

Toughness dimension

Toughness is having the strength and amplitude to withstand anything that's meant to break you.

Being tough is one of the most important elements that one can have to overcome adversity and tough times, the willingness to embrace your fears, the ability to go after what you want and not be shaken and also learning how to deal with yourself when you feel a bit shaken or in doubt. Acquiring toughness is not easy and learning how to build and enhance it takes time, life experiences and also allowing challenging moments to help build character.

Here's a short story of how a boy learn to become tough:

There was a boy who was born in Bristol and was raised in Bristol all the way up to the age of 10. He didn't have any support and plus, his dad who was born in New Castle abandoned him and his mother by the age of 5. Him and his mother traveled all over the country from Bristol to Liverpool to Blackpool, Essex and constantly not having any stability. They moved from city to city, home to home, shelter to shelter and on some occasions, slept on the streets throughout the year.

They were staying at a friend of a stranger's house and unfortunately they have nowhere else to go. Things only get worse from here because not only do they experience more lack of stability but also now they're in London and his mother decides to abandon him. He was on the brink of loosing his self-esteem because of his experiences with abandonment, disappointment, feeling like he couldn't rely on anyone for help and also feeling like there's no reason for living or being on this planet.

They were spending most of their day in the shopping centre and so the boy asked his mother, could we get some food. The mother pulled out some spare change so the boy could go get a snack from a shop or fast food place. He decided to go get snacks from a shop and when he came out, he went back to go find his mother but unfortunately, she wasn't there! He doesn't know where to go and is confused with what to do next. It's like looking at a blank page. He decided to walk around, walk in and out of shops, food places, and local bus stations and couldn't find his mother anywhere. Although he is confused and lost, he remained calm within this experience. After spending hours of trying to find his mother and not finding her, he went off to seek shelter of his own.

It was starting to get dark and the boy didn't have any money to take public transport nor did he have a way of contacting anyone. So within the shopping centre, he decided to try and find a gap of space where he could sit and lay down just so he can figure out what to do. He sat on the ground with his back against the wall and was surrounded by people who were not of great thinking either. A few hours have gone by and nobody has

witnessed the in need of help so now he feels secluded and a person who doesn't feel like life is worth living.

He's now depressed... He feels like he's come to a realization about his own life and now he really doesn't know what to do. However, he was forced to make a choice between staying there and believing that this is the end or believing that with making the right decision, the boy can go find what he's really looking for. He decided to go out and go find what he's looking for which is shelter, food and love. So he got up with toughness and hope and walked to a telephone booth to call the police department. He talked to the officer on the phone and explained the story. The officer told the boy, "The police will be on their way so please wait." So the boy waited and eventually the police showed up.

He was taken to the police station because he needed some shelter. They arrived at the police station, walked in and the boy took a seat. The only thing he had was a backpack and bag of snacks from the shop. In the mean time, the police officers are looking for the parent and unfortunately, they couldn't seem to trace her. So the only thing they can think of was to call the social services. After some time and waiting, a random stranger appears. The random stranger was talking to the police officers and then eventually talked to the boy.

The stranger starts talking to the boy and lets him know that he's a social worker. The stranger and the boy both left the police station and drive to another building. By the end of that night, he found himself in the foster care system where he had no idea that that was going to happen. However, he moved into one home temporarily before moving to another and from the age of 10, he stayed in the foster care system without ever seeing his mother again. Now he has new caring parents and everything that he needs in order to succeed. He found the toughness and willingness to withstand his adversity and overcame his trauma. He never gave up and remained hopeful and told himself that he'll never be victim of his circumstance ever again. He later went on to becoming one of the smartest students in school all the way from secondary to college and then to university and in the midst of it, he played various different sports such as basketball, football, and swimming.

The moral of the story is, whatever happens in your life, never feel as though you are meant to give in to what is happening outside of you. You have to find a way to stay tough and strong throughout your experiences because at the end of the day, if the boy fell into the weakness of his situation, then he wouldn't have turned out to be the person who he is now.

Through his experiences, he found toughness, character, strength and courage to stay strong and because of that, nobody would have guessed that he went through what he went through. He's a bright young man with toughness out of this would and because of that toughness, he will be successful in whatever he was able to do.

Exercise for toughness

Directions-

Finding toughness isn't easy but yet it can be developed over the course of time and experience. What we are going to do is learn about finding toughness and we're going to be using all sorts of comparisons to help you understand what are different forms of toughness.

1. Think of the **heart** in your body. It is tough because it has to do a lot of work like pumping blood throughout your body and no matter how hard the body is working, the heart and it's muscle is always making sure that it's doing it's job.
2. Think of a police officer that has the responsibility of making sure that everyone's life is safe. This requires a form of **toughness** because it's not an easy job dealing with difficult and unfriendly people.
3. Think of the kid in the story above who almost thought about giving up because he had nobody to go to and the only person who he thought he had, left him to survive. It takes **resilience** to not give up and to keep going till you find what you're looking for.

Activity:

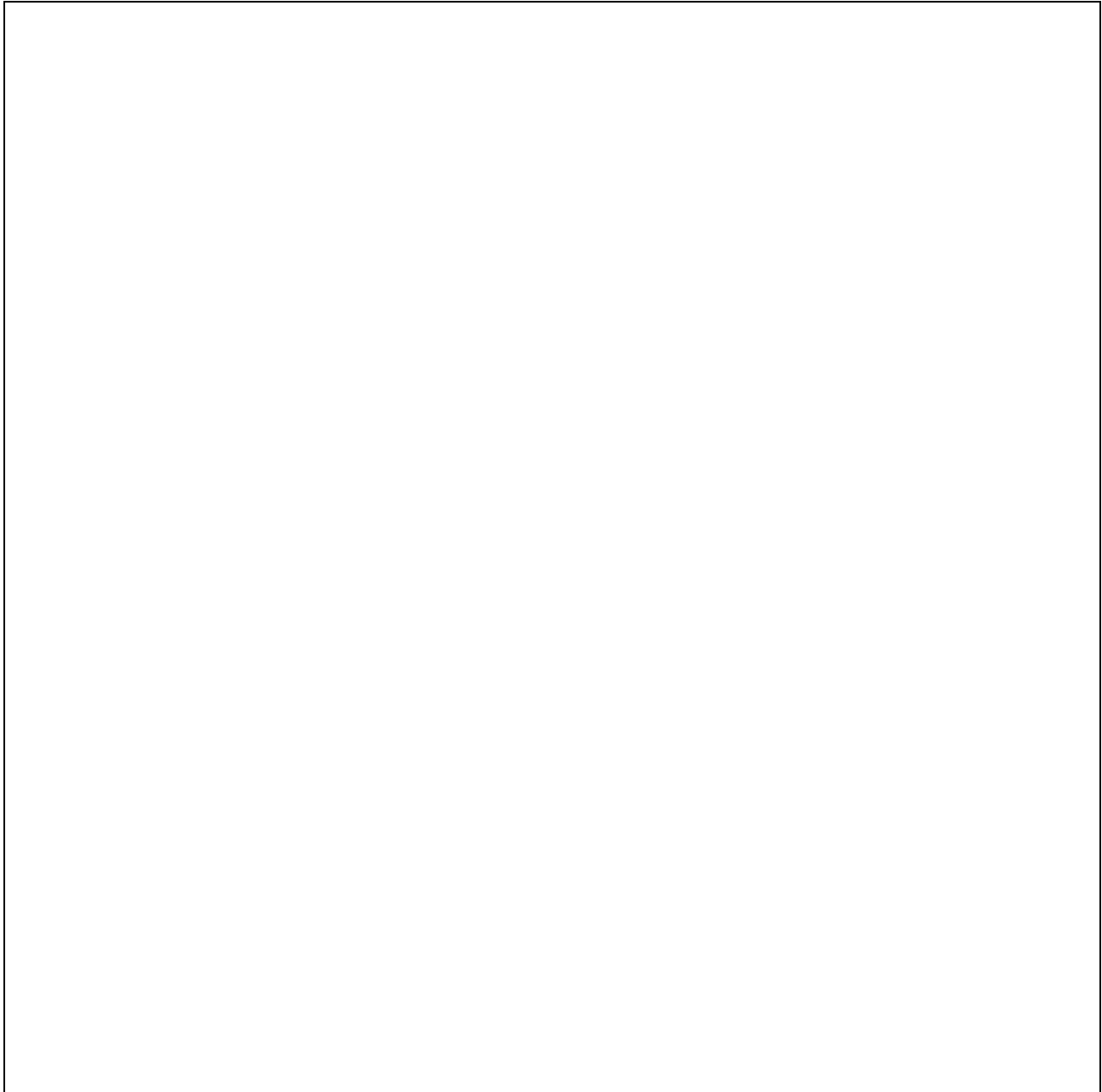
Think about a moment in your day, week, year or life where you could've easily went one way but you decided not to because you know you're **stronger** than your circumstance. Give an example for the following:

Today:

Week:

Year:

Life:



Reflection:

Think back at those moments that you just wrote down and think about how they made you feel.

- Did you find confidence and strength after the moment?
- Did they make you feel as though you were in control?
- Did you pay attention to the lesson learned?
- Did you feel yourself more relaxed afterwards?
- Did you learn something valuable that you can share unto others in a positive way?
- Did you eventually find the courage to overcome and be at your best?

These are just example questions to help you how to understand yourself when it comes to dealing with things that happen outside of us. Toughness is like having strong muscles and having strong muscles means that you're able to try fight through tough challenges. Whenever you find yourself experiencing a tough moment, try to be relaxed and respond to your situation the best way possible.

If you're going through a tough time, stop and think to ask yourself, a couple questions such as:

1. What life lesson is being thought and what am I suppose to learn?
2. Is this experience helping me to become a better individual?

1.

2.

Just remember, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going” and never feel as though your not strong enough to get through moments of challenge because guess what? **YOU ARE...** The most challenging part of it all is believing it and with believing it comes toughness. You have what it takes to withstand anything that happens and I believe you do so whatever you’re going through, just know it’s temporary.