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UK NEWS

WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU DOES MAKE YOU STRONGER



Monday October 18, 2010

By Daily Express Reporter

Have your say(1)

THE old saying "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger" is true, say experts.

We seem to fare better after facing a few knocks compared to those who sail through life with no problems.

A study has demonstrated how adverse experiences foster adaptability and resilience, with resulting advantages for mental [health](#) and well-being.

A study has demonstrated how adverse experiences foster adaptability and resilience, with resulting

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Suffering from life's ups and downs also means that we are better equipped to deal with adverse events in the future compared to those who have not experienced any difficulties.

The study, entitled *Whatever Does Not Kill Us: Cumulative Lifetime Adversity, Vulnerability and Resilience*, focused on 2,398 people who reported their lifetime history of adverse experiences and their mental health.

Its lead author, Professor Mark Seery of the University of Buffalo in the US, found people exposed to some adverse events reported better mental health and general well-being than others with a high history of adversity or those who experienced none.

Prof Seery said that people who had gone through a lifetime of difficulties were more likely to feel less satisfied and suffer symptoms of stress.

But those who had suffered a few ups and downs were best equipped to deal with the sort of difficulties life threw at them, such as divorce, unemployment or bereavement.

"We tested for relationships between lifetime adversity and a variety of longitudinal measures of mental health and well-being, including global distress, functional impairment, post-traumatic stress symptoms and life satisfaction," Prof Seery said.

"Our findings revealed that a history of some lifetime adversity – relative to both no adversity or high adversity – predicted lower global distress, lower functional impairment, lower post-traumatic stress symptoms and higher life satisfaction." The team also found people with a history of some adversity appeared less negatively affected by recent adverse events than others.

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Prof Seery said the evidence showed that experiencing adversity can contribute to the development of a resilient character.

He added: "Although we studied major lifetime adversity, there is reason to believe that relatively mundane experiences should also contribute to resilience.

"This suggests that carefully designed psychotherapeutic interventions may be able to do so as well, although much work still needs to be done to fully understand resilience and where it comes from."

The research will be published in the forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

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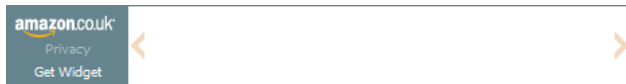
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18.10.10, 11:59am

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