

Published: Monday November 12, 2018

## Positively altering your thinking

T. T. SRINATH

***When resilience is more than just adapting to adversity or 'bouncing back'***

When my father passed away, my mother was only 35 years of age. She was at that point studying abroad, having been sponsored by the Government for a training programme. Within days of my father's passing away, she had to return to continue her education, for if not we would have to pay back the sum invested in her by the Government.



My mother returned, continued her studies and fared well. Several people called her resilient, for she had, they said 'adapted well to adversity and bounced back'. While this might have been true without doubt, it wasn't her adapting to adversity or merely bouncing back which signified her resilience; it was, as her mentor and

guide told her when she returned home, that 'she had shown resilience not by bouncing back but by altering her way of thinking about life ahead and being flexible to change and adapting to the new condition of her life'.

When I heard this from my mother as a youngster I did not understand, yet today, as a grown person having had to alter my career late in life, I realise that being resilient is more than adapting to adversity or bouncing back. It is to me, feeling a sense of hope, which as psychologist Scott Barry Kaufman says is 'the ability to approach a dire situation with a mindset suitable to success, thereby increasing the chances that one will actually and eventually triumph and come out unscathed'.

Beyond hope, however, is also finding a personal meaning in what one is doing. My mother found it in teaching, and I have in walking alongside those like me, who have been dealt a hand of cards, seemingly hopeless, yet with the possibility to play with passion if willing.

*(The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at [ttsrinath@gmail.com](mailto:ttsrinath@gmail.com))*