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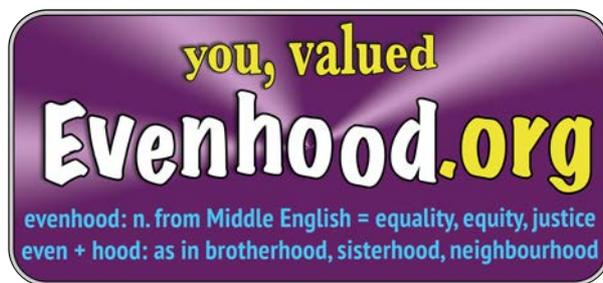
Wellbeing & Resilience
Workbook



for
mental
toughness

Jonathan Phelan
Rachael Peel

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Introduction by Jonathan Phelan and Rachael Peel



Hello

It is wonderful that humans look after and protect our young for so long. During our early years we enjoy gliding through life on autopilot - allowing people older than us to look out for us. It's safer that way. We can explore, play, take risks and know that someone is around to keep us safe

There comes a time in life though when we get that instinct to go it alone. We start to want to make our own choices.

And so we disengage autopilot and start to run things for ourselves. We want more independence and we start to try out new things. We have adventures, take some risks and make occasional mistakes.

Disengaging autopilot can be wonderful. It puts us on a superb journey to discover our purpose in life - who we are and what we want to be. But it can be challenging too. As we discover ourselves and start to run our own lives, there are lots of things to try out and choices to make. Sometimes things go well; but that's not always the case. This can have an impact on our wellbeing.

There are also contradictions to cope with. We want independence; but we still live in the structure of families and social groups. We may still attend school or higher education. We may be doing an apprenticeship or have a job. Getting the balance right between full independence and these other responsibilities takes a bit of work.

Then there are influences from role models, from people we admire and from people who tell us what they think is best for us - friends, family, loved ones, peers, social media and celebrities. Some of what they say and do might work for us; but not always. As we develop, we start to form a set of values by which we live our life. Working out a set of values that we feel comfortable with can be a challenge.

If you're on any part of this journey of you becoming you; if you want to know how to manage your wellbeing, resilience and happiness through challenging times; and if you want to disengage autopilot in a safe way, then this book is designed for you.

We wish you all the very best

Jonathan & Rachael

Your Wellbeing & Resilience Workbook

This is your workbook, designed to help you improve your wellbeing and strengthen your resilience.

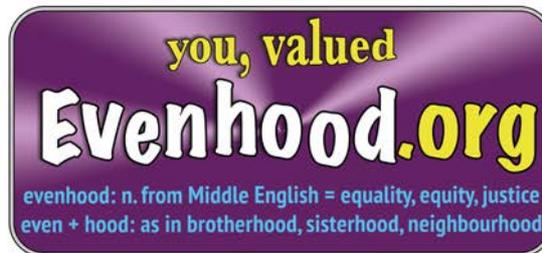
The workbook gives you things to learn as well as things to discover for yourself. There are some numbered exercises for you to do. You'll explore how to mindfully reflect on you and your environment. All of this will help you go through life with the ability to manage your wellbeing and strengthen your resilience. This workbook also includes some important facts, theories and definitions to help you understand important concepts like wellbeing, resilience and mental health.

Finally, there's a Wellbeing Journal for you to complete as you go along and keep so that you can stay on top of your wellbeing for life. The Wellbeing Journal is also freely available on the Evenhood website for you to print and use as much as you like.



WELLBEING JOURNAL

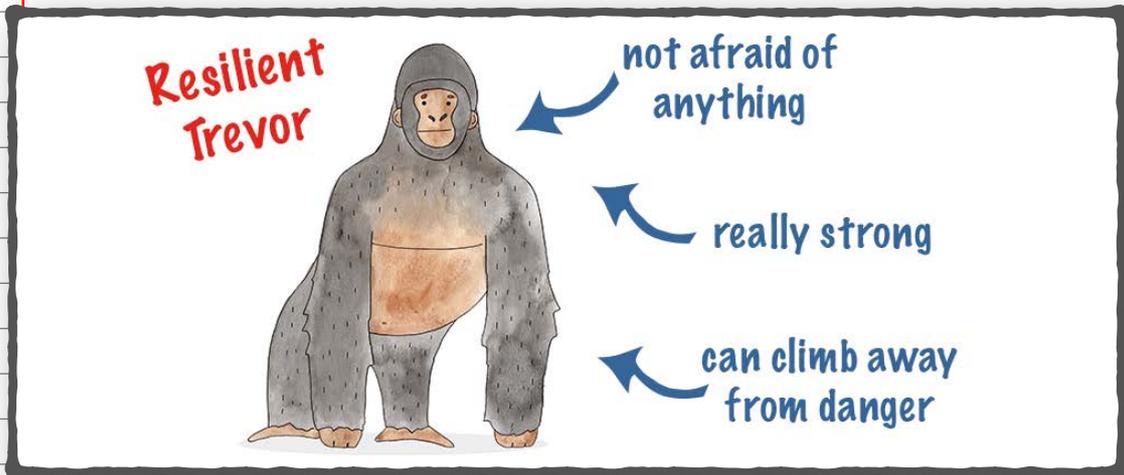
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**Helping you manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience
and have mentally healthy conversations**

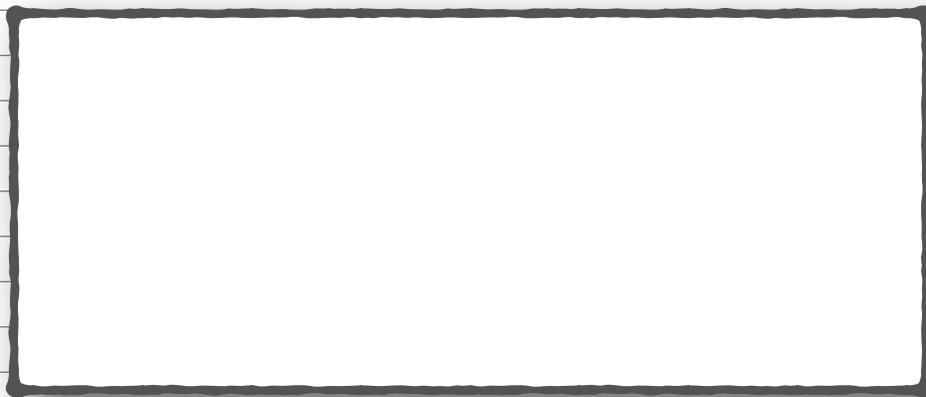
What is 'wellbeing' anyway?

Here's a picture of Resilient Trevor. He's going to help you understand how life is sometimes challenging and how it can have an impact on your wellbeing. Then you'll discover what you can do about it.



Resilient Trevor is a gorilla. We chose him as a resilient creature because he's strong and not afraid of anything. He faces few threats in life.

1. Think of the most resilient animal you can imagine. Write a description or draw a picture of an animal that you think is really resilient.



2. Describe what it is that makes your animal so resilient.

Now let's zoom out a bit and look at the environment that Resilient Trevor lives in.



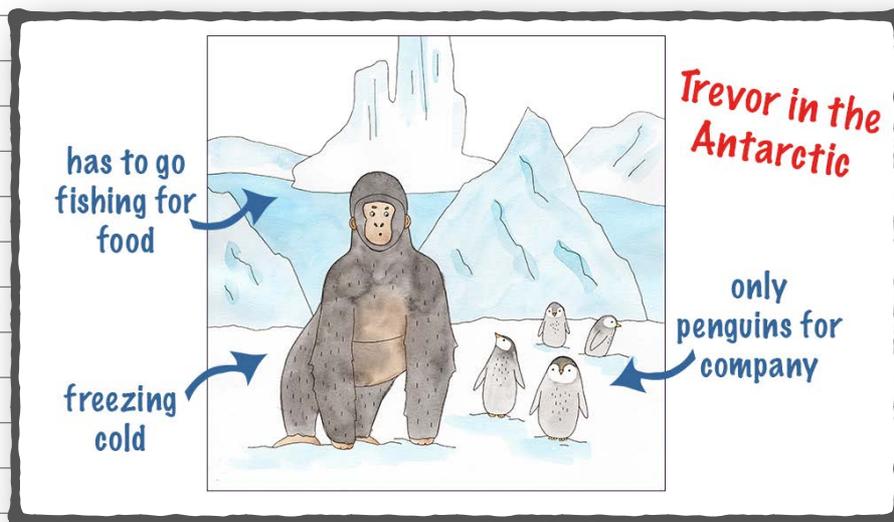
Resilient Trevor lives in a lush jungle. He's surrounded by plenty of food; clean, fresh water; lots of trees to climb and soft leaves to make a bed with. All these things help his wellbeing. He is totally suited to his home environment. And his home environment is totally suited to him.

3. Write a description or draw a picture of your resilient animal in its home environment.



4. What does your animal have in its environment that helps it stay resilient?

Now let's see what happens if Resilient Trevor is taken out of his natural environment and placed somewhere completely different. Let's try moving him to the Antarctic instead of his lush jungle.



5. What do you think has happened to Resilient Trevor's resilience in this different, unfamiliar and hostile environment?

6. Write a description or draw a picture of your resilient animal in a completely different environment. Choose anywhere you like.



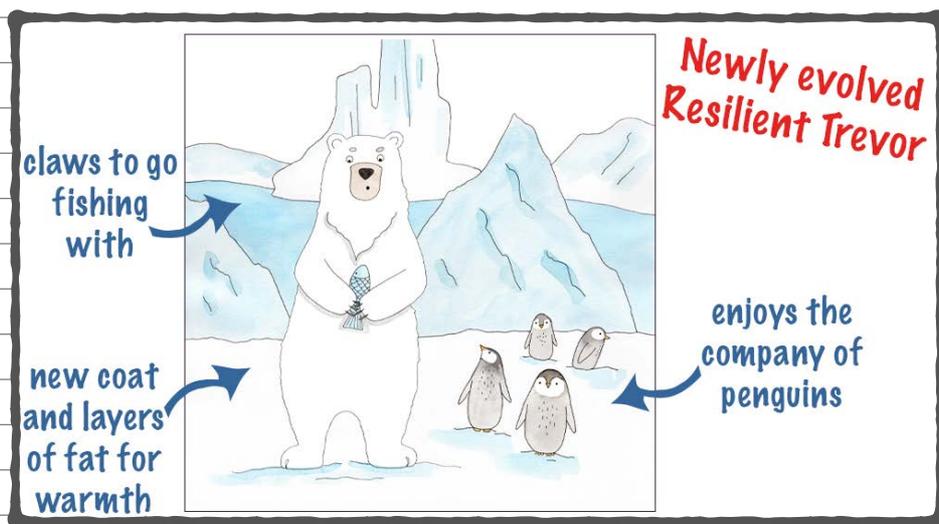
7. How do you think your animal would feel in this environment? Would it still be resilient?

Imagine that Trevor could have a conversation with you now. He'd probably tell you that he's scared, hungry, lonely and that he feels unhappy.

You'd have to admit that Trevor is not resilient any more. In this new, challenging environment he seems weak and incapable.

So. What can you do to support Trevor if he had this conversation with you?

If you had the right skills and abilities, you could help Trevor evolve so that he can cope better in his new environment. This is your imagination - so assume that you have these wonderful powers to help Trevor improve himself so he can cope in this harsh environment.



You could help him by making him more suited to his environment. You could change his body to give him extra thick fur, more layers of fat to keep warm, claws to catch fish with and so on. This could help Trevor become resilient again.

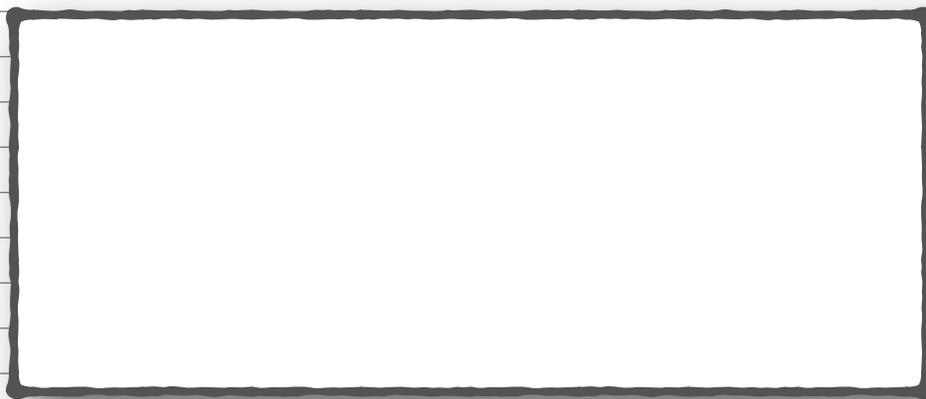
A Brief Look at Resilience

When we think of resilient individuals, we often think of them as being strong or tough, able to easily cope with whatever comes their way without it bothering them in the slightest. However, that's not really true: the most resilient people are those who can adapt to their conditions.

Some psychologists have compared resilience to metals: cast iron is hard but easily breakable (not very resilient), whereas wrought iron is soft and flexible (much more resilient). So, the more flexible we are, the more resilient we will be.¹

8. What abilities would you need to give your animal, to help it cope with the new situations it faces?

9. Write a description or draw a picture of your animal showing what changes you would need to make to help it cope in its new environment.



Let's . . . think of a different solution

Let's go back a step and think this through some more. It's fine to use your imagination like this to help Trevor adapt; but it's not very practical in real life unless you have a very special set of skills, knowledge and experience.

The reality is that you can't do much to help Trevor evolve that quickly to cope in this difficult and challenging environment.

Let's explore what your options are.

First - you already know that you could try and help him evolve, but you've worked out that this isn't practical. You don't have that kind of power, so this won't end well. You will end up feeling responsible for trying to help, but frustrated that you can't help. Of course, Trevor will also still feel miserable.

Second - you could tell Trevor that he's weak and incapable now, and he'll have to get used to it. Again, Trevor will still feel miserable. In fact, he'd probably feel worse. This isn't a good option either!

Third - you could take Trevor to an environment that suits him better! Now that's far easier, and you know that a lush jungle is far more suitable for Trevor and he'll be comfortable again. This is something that you CAN achieve. If you did this you'd have a satisfied sense of responsibility; because you're able to do something that helps.

What do we learn from this?

You learn a couple of really important points from this exercise.

The first is that nothing, and no-one, is resilient wherever they are and whatever their circumstances. If you ever feel like you're not coping and that life is difficult, this is completely normal. Everyone faces challenges in life that they sometimes find difficult. So don't feel that there's something wrong with you just because life might sometimes feel a bit tough.

The second thing to learn from this exercise is that your wellbeing is not just about you and your mind. It's also about your environment. In the right environment for you, you thrive and can do really well. In the wrong environment for you, life becomes more challenging.

So, you don't just have one solution to help you out when life is tough. You don't just need to see this as being something to do with the way your mind works and how you think. Instead, you learn from Resilient Trevor that when life is tough, you can make changes to your environment so that it's more comfortable for you. The environment you live in is really important to help you stay mentally strong.

Let's . . . have a different conversation

When you look at it like that, you'll find that getting help with fixing your environment is easier too.

When you see wellbeing as being solely about the mind, the help you need has to come from medically trained professionals and therapists - because only they know how the mind works and can help fix things when it goes wrong.

But when you see wellbeing as also being about your environment, it's far easier to get help and support from anyone. All the people you see every day - your friends, family, people at school, university or work - any of them can help to give you an environment that suits you best.

You can have a 'mentally healthy conversation' with any of these people about your environment and how it affects your wellbeing. The beauty of a conversation about your environment is that it's not complicated. No-one needs special training in medicine or therapy to help. Instead of talking about the way your mind works, you instead talk about what you did today and how it affected your wellbeing. And you can talk about how, if you did something different, maybe your wellbeing could improve.

Let's . . . live in evenhood

Another important thing that you will learn from this workbook is that showing kindness, compassion and respect to other people is important for your own wellbeing.

Through this workbook you'll explore what 'evenhood' means. You'll have heard of brotherhood, sisterhood and neighbourhood. These are all words that describe a sense of togetherness, where people come together to support each other.

Evenhood is also about togetherness. It's about all people treating each other as equals. It's really good for your wellbeing if other people allow you to be yourself and if they value you, just as you are. And it's really good for their wellbeing if you treat them the same way.

When other people compete with you, assess you, judge you and try to be better than you, or claim that they are better than you, this is an environment that can damage your wellbeing. When other people say that you ought to be able to do something, or you should like something, or it's not normal to dislike something, this is an environment that can damage your wellbeing.

The opposite of this sort of environment is one in which people allow you to be yourself. They value you for who you are. They treat you with kindness, respect and

compassion. In this environment people support each other's wellbeing by living in evenhood.

Anyone can choose to have a mindset based in evenhood; although, sadly, not everyone does. In an environment where people live in evenhood you will be treated equally to everyone else. You won't be expected to look, dress, behave, act or talk in a particular way; or be anything in particular - except yourself. Indeed, evenhood is a mindset that wants you to be yourself and values you just as you are.

Let's . . . learn about wellbeing

We hope that you enjoy using this workbook and that you learn some valuable lessons from the exercises, about how to manage your wellbeing and strengthen your resilience.

Mental Health

Physical health: focuses on what's wrong with our bodies and how to put it right. It can also involve staying in environments that are good for our physical health and avoiding environments that make us physically unwell.

Mental health: focuses on what's wrong with our minds and how to put it right. It can also involve being more aware about what happens in our environment that has an impact on our mental health, and what we can do to put that right to help our wellbeing.

Mental Health Support

When we feel that our wellbeing is not good, there are two types of support we can get. The first is the well-trained medical and therapeutic support that comes from the health services. Support from therapy and medicine can be a particularly important and necessary part of improving our wellbeing, especially if we suffer from a mental illness.

There is also support that we can get from others around us. If they don't have specialist skills, they can't give us the complex medical or therapeutic support that might help. However, they can still support us by helping us have an environment that we feel comfortable in.

What you just learned



You can get help when you feel that your mental wellbeing is not so good.



It's normal to have some mental wellbeing challenges from time to time.



Sometimes the help you need comes from having conversations with trained medical professionals.

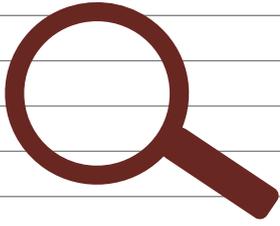


But you can also get help from other people, so you can get their support. They can give you the right environments that help your wellbeing.



The people you need support from need to treat you with kindness, compassion, respect and a sense of evenhood.

What you're going to discover



Apart from signposting to say that you can get support from medical professionals and trained therapists, we're not going to look at mental illness, medical conditions or their symptoms.



And we won't be looking at medical treatments, therapies and medication for mental illness.



You're going to discover how to find the environments and situations that work best for you.



You're going to discover how to have 'mentally healthy conversations' so that you can get support for wellbeing from other people. By having mentally healthy conversations you will also be able to give wellbeing support to other people.



You're going to discover how to live with a sense of 'evenhood'. People who live in evenhood treat each other with respect, equality and kindness. This is hugely supportive of our wellbeing.

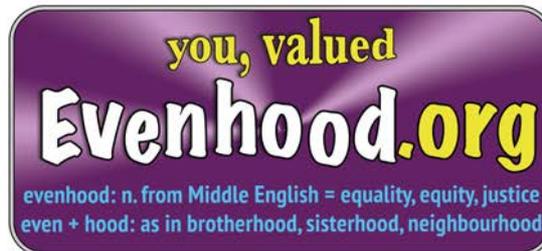
Your Wellbeing Journal

As we go through this workbook we'll introduce you to pages from the Wellbeing Journal. You can print any of the pages, as often as you like, for free, from the Evenhood website which you'll find at www.evenhood.org.



WELLBEING JOURNAL

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**Helping you manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience
and have mentally healthy conversations**

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Wellbeing Journal Page 1

Step #1

What does 'Resilience' mean to you?

You already know that you're more likely to show resilience in an environment that suits you. But what does 'resilience' really mean?

Resilience is a confusing concept. If we asked you to look up a definition of resilience you'd find that it's about all sorts of different things.

What people might say resilience means

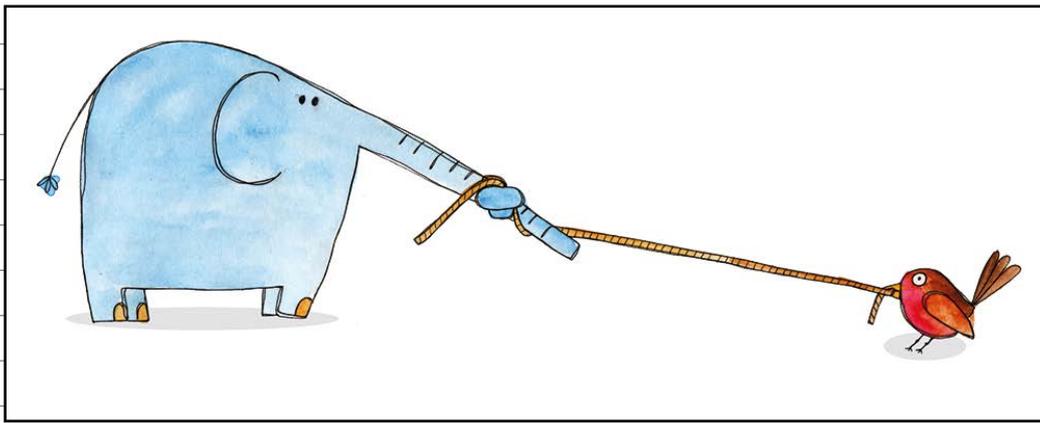
- Being able to recover from challenges
- Having elasticity
- Having mental toughness
- Springing back into shape
- Being steadfast
- Having the courage of your convictions
- Being adaptable.
- Being flexible.
- Being strong and rigid.
- Being unmovable.
- Not wavering.
- Having authority and gravitas.

These definitions are quite confusing and seem to contradict one another.

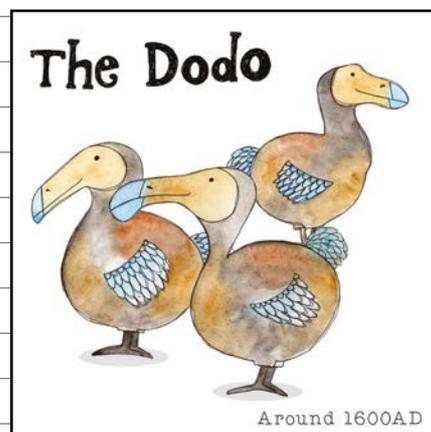
If you look at resilience in the natural world, you'll find more confusion.

One of the things you learned from Resilient Trevor is that resilience is not the same for everyone. There are very few animals that can happily live in lots of different environments. They are only resilient in certain environments.

If you try comparing some animals, you'd probably think you'd know which is the more resilient. So if you compare an elephant with a small bird, you may think of the elephant as being more resilient. The same goes for a thick-trunked oak tree compared to a poppy, or a whale compared to a goldfish. But things look a bit different if you explore what happens to an elephant versus a bird in a drought, an oak tree versus a poppy in a hurricane or a whale versus a goldfish facing a harpoon. Now definitions of resilience become less clear.



And what about the Dodo? Surely this is an example of an animal that's utterly lacking in resilience? But look at it a different way. The dodo didn't do so bad in many respects. It managed to rule the roost and live largely predator free right up until the 1660s when the arrival of humans led to its demise.



What you'll see from this is that all of these examples from nature have something in common. They are all comfortable in a particular environment that they are suited to. If the environment changes a bit, maybe they're still comfortable. If it changes a lot, perhaps they start to get quite uncomfortable. If it changes a great deal, only some cope. But if the environment changes substantially or completely, few survive.

This glimpse into the natural world gives you an idea of how you could think of resilience, because what you find is that it depends on the individual AND their environment.

Resilience is an important subject. It's one that psychologists have to grapple with a lot, so that they know how to support people who feel that they are having trouble staying resilient.

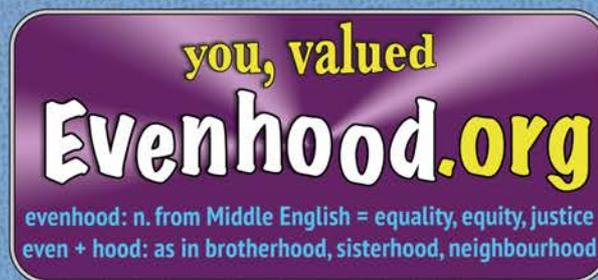
Before you work through some exercises to help you manage your wellbeing and strengthen your resilience, it will help if you first decide what resilience means to you.

Don't worry if other people define resilience slightly differently to you. It's important to understand and accept that others define resilience differently. In life

This Wellbeing & Resilience Workbook helps you develop mental toughness.

When you work through the exercises in the workbook you'll learn how to manage your wellbeing, strengthen your resilience and have mentally healthy conversations with others - so that you can give and get support.

Developing mental toughness is a key life skill - the benefits will stay with you for ever.



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