

Lockdown: three self-care tips

Emma J Bell

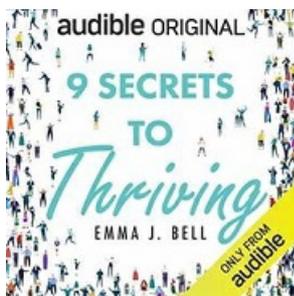
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Resilience coach and Audible author Emma J Bell shares some top tips on navigating life and lockdown



As I sat in Helen Connolly's kitchen, she told me about how terrorists had stormed the restaurant at the Oberoi Hotel in Mumbai whilst she dined with a close friend and his 13-year-old daughter. The three of them had taken cover under the table as the bullets rained down around them. Finally, the gunfire fell silent, and Helen saw her friends lying motionless beside her.

Tears filled my eyes as the horror of those events sunk in. My interview with Helen was the sixth I had conducted in seven days, flying hundreds of miles from one story of trauma to another. It was a journey that would ultimately take me over 35,000 miles round the world to interview 50 people who had flourished in the face of violent terrorist attacks, of death, abuse, loss and paralysis.



I discovered the surprising truth that there were nine resilience strategies that consistently enabled each of these people to bounce forward and thrive. I've leaned heavily on these strategies to maintain my sanity and optimism during lockdown, and I've shared them with thousands of others who've been struggling with this "Groundhog Day" existence. You won't be surprised to hear that "Self-care" is one of those "9 Secrets to Thriving", and I'd like to share these self-care insights that might just help you thrive through the coming months.

1. Ask yourself, "Who do I want to be?" Self-care begins with a clear and deliberate intention to thrive emotionally, mentally and physically. Each thriver saw struggle as an opportunity to become a better version of themselves.

When you hold the intention to grow as a result of this experience, you regain control. Growth might come from increased compassion for family members who trigger you, greater patience with those who are struggling too, or reaching out to help others in your community.

2. Apply Empathetic Thinking. It's common to fall into "wishful thinking" or "support seeking" in tough times. Wishful thinking means you initially underestimate how difficult things are likely to be, and then become overwhelmed with the difficulties that lockdown brings. Support-seeking can have you leaning too heavily on



others and sinking into a victim mentality that focuses on the limitations of your situation. Applying empathetic thinking instead allows you to see how others may be suffering more than you. That prompts you to do two things: to reach out and help, and to count your many blessings when you compare your own situation to theirs.

3. Create ways to trigger your relaxation response. It's not easy to have fun right now. It takes a bit of planning - but it's worth the effort. Whether you "self-soothe" by lighting a candle, savouring the taste of decent coffee or stroking your dog, these activities bring much-needed joy at this time. Divide each day into portions and allocate at least two to doing things simply because they are enjoyable.

You already have everything you need to thrive, whatever life throws at you. The insights and practices of the 50 thrivers I spoke to are a roadmap that will guide you to the right strategy just when you need it.

***9 Secrets to Thriving: Uncovering Your Inner Resilience* is out now on Audible.**

Emma J Bell will take part in the Groucho Club x Pink, Auld and Brown Book Club on Wednesday 3 February at 6.30pm (GMT)

<https://pinkauldandbrown.co.uk/book-club/>

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