

## MINDSET AND RESILIENCE

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Humans have an innate negativity bias — it's intended to promote survival by increasing our awareness of the potential danger in our environment. EMS work hones that bias through experience and training. When entering a scene, we must be alert to dangers and be able to predict what might go wrong so we can be prepared to prevent or manage it. The scenes we respond to are often representative of the worst that can happen to humans or the worst that humans can do to each other, further increasing our negativity bias.

In response, our culture encourages us to become jaded and cynical, in fact, this attitude is glamorized as swagger or experience. However, we often don't realize the negative impact this mindset can have on us. In attempt to discharge the negative emotions we experience; it is a common human response to default to blame or shame. Like anger, shame and blame make us feel like we are taking action, but we are ultimately just distracting ourselves from the real issue. We think that if we blame someone else loudly enough, we have solved the problem. Conversely, we might believe if we blame ourselves enough (shame), we are making ourselves better. Neither is true. If we are not vigilant, the judgement and resentment we cultivate can lead us down the path of victim mindset. Do any of these thoughts and statements sound familiar?

- "No good deed goes unpunished."
- "Typical, they always do that—just shows they don't care and don't have a clue."
- "Whatever- nothing we do makes a difference."
- "I can't believe someone called 911 for that. It's not an emergency—don't they know there are real emergencies out here?"
- Any statement starting with "That idiot..."

All these statements may make us feel like we are taking action and that we are justified in these sentiments. But really, they disempower us. Through them, we abdicate our control over ourselves and our ability to affect our environment. We start to think like victims. Victim mindset is corrosive and destroys our resilience. ***Maintaining grit or resilience requires vigilance.*** It's not just about what we choose to do (sleep, eat well, practice gratitude, etc...), but also about what we choose to not do (indulge in shame, blame, judgement, rumination, resentment, etc...). It's like deciding to adopt a low carb diet plan to lose weight. But then deciding to only follow it for breakfast by eating eggs, bacon and greens followed by pizza, beer and twinkies at lunch and dinner. It won't work, they cancel each other out. ***We can do all the self-care practices we want but if we allow our minds to stew in a toxic mentality, we've defeated all our efforts.***

***Utilizing your many skills, you are doing great work in the service of others. But your greatest power, the one that unifies all your skills, is your ability to control your own mindset and attitude. When you align them to support your resilience and quality of life, you amplify your power.***