

Exercise: Fight or Flight

We humans have many sophisticated ways to run from things. We make it a lot more complicated than it has to be sometimes. There are six major ways we avoid facing our shadows and miss opportunities to learn and grow stronger on our resilience journey. This is another one of those “D” lists, but this time it’s not about what others do to us; it’s about what we do within ourselves.

1. **Distract:** There is a lot to be said for distraction. This is the strategy we used most when we were learning about recovery. What are ways people distract themselves in order to run from recovery?
2. **Deny:** This is another common approach to running – just pretend it’s not there. Why do many people think denying will make the challenge disappear?
3. **Divert:** This is about blaming others for all our “problems” instead of owning them and using them to make us stronger. How can owning our “problems” in our recovery from mental illness and/or addiction make us stronger?
4. **Delay:** Now we recognize the problem but decide not to tackle it. We’ll do it next week or next month. Why is procrastination difficult to recognize as a response to pain and fear?
5. **Detach:** We know about the “problem” but we detach ourselves from it. It continues to eat away at us. How could detaching from a decision to recover eat away at us?
6. **Detour:** We spend a lot of time trying to work around the problem instead of dealing with it and learning from it. What are some shortcuts and workarounds people use instead of directly working on their recovery?

Facing Fear Head-On

On the front line of every life is fear. It shows up as change, loss of something new we must now do, or perhaps an old nemesis we must battle again. If we take up our sword of determination, face the dragon head-on, and push through to resilience, we’ll discover we get stronger as a result. Dr. Susan Jeffers who wrote the book, *Face the Fear and Do It Anyway*, identified 5 fear truths or principles about how pushing through fear builds resilient power and growth.



Facing Fear When Starting Our Jobs as Caregivers

As caregivers, we have an empathic experience of having been there; we call this lived credential our *ITE* or I'm The Evidence that caregiving of a family member and/or loved one made a difference in their recovery and resilience. Our *ITE* credential also relates to our own personal resilience experience in all the ups and downs while caring for our family member or other loved one. We earned this credential from the "school of hard knocks". This *ITE* becomes an inspiration to other caregivers who begin to have hope that is we can do it, so can they.

Our ITE is a wonderful gift to bring to a social service organization. Sometimes, however, when first starting our new jobs, we as caregivers can become fearful and doubt the validity of our own lived experience. When we begin working side by side with professional colleagues who have their own credentials and training which are just as valuable, it sometimes makes us falter with self-doubt.

Let's take a look at Lori's experience in how she kick-started herself as the Karate Kid (handout included).