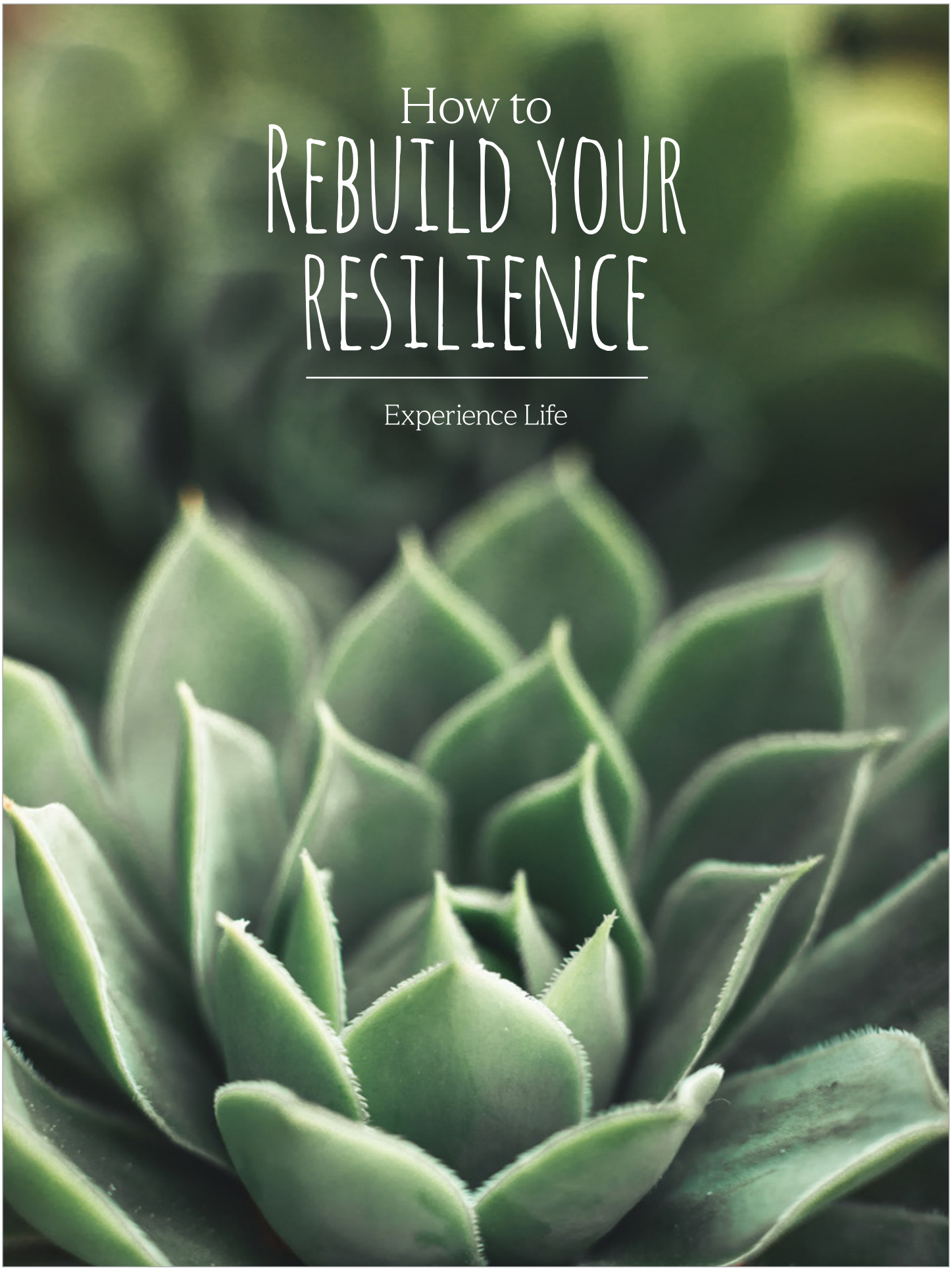


How to Rebuild your resilience

Experience Life

10 ways to build resilience this year

Hello — and welcome!

Resilience is our capacity to overcome and recover from difficult times — and we're definitely in one of those right now. In this e-book, you will find 10 tips to help you rebuild your resiliency.

We hope these strategies inspire you to create some space, take a deep breath, and develop the skills you need to bounce back from adversity.

For more health-and-wellness strategies, feel free to sign up for any of **our newsletters,** visit **our website** for our newest content, **subscribe to our print magazine,** or follow us on our social channels (below).

Yours in health,
The *Experience Life* Team



1. Measure Your Resilience by Taking This Quiz

While building your resilience, it's important to first take stock of how you're doing — for real. Curious to know how your own resilience rates? Take this quiz, adapted from *The Resiliency Advantage*, a book by the late Al Siebert, PhD, founder of The Resiliency Center in Portland, Ore.

Rate yourself from 1 to 5

(1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree): **Rating**

Statement	
I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.	
Feelings of anger, loss, and discouragement don't last long.	
I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.	
I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.	
I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations and can laugh at myself.	
I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.	
I'm good at solving problems. I'm good at making things work well.	
I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.	
I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.	



Add up all of your ratings to determine which of the following categories you currently fall into:

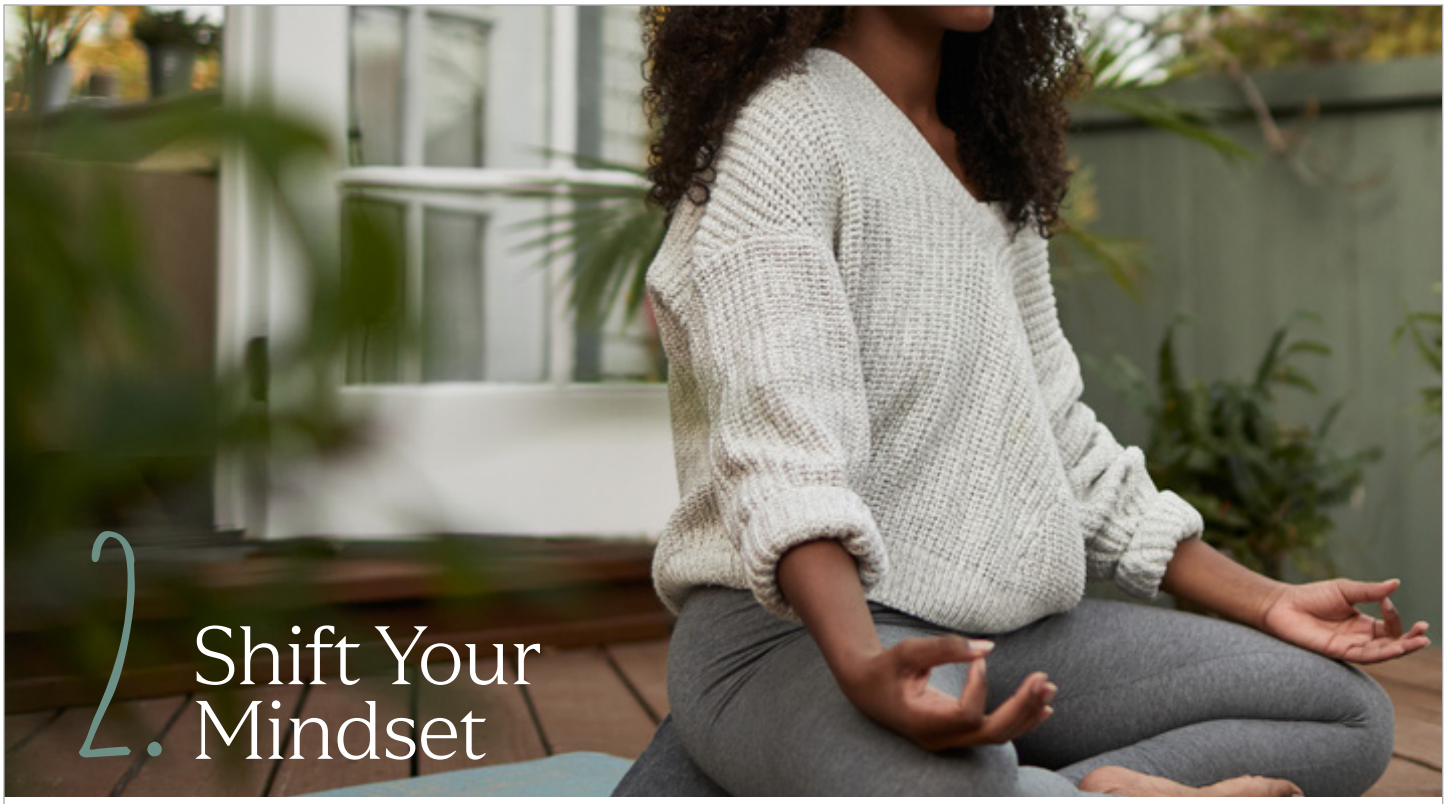
Less than 20: Low Resilience — You may have trouble handling pressure or setbacks and may feel deeply hurt by any criticism. When things don't go well, you may feel helpless and without hope. Consider seeking some professional counsel or support in developing your resiliency skills. Connect with others who share your developmental goals.

20–30: Some Resilience — You have some valuable pro-resiliency skills, but also plenty of room for improvement. Strive to strengthen the characteristics you already have and to cultivate the characteristics you lack. You may also wish to seek some outside coaching or support.

30–35: Adequate Resilience — You are a self-motivated learner who recovers well from most challenges. Learning more about resilience, and consciously building your resiliency skills, will empower you to find more joy in life, even in the face of adversity.

35–45: Highly Resilient — You bounce back well from life's setbacks and can thrive even under pressure. You could be of service to others who are trying to cope better with adversity.

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2. Shift Your Mindset

"Our brain is Velcro for the negative and Teflon for the positive," says Jen Elmquist, MA, LMFT, director and co-creator of Life Time Mind. It's so easy right now to be drawn into the drama dialogue, but it's important to try and shift your thinking from the negative to the positive if you want to build mental resilience.

"This isn't about being Pollyanna — trying to make something positive out of something that really is difficult," Elmquist says. "This is about finding the silver lining in the challenge that is in front of us."

Mind–body exercises can help relax your body and build mental resilience. Try this loving-kindness meditation from the LT Mind team:

1. Sit quietly with your hand on your heart. Feel your chest move as you breathe deeply in and out.

2. Picture a warm light around you.

3. Speak these words out loud or to yourself: "May I be well. May I be safe. May I be happy. May I be at ease."

4. Think of someone you know who needs support. Hold them in your mind and cast the warm light upon them as you speak these words out loud or to yourself: "May they be well. May they be safe. May they be happy. May they be at ease."

5. Think of humanity as a whole. Hold the collective group in your mind and cast the warm light upon them as you speak these words out loud or to yourself: "May we all be well. May we all be safe. May we all be happy. May we all be at ease."



3. Get a Good Night's Sleep

Building resilience is almost impossible if you're not getting enough sleep. Hundreds of biological processes occur while we snooze — and missing out on them can undermine emotional stability, cognitive function, the immune system, and more.

If you are feeling less than resilient these days, developing a bedtime routine could make a difference. Experiment with these five strategies to reclaim the rest you need.

1. Stick to a schedule. Going to bed and waking up around the same time every day is the best way to **establish good sleep habits.** A 30-minute buffer on either side is fine, but try not to stray beyond that — even on the weekends.

2. Create an electronic sundown. At least an hour before bedtime, turn off your devices. After dark, the blue light from screens can prevent quality slumber. If you can't unplug entirely, consider a light-dimming app like f.lux for Apple or Twilight for Android.

3. Establish a ritual. **Taking a warm bath,** reading a book, and engaging in other restorative practices will keep you occupied without your phone or tablet. Over time, it will also send a signal to your body that it's nearly time for sleep.

4. Clear your mind. If your brain tends to stay busy even when your body is trying to rest, consider some simple habits that can put yourself at ease before you hit the hay. Prep your breakfast for the next day, make a to-do list, or jot down your worries in a journal.

5. Relax your body. While lying in bed, try this progressive relaxation technique to release lingering tension: Starting at your feet and working up to your neck, slowly tense each of your muscles for five seconds, then release for five seconds.



4. Lean Into Your Fear

Identifying — and transforming — our fears is an essential step to building resilience. The more we acknowledge and overcome our fears, the more confident we become in our ability to bounce back from future adversity.

Psychotherapist Richard Schaub, PhD, who wrote *The End of Fear: A Spiritual Path for Realists*, with his wife, Bonney Gulino Schaub, RN, MS, recommends these five steps to transforming fear:

1. Notice the sensation. Self-awareness is the "prerequisite to everything else" when it comes to managing fear, Schaub says. If you can notice an anxious feeling before acting on it, that's the first step.

2. Name the feeling. Schaub recommends identifying feelings by name, like, *Wow, I feel nervous.* This creates an opportunity for reflection and a more conscious response.

3. Investigate the trigger. Ask yourself what's frightening you, Schaub says, and establish whether it's a genuine, immediate threat.

4. Lower the alarm. Self-soothing is a key part of moving beyond a fight, flight, or freeze reaction, so do whatever works to **calm your heart rate,** like listening to music or taking 10 deep breaths.

5. Cultivate compassion. Remember that everyone is vulnerable to loss and change, so there's no need to judge yourself or others for being afraid. Take comfort in knowing that we're all in this together.



Start a Gratitude Journal

One of the most reliable ways to boost your resilience is also one of the simplest: practicing gratitude.

Keeping a gratitude journal and writing your thoughts on paper allows you to consciously note your appreciation for all the good things and people in your life. When you're scared or angry, practicing gratitude in this way can help you put things into perspective, ease your anxiety, and improve your mood.

But recognizing what you're grateful for, and fully appreciating it, takes practice. Here are some tips on how to document your gratefulness more frequently — and meaningfully.

1. Be creative. Can't find the right words? **Draw instead.** Or paste mementos of fun events (photos, ticket stubs, etc.) into your journal. Each time you see these, you'll feel thankful for those experiences all over again.

2. Go deep. Don't just document events or thoughts; express your emotions about your experiences.

3. Take a moment to reflect. Note two to five things **you're grateful for** — such as the evening walk you had with your kids or being able to connect with a good friend.

4. Get real. Record the good in your life, but also chronicle the lessons and silver linings you take away from challenges and setbacks.

5. Make it a habit. Writing weekly is the best way to establish a consistent rhythm for your practice.



6. Practice Self-Care

Self-care and relaxation help keep stress chemicals at bay, which helps to build resilience.

After a long day, try taking a soothing bath. Here are some tips to take your soak to the next level.

1. Ambience, ambience, ambience: A few simple additions can really change the mood of your space. A **reed diffuser** and some candlelight will offer you spa-like luxury in the comfort of your own home.

2. Find the right temperature: Getting your sweat on in the tub can make for a cleansing, rejuvenating experience — but too-hot water can make your heart race. Stick with the temperature that feels good for your body.

3. Bubbles! Add some extra luxury to your soak with a little bubble bath. Avoid the commercial brands, many of which are loaded with skin-irritating artificial fragrances.

4. Add a pinch of salt: An Epsom salts bath will help your body absorb magnesium, which is known as the "relaxation mineral." We love infusing our bath salts with the calming scent of lavender and rose essential oils.

5. Minimize multitasking: Don't try to catch up on email in the tub. Pulling the plug — if only for an hour — is the best approach to truly enjoying your bath's resilience-building benefits.

6. Extra indulgences: Have a mug of tea, cup of kombucha, or a glass of wine during bath time. Add a bath pillow or a tray caddy for extra pampering.



1. Stop Doomscrolling

We all do it, especially in these trying times. But constant exposure to bad news can wreak havoc on our resilience levels. Here are four tips to stop doomscrolling — and improve your mental health.

1. Realize you are doomscrolling. Our minds are wired to look out for survival threats, yet the current state of affairs offers a boundless rabbit hole of worries through our devices. While not all news consumption is harmful, pay attention to the effect it has on you, especially before bedtime.

2. Limit exposure. Keep tabs on your social-media usage with a productivity app. Turn off notifications. Delete toxic apps. Have device-free times of the day.

3. Take control and set boundaries. Manage access to your device by not keeping it always handy — and don't pick it up on a whim to check the weather or a text, as it's all too easy to start looking at other feeds. Consider a self-imposed break from inflammatory websites, social-media accounts, or your device.

4. Replace doomscrolling with healthy behavior. Read a book. Do puzzles or play games. Go for a walk or run. Clean the house. Make tea. Journal. Call friends or family. Or if you really need to look at your device, end your night with kitten or puppy videos or something else that's guaranteed to put you in a good mood.



8. Eat for Immunity — and Resilience

It's hard to be resilient if you're feeling rundown. One way to increase your energy — and promote resilience — is to boost your immunity by eating nutrient-dense foods.

Stay away from foods that dampen the immune system and energy levels, including highly processed or fried foods and those high in added sugar.

Here are some **immune system–balancing superstars to focus on:**

Green tea is rich in polyphenols, including potent antioxidants called catechins that have antimicrobial properties.

Berries are a potent source of immune-supporting flavonoids.

Turmeric gets its deep orange-yellow color from curcumin, a powerful compound that helps balance the immune system.

Garlic contains sulfuric compounds with a range of antimicrobial effects, such as inhibiting the biofilm formation of bacteria. It also has natural antiviral properties.

Citrus fruits such as grapefruit, kiwi, and lemon deliver immune-boosting **vitamin C.**

Sauerkraut and other fermented foods contain lactic-acid bacteria, which produce compounds in the gut that spur the immune system into action.

Medicinal mushrooms are rich in beta-glucans, an immunomodulator that activates macrophages, natural killer cells, dendritic cells, and neutrophils.



9. Get Outside

Spending time outside is essential to our mental health, says integrative psychiatrist Henry Emmons, MD. "We desperately need to reclaim a more intimate connection with nature, if for no other reason than its calming effects on our lifestyles and its ability to counter our overimmersion in technology," he says.

Whether you have five minutes, 20 minutes, two hours, or all day, here are some ways to get outside.

If you have five minutes:
- Sink your bare feet into the grass — or crunch your boots in the snow!
- Walk mindfully to your next destination.
- Gaze out the window at something beautiful.

If you have 20 minutes:
- **Go for a walk** outside.
- Eat your lunch outdoors.
- Lie on your back and gaze at the sky.

If you have two hours:
- Pack a picnic for your family or a small group of friends.
- Explore the trails in a nearby park.
- Read a book in a hammock between your favorite trees.

If you have all day:
- Go for a long, leisurely bike ride.
- Take on a **gardening project.**
- Take a day trip by canoe or kayak.



10. Learn to Say No

Setting boundaries — and saying no — is critical to building resilience and avoiding burnout.

Here is a three-step plan from Christine Carter, PhD, a sociologist and senior fellow at the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley:

1. Get Clear
Create a stable routine that maps out how you use your time, energy, and other resources. By setting crisp boundaries — limiting evening social obligations to two events a week and blocking out time for hiking with your dog, for example — you have real, practical reasons to decline invitations or requests.

2. Rehearse Your Response
If you don't want to do something, you can always just say no. Rehearse kind-but-firm ways of saying no:

- "I'd love to, but I can't."
- "Thank you for asking, but no."
- "That doesn't work for me this time."

"No one wants to disappoint someone; it's uncomfortable," says Carter. "It takes vulnerability and courage to feel discomfort. But it's important. Living a happy life involves some discomfort."

3. Find the Yes
Focus on the rewards of saying a particular no, says Carter: "Maybe you had a few more hours to read a book you actually did like, or more time to spend with your spouse and kids . . . focus on that."

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