

Elena Aguilar:

Hello and welcome to the Bright Morning Podcast. I'm Elena Aguilar.

Hi friends! So this is the second episode in a mini-series about coaching emotions and resilience and related to my book *Onward*. And so in this episode, I am going to give you three ways to boost your resilience or the resilience of the folks that you are coaching, three strategies that I am finding incredibly useful right now that are sort of at the top of my strategies to boost my own resilience or to work with challenging stuff that comes up. So that's what I'm going to share with you. You can add these strategies to your coaching toolbox and perhaps some of this will also provoke some reflection on perhaps the concept of curiosity. That's one thing I'm going to dig into. So do you think you are a curious person? I'm going to challenge you on that. That's coming up in just a moment.

Before we get into this episode, however, I do want to thank Elizabeth R. for being a friend of the show and really thank all of you who are friends of the show because this show, it does take a lot to produce a podcast and I really want to keep it ad free. Honestly, I don't know. And this is a hope, I want to keep it ad free, trying to find ways to cover the cost of it. And so folks, if you're interested and you are able, check out the show notes. And you know what? If that's not possible for you right now, there is another way that you can support the show, which is... Well, actually there's two ways. Let me tell you two freeways. One is by rating and reviewing the podcast on Apple Podcasts. It really helps to spread this podcast. Those numbers matter. The second way that is free that you can support the podcast is just by sharing it with a friend or with a colleague who might also find it useful.

All right, let's get into this episode, Three Resilience Boosters. Okay, these are the three that I'm finding incredibly useful for myself. And so yes, you can use them with the people you coach, but maybe you need a little bit of resilience boosting right now. And so when I say resilience boosting, I'm also just talking about when tough stuff comes up, when uncomfortable emotions surge. I'm going to tell you what the three things are and then I'll unpack them. So the first is to practice self-acceptance. The second is to scan for curiosity. And the third is to ask yourself, "What's sustaining me?"

Let me tell you more about each of those three things. So first I said is to practice self-acceptance. I got to acknowledge the Conscious Leadership Group for this reminder. Okay, there's lots of people who talk about self-acceptance, but the Conscious Leadership Group, check out the show notes for the book. It's part of our leadership model that we use in Bright Morning, and it's been incredibly useful for me individually and as a leader and to our team. So in Conscious Leadership, they talk about the first step. When you recognize that you are feeling strong, uncomfortable emotions. You are feeling fear, anger, sadness, shame. Whatever really strong emotion that's taking you out of a place of presence, they say the first step is to ask yourself, "Can I accept myself for being here?" And I got to say, when I first read that, I thought, "Yeah, sure, okay, I can just say yes."

It's really, really hard. It's really hard for me to do. I'm not going to generalize that. Maybe it's not that hard for you. But I have spent now about a year and a half practicing this. When I notice that I'm feeling angry, sad, afraid, whatever it is, that's uncomfortable, saying to myself, "Can I accept myself for being here?" And for months and months and months when I started practicing this, my response to myself was, "No. No, I cannot accept this." And I'd have so much resistance against the emotion. Somehow this prompt, this question, "Can I accept myself for being here?" really helped me confront the fact that I couldn't. I was fighting the emotion.

So when we have resistance to an emotion, it actually makes that emotion feel more intense and stickier and we then have emotions about the emotions and we kind of go into this cycle. So in the practicing of, "Can I accept myself?" Some of what that sounds like to me as I try to accept myself is I tell myself things

like, "It is a normal human thing to have feelings. I'm feeling angry right now. It's not permanent. Can I just accept that I'm experiencing this emotion right this minute?"

Now, if you're coaching someone and you hear that they are expressing a lot of one of these strong emotions, you could say something like, "I'm hearing a lot of frustration. How do you feel about feeling frustrated?" Or you can say, "I'm hearing a lot of sadness. Are you able to accept that you're experiencing that right now?" You can also help someone unpack their thoughts about the emotion, because often the resistance is the thoughts. So if someone's saying, "I'm just so angry, I can't believe my principal did that," you can say, "What are the thoughts that you have about your anger?" And this is where you can begin to unpack some of the beliefs that we hold about anger like, "Anger is dangerous," or, "I'm not supposed to be angry, or I don't trust my anger."

When you are inviting someone to explore an emotion, it can help the self-acceptance because as we start talking about an emotion, often we get to the place where we both acknowledge that it's temporary, that we felt it before, and it's a human thing, and that allows us to accept it. So this is the first resilience booster. When you notice you're having a strong emotion, when you're feeling uncomfortable, whatever that feeling is, say to yourself, "Can I accept that I'm having this emotion?" Self-acceptance, being kind to yourself, self-compassion is so transformative. Lately, I've just been thinking this is really all there is to resilience. I don't know. This is a recent experience. Maybe resilience is all about just being able to be kind to ourselves. It doesn't mean we stop taking action. It doesn't mean we change habits when we're kind to ourselves. In fact, when we're kind to ourselves, our energy, our motivation to change habits, to do different things increases. Maybe it's just me that struggles so much with this, but I don't think so. And that's why this is number one, practice self-acceptance.

Number two resilience booster is what I'm calling right now scan for curiosity. So when you notice that you are in a tough place, you're experiencing some strong emotions, I want you to imagine that you can see sort of an aerial map of your emotional landscape. Maybe see a lot of turmoil, a lot of irritation, grief, confusion, whatever it is. Scan that map for curiosity. Just see if it's out there somewhere. I'm not suggesting you grab for it or that you try to be curious or that you push yourself into it. I just want you to consider whether anywhere on the horizon there is curiosity.

Now, recently, I've been reflecting on curiosity because there's been times when I thought I was really curious, but I realized I wasn't. There's times when I was curious, but I realized that it was curiosity as sort of a mind state to try to control someone else. Like I'd say like, "I'm really curious about why my husband thinks that is the way to load the dishwasher." I was not curious. I was trying to figure out a way to manipulate or control someone else. That's not true curiosity. I've done this as a coach. I've done this as a leader. I think I'm curious about what someone else thinks or feels, but I'm not really curious. I'm just trying to figure out a way to control someone else.

I have also realized that sometimes I think I'm curious, but I'm actually just trying to figure out how to achieve some outcome. And that is also not true curiosity. Not when I have an end that I'm trying to get to and I say to myself, "Well, I'm just curious about how I can do that." It's not true curiosity. I can tell. I can feel it. It's me trying to get somewhere and trying to find some data or something that will lead me to the conclusion that I have already come to.

So true curiosity I find is terrifying, exhilarating. True curiosity requires me to be willing to give up everything I've ever known or believed. And I mean everything. It's terrifying. True curiosity is terrifying. It demands tremendous courage. It means that I have to accept my fear. But when I'm truly curious, I am able to discover solutions to problems that have perplexed me for a long time. When I'm truly curious, I connect much more deeply with others. When I'm truly curious, I do have to regularly explore my fear. I have to accept myself for having fear, but it leads me into state a reality into new habits that are those that I truly want to be experiencing and embodying.

Okay. So that was little reflection there on curiosity, because strategy number two is to scan for curiosity, okay? So just a reminder, I don't want you to necessarily grab for it or push yourself into it. I want you to see if anywhere on your emotional terrain there is some curiosity, some true curiosity, which could be scary, but see if it's out there. That's all. The second resilience booster is just to scan for curiosity, because what'll happen is if you see it there, you'll lean into it just a little bit.

Okay, the third resilience booster is to ask yourself, "What's sustaining me?" So this is a different question than some of the other resilience boosters I ask sometimes like, "What's giving you joy or what's helping you thrive? Or what are you grateful for?" Ask yourself what's sustaining you and explore the thoughts that are sustaining you. Which are the thoughts that help you feel like, "Yeah, I can go on. I can continue"? It's sort of a softer, more subtle state than joy or gratitude or thriving. Explore what feels sustaining, the activities, the emotions, the thoughts, the connections that sustain you.

All right. So those are three resilience boosters that you can ask yourself, ask the people you coach. And in the next couple of episodes, you're going to hear me coaching a real person about a real situation, and you'll hear me using these strategies as well as other strategies to coach emotions. So whenever I'm talking about coaching resilience, resilience is an emotional state. It's a state of agility and presence and self-awareness that allows us to respond to challenges.

All right, folks, that's this episode. If you found it helpful, would you share it with a friend or a colleague? Thank you. And I want to acknowledge that LesLee Bickford is the podcast producer, and Stacey Goodman is the sound engineer. All right, I'll see you next time. Take care, everybody.