psychological Society, 1 June 1995, available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8721.ep10772327>, accessed on 05.11.2025.

Eric Greitens views resilience as, whether or not identifying a mentor and a circle of support, achieving the selection of a goal in life, materializing a vocation with the unintentional activation of a strategy, facing social and natural adversities, inducing a final moment of equilibrium. Obviously, the phenomenon can be repeated through a multitude of cycles.⁷

Emily Hunter considers that the individual's permanent slobbering is rooted in the subject's way of life and in the societal context, intervening between two value thresholds. Thus, one threshold is placed below the optimal standard, the second is the optimal existential threshold.

Michael Rutter sees resilience as a protective mechanism, able to stop the damage caused by the social environment.⁸

The mechanism can generate four forms of manifestation:

- reducing the societal impact on the individual;
- reducing the string of negative social forms of coercion;
- restoring and stabilizing the individual's self-esteem and self-efficacy;
- generating new opportunities.

Sunnya Luthar argues that finding ways to establish a state of equilibrium involves identifying the social vulnerabilities and protective factors that can generate negative effects on the individual's living conditions. As a result, resilience can be the constructive pendulum swing between objective negative societal adversity and the positive adaptive possibilities of the social individual.⁹

Boris Cyrulnik presents an interesting appreciation of resilience, starting from the similarity between social phenomena and the physical phenomena of non-deformation, which are inherent to the resistance of materials. The metaphorical demonstration of resilience is illustrated by the cognitive pattern of materials reverting to their original form, even though they have been subject to mechanical deforming actions in the past. Cyrulnik considers resilience to be the individual's ability to overcome harsh, extreme experiences and to recover from major damage, avoiding the phenomenon of depression.¹⁰

3. The Resilient Equation and Process

Reference should be made to the analysis of the term produced by non-specialists, by ordinary people. One can cite the case of the hard-hitting

⁷ Eric Greitens, *Reziliența*, Bucharest, ACT și Politon Publishing House, 2017.

⁸ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Securitatea internă și reziliența*, "Carol I" National Defense University Publishing House, 2021, pp. 22-23.

⁹ Sunnya Luthar, Dante Cicchetti, *The construct of resilience: Implications for interventions and social policies*, Dev Psychopathol, Vol. 12 (4), 2000, pp. 857-885.

¹⁰ Nicolas Martin, Antoine Spire, François Vincent, *Reziliența*. Convorbire cu Boris Cyrulnik, Bucharest, Spandugino Publishing House, 2016, pp.8-53.

Navy Seals (special forces operators in the US Navy). The work of special forces operators can thus be placed in line with Albert Einstein's statement: "There is only one road to true human greatness - the road through suffering". The resilience occurs at the existence of a responsible attitude, favorable choice, positive direction of effort, virtues of the subject, but also by imposing a vocation. Resilience is perfectly circumscribed by Plotinus' superb statement "Never cease to carve your own statue". The result is dependent on psychological involvement, volitional effort and constructive perseverance.¹¹

In the form of an equation, resilience can be written as:

$$\text{Magnitude of challenge} \times \text{Intensity of subject involvement} = \text{Rate of resilient development}$$

How all human actors, who in reality can be characterized as imperfect, insufficiently resilient, being perfectible, will be magnificent but susceptible to positive change. In other words, every Achilles warrior will inevitably also have an Achilles heel. But it must be said that in the space and conditions of resilience, Achilles will be victorious. Of major significance is the reality that resilient leadership always draws its sap from an exemplary life and career, so both are resilient. The need for simultaneity of life and career arises as imperative because life does not rigidly follow a set of rules, but envisages a coherent set of consequences, of consequences, of consequences, of positive summative ends. Ernest Hemingway said that *"There are some things that cannot be learned quickly, and time, which is all we have, must be paid for in full."*¹²

In more recent times more complex and precise terms of the resilient phenomenon are accepted and the term resilient processes is used. In the context of resilient process should be included primarily family, friends, extended circle of relations, the organization to which the subject belongs, the adjacent social environment, other factors. There is no doubt that the concept of resilience is widely used in the exclusive field of psychotherapy, but we will not go into details. We will only state that the term has relevant theoretical approaches as well as practical consequences. If there is a self-healing potential in some subjects, a beneficial process of resilience and post-traumatic recovery can be triggered. The external involvement of proactive people (mentors, charismatic leaders, resilience tutors, therapists, teachers, medical professionals, psychologists, etc.) is desirable for the rapid and energetic mobilization of the latent possibilities available to individuals, for the coherence of the triggering of resilient phenomena. All those listed

¹¹ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp.20-21.

¹² Eric Greitens, *Op.cit.*, pp. 35-310.

will have a catalytic role in triggering, energetically inducing and beneficially completing resilient processes.¹³ The possibility of isolated positive individual mutations, generated without external mentoring presence, is not excluded, the decisive importance having the subject's own volitional triggering nature, sensitive to external stimuli from the social environment.¹⁴ The subject's assumption of responsibility will provide the power and the binder, able to change the unpleasant situation into a favorable dimension¹⁵

4. Success Factors

The success factors for the resilient process can be: goals that exceed the self; establishment of the positive vision; the past will only be a springboard to learn and erase; imagining the end (expected state); permanence of self-care; synergistic perseverance; spiritual dimension.

1. *Exceeding the self* - the capacity of resilient people requires the setting of goals in life as placed on a higher plane, above, the narrow self, respecting the activated value system. The resilient process cannot be publicly proclaimed, being present in the privacy of the subject. The human factor will manifest itself through a positive form of the action plan, or through a metaphor expressed to those around. Resilient subjects aim far, the tasks are designed for the benefit of the community.¹⁶

2. *Positive vision* means using a positive perspective on the situation and shaping the final outcome. Due to the positive state of affairs, there will be changes in the tactics used, the perpetrators will reinvent themselves. The direction of travel and effort, the sense of change, the focus on higher values in line with the good strategy are of major importance.

3. *The past for learning and erasing*. People with resilient involvements will use past experience as a wellspring of positive endeavor. The facts do not need to return to personal memory and life, but remain only as a trigger for future beneficial learning and effort. The past supports the acquisition of wisdom, compassion and detached thinking.¹⁷

4. *The image will contain the finality (desired state)* - resilient subjects will make selections according to the value they hold. Inner conflict will be given up, useless dreams will be eliminated, confusions will be eliminated, and the direction of interest and attainment will be intuited and followed. The future will be efficiently prioritized, separating the things of major interest from the inherent useless things. The harmonization of the

¹³ Șerban Ionescu, *Tratat de reziliență asistată*, Bucharest, Trei Publishing House, 2013, pp. 41-42.

¹⁴ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁵ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 57-58, 250-251.

¹⁶ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁷ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 57-59.

major levels involved in the resilient phenomenon - mind, heart and physical body - will be achieved.

5. *The permanence of self-care* involves maintaining balance, keeping the mind, heart and physical body in a state of cleanliness and proper utilization. Healthy food, carefully dosed, quantitatively and qualitatively, will be used. Hygiene of mind, body, thoughts and feelings is utilized. The thoughts are listened to, the motivation of deeds is used, the projection of the approaches is in accordance with one's own positive values and the established beneficial intentions.¹⁸

6. *Synergistic perseverance* - constancy of intentions to complete and removal of giving up is necessary. The desired state of mind is continuous, emotions are balanced and concerns are maintained emanating positive beliefs. Balance is also preserved in the context of the collective, utilizing the positive energies in the group in the resilient process. Resilient individuals will utilize the energy needed by becoming aware of the process and focusing the positive energetic factors of the individuals involved.¹⁹

7. *The spiritual dimension* is indisputable and is a key factor. People with a strong faith, who keep fasting, have a moral life and pray a lot, are helped to reach the goals set in the resilient process.

Success factors will not act singularly, in isolation, but synergistically, as a requirement for resilience and change.

5. Foundations of Resilience

The basis for resilient processes can make summary references to the purpose, objectives, components, requirements, principles, and other issues.

5.1 Purpose and Objectives

The goal is constituted as a sum of opposing and complementary elements, which can synthesize aspects that contribute to the elimination of fear, reduction of anxious feelings of the population, reparation measures for human losses and material damage, strengthening of political-administrative measures, return to the previous standard of living, beneficial media impact and promotion of the appropriate message.²⁰

Objectives can be multiple, measurable or non-measurable. Measurability refers to the quantification of change by illustrating it quantitatively or in terms of value. Thus, they can be quantities of losses, levels of reduction (physical, percentage or graphical), quantities of financial funds, distinct measures, other aspects. Non-measurable targets may produce references to the status of characteristics of the social group or individual,

¹⁸ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁹ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 255-257.

²⁰ Eric Greitens, *Op.cit.*, pp. 93-221.

concerning the standard of living, local measures put in place, internal security framework etc.²¹

5.2.Principles

The resilient process will know a range of principles, such as: constructive leadership, flexible vision, conceptual complexity, prioritization of self-effort, alternation of efforts and complementarity of involvement.

Constructive leadership means that the steps taken must not lead to social turbulence, dissatisfaction or splits. The effort made at central and organizational level must present elegant ways of understanding the situation and reparative solutions.²²

The flexible vision is conferred by the interweaving of complex elements (political, social, financial, cultural, traditions, psychological, religious, etc.), oriented in a positive direction, to support the recovery of the situation and the strengthening of organizations.

The conceptual complexity is provided by the multitude of aspects that interfere and will be taken into account to achieve the goals of restoring the previously damaged state.²³

The priority of one's own effort is defining, the potential social group envisaged must be a sum of individuals, but each one acts deliberately, constructively, with a synergic vision within the group. The synergy of positively oriented individual efforts will lead to collective success.

Alternation of efforts means the possibility of shifting the focus from one measure or action to another, depending on the social-political framework of manifestation, the involvement of the group or random factors (time, season, climate, weather).

The complementary nature of the involvement derives from the need to overlap and combine efforts from different levels and sectors of community life. The synergy and the holistic aspects developed will guarantee the desired results.²⁴

5.3 Requirements

Resilience must be accepted as a major endeavor of communities and individuals. In the engaging dimension, resilience must be accepted as the dynamic capacity of the individual, excellently mobilized in hostile environments.²⁵

²¹ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 256-257.

²² Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, p. 28.

²³ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 256-257.

²⁴ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 28-29.

²⁵ Christina Berndt, *Reziliența: secretul puterii psihice: cum devenim mai rezistenți la stres, depresii și epuizare psihică*, Bucharest, All Educational Publishing House, 2014, pp. 60-76.

The requirements must include as a priority: the will for positive change, internal mobilization and continuity of manifestations.

The will for positive change will be the initial, triggering factor for all efforts to stop the negative manifestations that have occurred, harboring the intention and the possibility of restoring the damaged level.

The internal mobilization consists in the dynamization of the target entity's action possibilities for the restoration of the damaged level, recovery and progress of the subject.

The continuity of manifestations means the permanence of complex and multiple concerns, measures, actions and complex and multiple involvements towards the success of the resilient approach.²⁶

5.4 Components

As the components are multiple, we will consider that the operational and psychological dimensions, relevant to the societal and state environment, may be of greater interest.

The operational component is triggered by the multitude of aspects that define the legal framework, actions, measures, efforts and support procedures, aimed at redressing the situation of social groups.

The psychological component is provided by the totality of feelings, acts of will, placed at individual and collective level, which will be mobilized, empowered and channeled towards the desired direction. It is extremely important, with individual or collective representations, all of which are difficult to estimate, control and sustain.

The analytical starting point is given by the fact that resilience is the human capacity to maintain oneself as healthy and strong, full of life and fulfilled, even after a trauma. Resilience includes a side of adaptation, of conservation provided by human instinct, as well as a side mandated with learning (adaptation) and psycho-emotional training of the subject.²⁷

The human body will automatically register the stressful phenomenon, regardless of whether or not the negative aspect is conscious. The onset and materialization of stress is an unpleasant, easily perceptible form. The negative event triggers a stress-generating thought, which will produce a negative feeling. The feeling generated is in line with the defining typology associated with the initial thoughts. Automatically, the human subconscious mind will analyze the possibilities in which the individual's major needs are met, formulating unequivocal answers, materialized in clear forms: "YES" or "NO".

²⁶ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.

²⁷ Constantin Banu, Iuliana Vintilă, Adriana Miroiu, *Reziliență: calea de la supraviețuire la succes*, Bucharest, ASAB Publishing House, 2016, pp. 19, 69.

If the needs are met (for the answer "YES"), negative feelings are eliminated, calm is established and the organism's state of well-being returns.

In the opposite direction (for the answer "NO"), feelings trigger the release of hormones that facilitate the adrenal gland's response to stress, with consequences throughout the body. The first stress spiral occurs. Under stress, the adrenal gland can provide one of 4 types of responses:

- fight (counteract the intervening phenomenon);
- flight (to get out of the stressful phenomenon),
- blocking (depriving the subject of any kind of reaction);
- falling asleep (protective measure, dictated by the adrenal gland),

the last two responses being generated when the stress is very high and unmanageable by the subject's structures.²⁸ For each spiral of stress produced, the hypothalamus and limbic system will institute amplifications of the adrenal stress response, with the body functioning at failure levels. Undesirable physiological changes will be produced, damaging human organs, glands and tissues (increased heart rate and blood pressure, twitching or stiffening of muscles, etc). Organs, tissues or glands that are severely strained will send out warning messages in the form of disease symptoms. By removing or eliminating the factors and feelings that cause stress, the normal functioning of the body can be restored and a state of well-being and health can return.²⁹

The human mind, awareness of the requirement for positive progress and emotions will generate significant effects in the human body. Thus, the transformation of negative stress into a positive manifestation will occur. Stress manifests itself in the subconscious, in a hidden way and can be conscious. The stress phenomenon can be acted on in full awareness.³⁰

The healing process requires a change of lifestyle. The subject will move from the state of dependence of the individual to the process of autonomy. Activities, attitudes and behaviors will be promoted that favor individual freedom of thought, emphasize self-awareness, demonstrate the value of a close circle of relationships and a positive social environment. States of joy, contentment, satisfaction, cheerfulness, love, amusement and humor are to be promoted. Changes in regaining beneficial control over life will cumulate personal, professional, emotional, spiritual and medical activities. Extremely beneficial is the conscious involvement in a relationship of extended empathy, as well as the effort put forth in a stable organization with sound thinking, moral coordinates and beneficial practices.³¹

²⁸ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.

²⁹ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 45-46.

³⁰ Viorel-Cătălin Mihalcea, Gabriela- Elena Sîrbu, Vasile Bogdan, *Op.cit.*, p. 27.

³¹ Arielle Essex, *Op.cit.*, pp. 29-30.

Conclusions

Resilience to stress, depression and mental exhaustion must rest on as many pillars as possible. Thus, one can mention the connections, the quality (but close) bonds established in individuals within the core micro-group, the resilience of organizations, activated (possibly also through frustrating events), the reciprocal relations between individual qualities (individual ego) and the integrating social environment. The essential aspect should be emphasized in the self-confidence, based on self-efficacy and self-knowledge.

When assessing the resilience of organizations or large social groups, it is important to consider the political aspect of the surrounding environment. The general system, democratic aspects, respect for the rights of the individual, strength, capacity of influence, support for the organization will be evaluated. Other aspects that facilitate collective resilience will also be highlighted, such as spiritual community and predominant type of religion, support from outside, unfavourable forms of societal resilience, various elements that induce support or adversative forms in the resilient subjects.

In these circumstances, societal resilience must be recognized as being dependent on state involvement in the equation of restoring collective and individual living standards, which may have suffered various effects. It will be important to intervene to eliminate the dysfunctions identified and restore the standard previously held.



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