

Be flexible: A lesson from Aesop

An oak and a reed were arguing about their strength. When a strong wind came up, the reed avoided being uprooted by bending and leaning with the gusts of wind. But the oak stood firm and was torn up by the roots.

Aesop

This Aesop story reminds us to be flexible in order to remain strong and resilient. Family resilience requires the ability to maintain a balance between stability and change. Picture a skier going down a hillside, maintaining stability while bending back and forth to meet the challenge presented by uneven terrain. If the skier stiffens up and doesn't bend, disaster is likely to strike.

Like the skier, Aesop's reed didn't give in entirely; it kept its roots planted. In life, it is the routines and traditions which keep us grounded. Even seemingly small routines can increase our ability to handle a new challenge. As much as possible, continue your usual patterns of functioning. Are you doing those daily/weekly routines that keep you grounded?

Bend when you need to in order to handle a new situation. Don't resist change so much that it causes you to stiffen up and fall.

Reference: Walsh, Froma, Strengthening Family Resilience, New York: The Guilford Press 2006.



"Be resilient: stretch, bounce back and roll forward."

Resiliency Reminders are brought to you by the "Families in Stress and Transition Team", Family Living Programs. For more ways to strengthen family resiliency, visit <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/> or contact Patrick DuCharme, Employee Assistance Consultant, 800-385-8511, patrick.ducharme@uwex.uwc.edu