

# THE SEVEN HABITS OF PERSONAL, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

*Resilience is the ability to successfully meet and surmount challenges, obstacles, & problems.*

**1. Solidarity and cooperation.** When the going gets rough, nobody gets thrown to the wolves. This is a basic principle of a human civilization of life and love. Our first concern is naturally for those who are closest to us, but that can't be the extent of our involvement. Our families are only as secure as our communities, and our communities are only as safe as the world. Studies of past disasters show clearly the importance of cooperation in successfully meeting and surmounting a serious challenge. The more solidarity and cooperation that is evident in a society, the more resilient it is when faced with big problems.

**2. Creativity and adaptability.** Sometimes problems that seem very big need to be viewed from a different angle of observation. We get enclosed in boxes that limit our ability to see an entire picture. A rapidly changing world means we have to get out of our boxes in order to see enough of the picture that we can authentically respond. Sometimes we need to see the possibilities of new relationships, new connections, new uses for old systems or machines or resources, or new ways of using those systems to do new things. The ability to creatively meet changing situations is a positive indicator of community and family resilience. If systems are breaking down, we must discover new and better systems that are not so brittle and vulnerable.

**3. Pro-activity.** Either you will act on a situation or it will act on you. A decision to do nothing may be a decision to make the situation worse. A problem won't get better by itself. A flat tire is a flat tire, it has to be changed. Standing there and wishing it were otherwise, or denying that the tire is flat, gets you nowhere. Positive action in support of safety and security is evidence of resilience in a family and a community.

**4. Prudence, preparation, and planning.** While the world is full of blessings and opportunities, it is also a risky and hazardous place. We know this and so we tell each other and our children stories and proverbs about watching for dangers and taking precautions. Look before you leap, watch where you're going, a stitch in time saves nine, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, these are a few of the ways we teach the importance of watching out for yourself and others that you are responsible for. The point of "watching out" is to avoid trouble, or manage it when it is inevitable. Cultivating the virtue of prudence & its associated discipline of sustainable living helps a family or community successfully surmount challenges.

**5. Responsibility.** Civilization works in part because most people willingly assume responsibility and carry out their duties. Your social responsibilities include making a best effort to ensure that your own household is as sustainable as is practical for your circumstances. The more people that assume personal responsibility and carry out their duties in life, living in a more rather than less sustainable way, the more resilient is the community. In a time of rapid change or disaster, everybody must accept responsibility for maintaining community values, order, health, and safety.

**6. Awareness of environment.** It's easy to get into the routine of life, and go through the motions practically oblivious to what everybody else is up to. We trust our environment because we know it well and generally have a handle on its risks. But there are times when things change very fast and thus normality is disrupted. Such disruptions can be prolonged. To cope with rapidly changing circumstances, we must practice our ability to observe, understand, and generally be aware of our environment -- its opportunities and its risks.

**7. Holistic methodology.** We live in an age of specialization, but life has plenty of reminders that there are some things that everybody should know how to do. The crises and challenges of life at this time in place and history call us to expand our horizons, to look for solutions in many different places and peoples. Nobody is an island, we are all connected. We can't cope with particular local situations in isolation from other global issues, because global issues inevitably work their way down to the neighborhood and there is a spiritual reality that unites us. Times of rapid change, disasters and disruptions of life as we know it can stretch pre-existing stresses in a culture to the breaking point. Thus, we must bring all that we have and are -- values, reasoning ability, knowledge, spirituality, faith, prayer, relationships, and cultures -- to the table in the search for solutions to the very grave problems which afflict all who live on this planet.