

Resilience Means...Bounce Back

Juan Berenguer

Before today, I wasn't even sure what the word "resilience" meant. Now I know and understand because it describes ME!

When my son was younger, I felt like I was letting him down. He wanted me to read to him, but *Green Eggs and Ham* wasn't cutting it anymore. That was one of the few books that I could tackle. I didn't want to be a failure, so I decided I needed to get back to school.

I went to school off and on for several years but this time, I'm really "working it." My teacher doesn't let me get away with memorizing; we work at putting the sounds of the letters together

to actually *read*. I always come to class *and* I practice reading at home. My wife and my son (who is in high school now) are ready to help if I need it. There are days when I am tired after a long day at work, but there is no question in my mind about whether I will be going to school or not.

My efforts are paying off. I recently applied for a better job. At the interview, I felt very different.

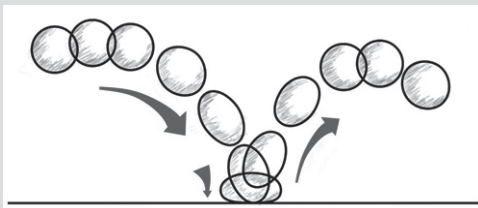
In the past, I would have been hitting the panic buttons if someone laid papers out in front of me. This time, I felt much more confident. I'm not saying that I could read everything in the documents, but I was able to make my way through all the forms. I really wanted this position and I felt good about how the interview went.

I didn't get the job. But I felt like a winner anyway. I know in my heart that I am growing and getting better. I could have let this disappointment get me down. I try to believe there is a better job that will come along for me. In the meantime, I will continue to become a better reader. I am RESILIENT and will keep on trying because Juan Berenguer knows how to bounce back!

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Bouncing Back

Use the space below to describe a time you were resilient. (Teachers: please note the "Writing with Resilience" lesson plan at www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras.)



Juan Berenguer is taking ABE classes at the New Brunswick Public Schools Adult Learning Center in New Jersey. He is currently looking for a new job where he can demonstrate his solid work ethic. He plans to be persistent so that he can achieve his goals and much, MUCH more.

