



Resilience

getting it right



THE INSTITUTE OF
LEADERSHIP
& MANAGEMENT

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RESILIENCE – AN INTRODUCTION

‘Resilience’ can be defined in different ways, but common themes include the ability to ‘bounce back’ after failure, or after confronting a particularly difficult situation or crisis, or having the ability to better overcome adversity and challenges.

Everyone has resilience to some degree, yet people with ‘good’ resilience are better able to cope with negative events in their lives and at work.

Research into resilience owes much to the pioneering work of Dr. Norman Garmezy (a clinical psychologist at the University of Minnesota in the USA) and his studies of positive outcomes in at-risk children in the 1960s, but ‘resilience’ is now seen as one of the most valued and important attributes of a leader.

A resilient leader is a person who sees failures as temporary setbacks they can recover from quickly. They maintain a positive attitude and a strong sense of opportunity during periods of turbulence. When faced with ambiguity, a resilient leader finds ways to move forward and avoids getting stuck. Many studies have indicated the importance of resilience as both an individual and leadership trait. (Folkman, 2017)¹

The case for resilient leadership is undoubtedly strong, although must be remembered that resilience is not the only essential attribute for successful leadership:

In other words, choosing resilient leaders is not enough: they must also have integrity and care more about the welfare of their teams than their own personal success. (Chamorro-Premuzic, T. & Lusk, D., 2017)²

¹ Folkman (2017). *New Research: 7 Ways To Become A More Resilient Leader* www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2017/04/06/new-research-7-ways-to-become-a-more-resilient-leader/#62021ae67a0C

² Chamorro-Premuzic, T. & Lusk, D. (2017). *The Dark Side of Resilience* <https://hbr.org/2017/08/the-dark-side-of-resilience>

MAKING RESILIENCE WORK

DEVELOPING A RESILIENT MINDSET

'Resilience is that part of us that gets us through some new or challenging circumstance or an unexpected disappointment that we must face. It is innate in all of us and we have been using it our entire lives. Without resilience, we would lose our compass and feel quite lost in the face of challenge or danger.' (Kay, 2017) ¹

Resilient organisations have systems and procedures in place to restore order in the face of anticipated threats or disruptions to their critical functions and processes. Leaders of resilient organisations will also see threats as opportunities and take measured risks to ensure that their organisations, rather than merely survive, succeed and prosper in the long term.

**Learn from the negatives
and focus on developing
the positives**

Steve Wallis

**Allow time for personal reflection
and the pursuit of something that
really interests you**

Jenny Beaumont

How to DEVELOP A RESILIENT MINDSET

1. PRACTISE SELF-AWARENESS

Understand why and how you react the way you do and how you impact others

2. KEEP YOUR WELL-BEING IN MIND

Take care of your mental health, practise mindfulness, allow time for exercise and regular breaks, and ensure you have a balanced diet and get enough rest and sleep

4. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Having a strong support network can help you in becoming more resilient

3. BE POSITIVE

Focus on what you can change rather than on the things you cannot change

5. PLAN AND MONITOR PROGRESS

Effective planning can help prevent you from becoming overwhelmed, and monitoring progress will enable you to recognise what you have already achieved

6. ADAPT AND EMBRACE NEW CHALLENGES

Being flexible and learning to embrace change can provide invaluable learning opportunities and help you to develop new strategies

8. PRACTISE!

Keep practising these approaches to improve your resilience

7. DEVELOP FOCUS

Concentrate when you must and make the right choices in how you spend your time.

MAKING RESILIENCE WORK

BECOMING A MORE RESILIENT LEADER

'A resilient leader is a person who sees failures as temporary setbacks they can recover from quickly. They maintain a positive attitude and a strong sense of opportunity during periods of turbulence. When faced with ambiguity, a resilient leader finds ways to move forward and avoids getting stuck.' (Folkman, 2017)¹

Individuals have different levels of resilience and so you may find that you or some of your team members are more able to cope with adversity, change or challenging situations than others. You can demonstrate resilience not just in times of extreme adversity, but in coping with the day-to-day challenges that occur.

Know yourself, know your team, know your organisation, know what's on the horizon

Dr. Bernie Divall

Allow yourself to be challenged by colleagues and those you lead

Alice Davies

¹ Folkman, J. (2017). *New Research: 7 Ways To Become A More Resilient Leader* www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2017/04/06/new-research-7-ways-to-become-a-more-resilient-leader/#1e26d9d27a0c

How to BECOME A MORE RESILIENT LEADER

1 ACCEPT CHANGE AS INEVITABLE 



You will be better able to deal with the unexpected when it arrives

2 FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL 

Don't be distracted by what you cannot control



3 BUILD A SUPPORTIVE NETWORK 

Colleagues



Coach

Mentor



4 CULTIVATE A HEALTHY MINDSET 

View each mistake as a learning opportunity



Identify strategies that help and those that derail



Face each challenge head-on



5 HAVE CLARITY AROUND YOUR VISION 



Know where you are going and how you will get there

MAKING RESILIENCE WORK

BUILDING RESILIENT TEAMS

'A resilient team is skilled in managing change, including changes in its membership, makeup and authority. Without such resilience, team productivity would break under the pressure of change.' (Bruce, 2018) ¹

Resilience is recognisable in teams where there are high levels of team cohesion and creativity. A resilient team demonstrates high levels of trust and members provide support to each other.

It is therefore possible through your leadership interventions to develop a resilient team that responds well to adverse events.

Create trust amongst colleagues by encouraging a culture where mistakes are seen as opportunities to grow, develop, to be better, to be our stronger selves

Emma Banks

Bring your team together at regular intervals to value them and develop relationships

Felicity Chapman

¹ Bruce, J. (2018). Change Is The New Normal. How Will You Handle It? www.forbes.com/sites/janbruce/2018/09/05/change-is-the-new-normal-how-will-you-handle-it/#32c956523959

How to BUILD RESILIENT TEAMS



MAKING RESILIENCE WORK

BUILDING A RESILIENT ORGANISATION

'Organizational Resilience is the ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper.' (Denyer, 2017) ¹

Resilient organisations have systems and procedures in place to restore order in the face of anticipated threats or disruptions to their critical functions and processes. Leaders of resilient organisations will also see threats as opportunities and take measured risks to ensure that their organisations, rather than merely survive, succeed and prosper in the long term.

Be transparent, open and honest, and lead by example

Chloe Ward

A clear vision with co-created values, an environment where it is safe to try new things and make mistakes

Scarlett Cooper-Wall

¹ Denyer, D. (2017). *Organizational Resilience: A summary of academic evidence, business insights and new thinking* BSI and Cranfield School of Management

How to BUILD A RESILIENT ORGANISATION



The 4Sight model of Organizational Resilience (Denyer, 2017) ¹



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