

4 ways to flourish in good times and bad

The following is excerpted from the article, “4 Ways to Flourish in Good Times and Bad” by Jancee Dunn of The New York Times, March 28, 2026.

Adversity is a part of life, and you can flourish through it. Our ability to flourish comes not from life’s wins and losses, but from how we navigate them.

To flourish is to have a life that feels meaningful and rich, despite the challenges we’ll inevitably face. Our daily routines and rituals can help us get there.

Flourishing falls into a few main categories: **awareness, connection, insight and purpose.**

Here are four easy exercises, one from each category, that can help. You can do them daily or a few times a week — whatever works best for you.

Awareness

Research suggests that practicing [mindful attention](#), or simply observing your thoughts and feelings, can reduce stress and anxiety and increase feelings of contentment.

Here is the exercise the experts recommend: Take a moment or two and look around. Notice some of the small details you usually overlook, such as the shapes and colors of objects around you.

Then, slowly close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Bring your attention to the sounds in your environment. Give yourself a few moments to relax and rest.

Connection

Connection is another [pillar of flourishing](#). People with strong ties [live longer](#) and have [greater well-being](#). And it’s easier to find closeness than you might think, the experts said.

Look for ways to generate small “sparks of connection” every day. Compliment a co-worker or text someone you love.

We experience what the experts call “flashes of appreciation and care” every single day, whenever we lend a helping hand or offer a kind word. To build your relationship muscles, they added, savor these “flashes” when you can.

Insight

To sharpen your insight, use the following prompts at the end of the day: What did I learn about myself today? How did my thoughts and feelings shape the way I see things?

As you write, don't just rehash events. Delve into why and how you behaved, using curiosity rather than judgment. Self-inquiry leads to self-knowledge, and understanding your thoughts and patterns can help you cope better.

Purpose

Having a purpose makes people feel more positive, fosters a sense of belonging and improves resilience. Our purpose is a North Star that guides us; it's a mix of our deepest aspirations and our guiding principles. You can recognize meaning and purpose in your everyday life.

Try this exercise to get clearer about what really matters to you. Start by reflecting on your interests, causes you're passionate about and meaningful moments in your life.

Then, ask yourself why they mattered. Maybe graduating from school represents values like perseverance, hard work or the importance of education, they write.

Finally, look for ways to reinforce those values. If part of your purpose is learning, for example, find ways to express your commitment to it, whether it's reading, sharing information with others or listening to podcasts.