

October 2011

## Upcoming Classes

### Children's Self Defense Two Parts

**Part I:** Parent's  
Training  
Friday, Oct 21,  
6:30-8:30pm

**Part II:**  
Saturday,  
October 22, 1:30-  
3:30pm

Children ages 4-  
12  
(Parents also  
attend)

Bancroft School  
18th and Newton  
Streets NW



Pre-register by  
October 15:  
\$49/child  
(parents  
included)  
Pay after October  
15: \$59/child  
(parents  
included)

[For more info](#)  
**REGISTRATION**

# DC IMPACT

## Self Defense

### Steps to help you thrive in hard times

From Special to CNN By Amanda Enyati

Researchers have discovered that the key to post-traumatic growth is resilience.

- Self-awareness helps you understand your habits of thinking, feeling and acting
- Relying on others is necessary, and it is certainly not a sign of weakness

Most anyone knows something about post-traumatic stress disorder, also referred to as PTSD. But mention post-traumatic growth and you are more likely than not to be met with blank stares. Post-traumatic growth -- the ability not only to bounce back from adversity but also to flourish -- is an ever-present theme in most of our epic tales and spiritual traditions. And science is finally catching up.

Researchers have discovered that the key to post-traumatic growth is resilience, and also that resilience is not just an advantage of a lucky few. "A lot of people erroneously believe that if you didn't get a good scramble of genes, resilience is not going to be your thing," says Dr. Karen Reivich, co-author of "The Resilience Factor." "But resilience is a set of skills that, with effort, anyone can develop. That's important because there is no magic pill here." According to Reivich, resilience is made up of six basic building blocks.

#### **Become more optimistic**

Optimism is believing that good things can happen and that you can effect positive change in your life and in the world. Pessimists underestimate how much control they have. They tend to focus their mental energy on things they can't do anything about. They also often hold the belief that optimists have their heads in the sand. In reality, though, most optimists can accurately assess what's going on; they just choose to place their attention on where they have control and influence as well on positive aspects of situations. "That takes effort," Reivich says. "For many of us, it's easier to navigate toward and get consumed by the negative. With some mindfulness, you can direct your attention toward positive aspects of situations and what you can control. This is not outside anyone's purview. It is

a habit that can be developed."

An exercise to help boost optimism involves paying closer attention to the good things you have received in life. "Basically," says Reivich, "science corroborating grandma's advice."

"Like a gratitude journal?" I flash an old Oprah episode.

"We call it a 'hunk of good stuff' journal. People who make a habit of gratitude have better health, better sleep, better life satisfaction, less depression, less stress, all sorts of things. We have people write down three good things that happened that day and a couple of sentences about each, like what it meant to them and how they're going to get more of it the next day."

### **Increase mental agility**

Mental agility is the ability to see situations fully, accurately and from multiple perspectives. The mentally agile are able to avoid thinking traps when something goes wrong. "Thinking traps limit your flexibility because each of them cause you to only see a small aspect of what's going on." Two of the more common thinking traps are the "me-me-me trap" (the tendency to always blame yourself) or the "them-them-them trap" (always blaming others). The key here is to identify which thinking trap you fall into and to develop your ability to be more flexible and accurate in your understanding of adverse situations. "Once you become aware of the trap, you can hit the pause button and repeat a catchphrase to help you get a more accurate and flexible grasp of the situation." The catchphrase for the "me me me trap," for example, is "look outward."

### **Seek self-awareness**

Self-awareness helps you understand your habits of thinking, feeling and acting so you can ask yourself, "How's that working for you?" It involves listening to your interpretation of adverse circumstances to figure out your internal dialogue under stress. "When something triggers you -- an activating event as little as not getting a parking spot or as big as losing a loved one -- where does your mind go? We teach people to look for patterns. Does your brain start sending out themes like 'loss,' 'danger' or 'trespass'? These patterns are like the glasses that color the way you see all events in your life -- good and bad. One simple way to exercise self-awareness is to keep a journal of your thoughts and beliefs during stressful periods. "What was the first thing that popped into your mind when something happened? And what was that about?" Reivich asks.

### **Self-regulate**

Self-regulation involves learning how to reverse counterproductive thinking by having more appropriate reactions. The less resilient often "catastrophize" when something happens. "We call it making a Himalaya out of a mountain," Reivich says. "It's something, but you make it bigger. The downward spiral of negative catastrophic thinking makes you feel out of control. The problem then becomes a runaway train and creates huge anxiety. And that blocks purposeful action." Reivich suggests an exercise called "putting it in perspective," which may at first seem counterintuitive. The exercise

## **Mixed-Gender Basics Nov 2011**

Saturdays, Nov 5,  
12, and 19, 1:30-  
4:50pm; and  
Sundays, Nov 6,  
and 13

Fee: \$595; \$100  
non-refundable  
deposit required  
to reserve spot in  
class. Payment  
plans available.

Length: 20 hours.  
Limited

Enrollment: Open  
to women men  
and older teenage  
boys and girls  
with guardian.

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## **Intro to IMPACT**

Sundays 1-4pm:  
Oct 16, and Dec  
4, 2011

Fee: \$79 with  
advance  
registration, \$89  
at the door

Length: 3 hours  
Open enrollment  
for teens and  
adults. No  
experience  
necessary

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## **Knife Defense**

Sunday October  
30, 2011; 1-6pm

Fee: \$149 with  
advance  
registration, \$159  
at the door

involves creating three columns. First, record all catastrophic thoughts under the worst-case scenario column. Next, write down the wildly unlikely, best-case scenarios. And finally, list the most likely outcomes. Reivich finds that this exercise helps people assess things they are going to have to confront and often leads to quite dramatic shifts in their emotions as well as the ability to tackle what's in front of them. "And it takes a total of seven minutes."

### **Focus on strengths**

This aspect of resilience involves identifying your top character strengths. "That might be your bravery, wisdom, sense of humor or the ability to love and be loved," Reivich observes. "People can usually tell you what their strengths are and who they are at their best. Those who tend to stay more resilient in the face of adversity are using these strengths to overcome. They feel energized, motivated and true to themselves."

### **Develop better connections**

The myth about resilience is that it's a solitary sport. But the key message here is that relying on others is necessary and it is certainly not a sign of weakness. "We teach people techniques that help build positive relationships, such as Dr. Shelly Gable's [active and constructive responding technique](#)."

Most of us believe that the quality of our relationship is determined by the answer to the question, "Will you be there for me when things go wrong?" But the real question is, "Will you be there for me when things go right?" Research shows that people respond in four typical ways to good news, and only one of those ways strengthens our relationships; the others erode relationships over time: (1) the conversation killer ("That's great!" as you're texting or on the computer); (2) the conversation hijacker ("That reminds me of my good news!"); (3) the joy thief ("But what about ...?" and going on to list the downsides); and (4) the joy multiplier (involves constructive responding -- that is, asking questions, offering praise, favoring the positive experience, being authentically interested in the details). "The beauty is that multiplying joy is not hard to do. It just requires intention and attention."

At the end of the day, Reivich says, "none of this stuff we're teaching is wildly difficult. They're basic, tried-and-true principles. But they do require practice. We live in a culture that is so quick-fix oriented, so if something doesn't lead to dramatic and huge change overnight we give up. These things take persistence and effort."

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## **Donate for Survivors**

DC IMPACT provides scholarships for local survivors of violence. Violence can destroy lives. If someone is a survivor, IMPACT can help. Learning self-defense is an experience of being effective in the face of fear, which gives many survivors the confidence to

Length: 5 hours  
Open to all adults  
with some  
IMPACT training  
[REGISTRATION](#)

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## **Self Defense in the Media**

[Teen Fights Back](#)

[Woman Fights off  
Attacker with  
Knife](#)

[Woman Defends  
Herself in Home](#)

[Another Brave  
Teen Resists](#)

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## **From Our Grads**

*"I thought I would just be learning physical techniques, and never expected the course to address the emotional aspects of abuse. It turned out that was the most important part—dealing with the memories of abuse and how to make things come out differently next time." –Deborah*

*"IMPACT  
definitely helped*

take on new challenges and communicate more assertively with people in their lives. All donations are tax-deductable.

[Donate via Pay Pal](#)

*me deal with fears and memories from my previous mugging, and gave me more confidence in my ability to resolve conflicts peacefully." – Phillip*