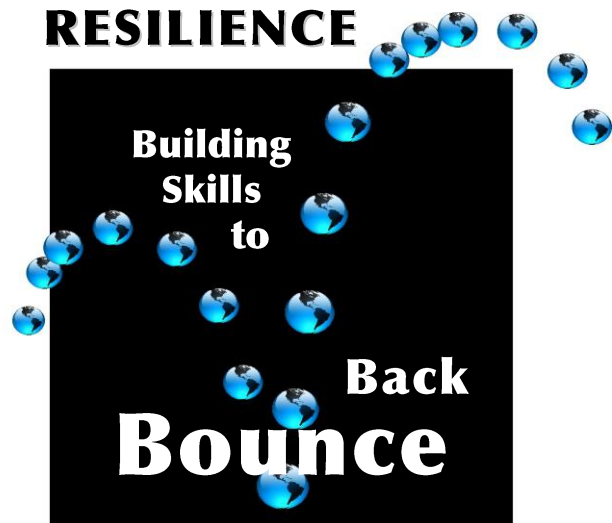


RESILIENCE



PONDER: Have you ...

- ... encountered construction on regular travel route ?
- ... got a new piece of tech at work or at home ?
- ... had a change in job duties or title ?
- ... had a major change in your personal life (baby, wedding, move, reno, empty nest, whatever) ?
- ... provided care for a family member or friend ?
- ... dealt with change in personal health or health habits ?
- ... had to learn a new procedure at work or at home ?
- ... had a change in any aspect of your life ?

It's probably time to build your resilience skills !



About the Author

TJ Titcomb has been helping organizations manage change, develop leaders and prevent problems for more than forty years. She holds a master's degree in counseling psychology and a PhD in organizational development. Now mostly retired, Dr. Titcomb is sharing workbooks from presentations she has given at conferences.

The One Constant ...



The one constant in life is change. Humans have been blessed with a tremendous ability to adapt. They are able to survive in a wider range of environments than any other living creature. This is not to say that change is easy for us. The only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.

Folks have always had to deal with change. The big difference today is the number and rate of change. Yesterday's changes came at a slower pace. People had a chance to get used to them before the next one had to be faced.

Today, major org change initiatives have become an almost daily reality. Just living with this endless expectation of more change – whether it is good or bad – can be stressful, perhaps even more than the change itself.



One of the things we've learned about people is that they can deal with almost anything as long as they know what they have to deal with. That's perhaps the hardest thing about change – it almost always involves uncertainty. We don't know how far away the other side is or even if there is another side ...

IDENTIFY COMMON STRESSORS

stress-inducing stuff that pops up often in my life ...

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____

Now, check all those that are likely to go away.

The universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it.

– Marcus Aurelius (121-180)

The Basics of Resilience

Resilience is the process of adapting well when confronted with change. It doesn't mean a person is not affected; every person feels some stress. Resilience is the ability to bounce back – the ability to call on the strengths needed to meet the challenge of change.

The study of resilience in human beings is a relatively new science, with the first major study published in 1973. Up to that point, the primary focus was on adversity, illness, and pathology. For the last fifty years, psychologists have been asking the important question, *Why do some people bounce back from stressful situations that cripple others?* Their discoveries are tremendously encouraging.

Resilience is not a trait or characteristic that someone *has*. It is a process involving specific thoughts and actions – things that a person **does**. These skills can be developed and strengthened with time, effort and commitment. The good news is that, if you have the commitment, you will find the time and energy.

Bounce Back!



- Make a commitment
- Learn and understand why
- Express yourself
- Build support
- Work on your reactions
- Take care of yourself and ...
- Remember what's important

Make a Commitment

We all have a road we're on. Sometimes it's just because we've always gone this way. Sometimes we've made a wrong turn. But the best roads are the ones we specifically chose because they were the right way for us.

Think of your job as one of the roads you travel. Why did you choose your current job? What drew you to the work? What do you hope to get out of it? What would you like to contribute? How does it help you to make a difference?

The work you do is part of your lifelong road trip. You can think of this trip as your **mission** in life. We're usually happiest in those jobs where we feel the organization's mission is a good fit with our own personal journey.

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Resilience is strengthened by having goals, making plans and taking action. These things add purpose and meaning to everyday life. Take time every morning to ask yourself, *What is **one thing** I can do **today** to move forward with my goal?*

There are only two options regarding commitment. You're either in or out. There's no such thing as a life in-between.

– Pat Riley



Learn and Understand Why

Changes are always easier to deal with when they make sense. Resilient people take the initiative to ask *why?* *Why is this being introduced?* *Why is this happening now?* They then listen carefully and work hard to understand.

Take two changes you've experienced in your organization and discuss why they happened. Can you identify changes that are clearly linked to your mission?

The CHANGE	The WHYs
The CHANGE	The WHYs



He who has
a why to live
can bear almost
any how.

- Friedrich Nietzsche

Express Yourself

Resilient people actively participate. When asked for input, they speak up. Even more importantly, they freely volunteer ideas, suggestions and feedback on what is happening and how people can cope. Their communication efforts are usually successful because they consciously work on being assertive – clear, direct and respectful.

● SPEAK UP

- Say it! – don't expect others to read your mind – be assertive – you have a right to express your feelings, wants, ideas and beliefs – and so does everybody else! Part of being assertive is listening to others and helping them speak up.
- Use gentle honesty – be direct – don't say one thing if you really mean another – don't hint and hope somebody picks up on it
- Seek out your *Stress Buddy* – the person who laughs at the same things you do

Stress Buddy:

● DON'T SPEAK UP

- It's just as important to know when NOT to talk – work groups can easily fall into two popular activities: *The Complain Game* and *Top That Stress* – these games actually add to stress and promote contagious negativity – if talking about work slides into these activities, change the rules – switch subjects, zone out or leave the room
- Be positive – make it a practice never to complain unless you have a constructive MIB (Make It Better) suggestion – work with others to solve problems. A key quality of resilient people is the commitment and ability to solve problems.



Identify two specific topics you can be lured into complaining about:

1. _____
2. _____

Build Support

Multiple studies over the years have shown that social support is a major contributing factor to resilience. Support is out there! Remember these simple steps to building an effective support system . . .

. . . know **WHAT** is supportive to you

. . . **GIVE** support to others

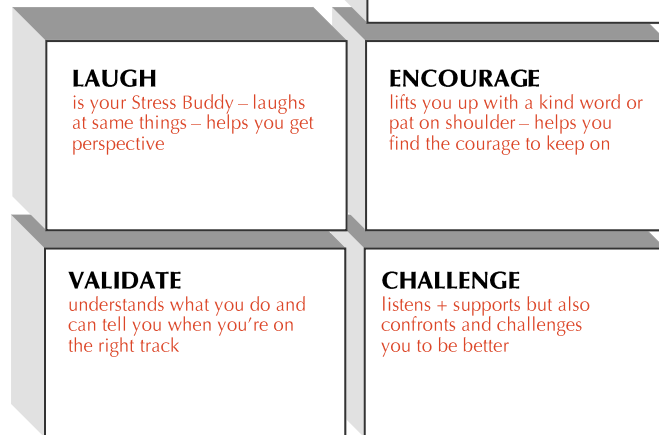
when you're asked for support, give it freely. Your time will come and, even if it doesn't, your efforts create a more supportive culture.

. . . **ASK** for support

too often we don't ask for support; we hint for it. It's not fair to blame others for not being supportive if you have not clearly asked for it.



Think of the people in your life. Fill in the boxes to identify your support system. The more names, the stronger the system. Keep in mind that one person can't do it all.



LISTEN

works to truly understand what you're going through

LAUGH

is your Stress Buddy – laughs at same things – helps you get perspective

ENCOURAGE

lifts you up with a kind word or pat on shoulder – helps you find the courage to keep on

VALIDATE

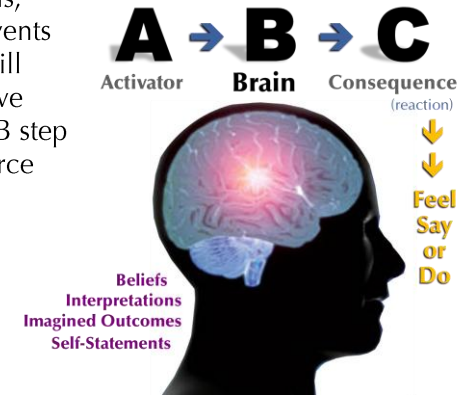
understands what you do and can tell you when you're on the right track

CHALLENGE

listens + supports but also confronts and challenges you to be better

Work on Your Reactions

Resilient individuals have learned to change their reactions to stressful situations and people. Changing reactions starts by understanding where reactions come from. Most of the time we operate on auto-pilot, responding automatically with little or no conscious thought. We are constantly influenced by our beliefs and expectations, by how we interpret events by what we imagine will happen, and by what we say to ourselves. This B step – the brain – is the source of all our reactions.



Challenge Beliefs

We all have unconscious assumptions about the way work, people and the world “should” be. We also have beliefs about the way we should be. We often imagine the worst possible outcome. Challenge: *Who said it should be this way? If it's not the way I want it to be, what's the worst that can happen? How likely is that to happen? Will I crumble because of this?*

Consider Interpretations

How we explain to ourselves why things happen and their impact on our lives influences level of optimism/pessimism. Ponder 3 “P’s” → permanence (*how long will this affect me?*) pervasiveness (*how much of my life is affected?*) and personalization (*how much of this did I cause?*)

Talk Back ... and Talk Smart to Yourself

Research for the last 50+ years has shown again and again the power of self-talk in changing reactions to stressful situations and people.



Man is disturbed not by events but by his view of them.

– Epictetus

Take Care of Yourself

When you're dealing with the stress of constant change, you can boost your resilience and increase your energy reserves by maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Remember Grandma's Rules! Get out in the fresh air, get your rest, and eat right!

- Eat healthy → multiple servings of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains – reasonable use of dairy, meat and poultry



- Limit sugar, fats, caffeine and alcohol
- Replace soda and coffee with water

- Make it a point to get 7-8 hours of sleep every day ... 3/4 of US workers are sleep-deprived ... what impact might that have?



- Exercise for at least 30 minutes at least 3 times a week.

- Avoid all forms of tobacco

- **Laugh** ... a lot! Your sense of humor is a gift and a blessing. It's what lets you laugh in spite of all the reasons there are NOT to laugh.



Practice ...



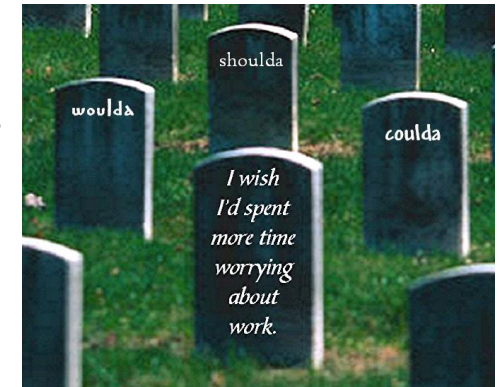
- :-) choosing more positive labels – take a stressful situation and shift your perspective to come up with a positive "frame" or way of looking at it.
- :-) remembering the difference between *laughing at* and *laughing with* – one style of humor relieves stress – the other actually increases it.
- :-) looking for the humor in everyday events – seek out and share funny stuff

Remember What's Important

You are the only person who can decide your goals and priorities. You have a RIGHT to determine what is important to you and to choose to LIVE these priorities.

Think about what is REALLY important to you in your life. Where are you currently investing your time and energy? Work to achieve a balance in your life.

Another thought to keep in mind: when we are under stress, our problems seem to become ALL-IMPORTANT in the universe. An alternative is to LOOK OUTSIDE ourselves – broaden our perspective. Help someone else; take up a worthy cause; volunteer your talents, really listen to a friend ... all of these activities can help put balance back in your life.



What are the three most important things in your life right now?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What will you do *today* to show the importance of these priorities in your life?

My Bounce Back! Plan

Choose two areas and make a promise to yourself
of TWO **specific** actions you'll take in each area

Make a Commitment

Learn and Understand Why

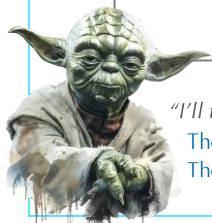
Express Myself

Build Support

Work on My Reactions

Take Care of Myself

Remember What's Important



"I'll try."

There is no try.

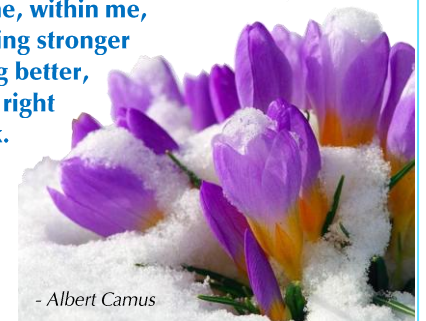
There is only **DO** or **DO NOT**.

Resources to Learn More

-  McKay, Davis & Fanning, *Thoughts and Feelings: Taking Control of Your Moods*
-  Reivich & Shatte, *The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength*
-  Salmansohn, *The Bounce Back Book*
-  Seligman, *Learned Optimism*
-  Siebert, *The Resiliency Advantage*
-  Wilson, *Instant Calm: Over 100 Easy-to-Use Techniques*
-  www.apa.org/topics/resilience
-  www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management
-  [www.verywellmind.com ... stress management](http://www.verywellmind.com...stress-management)
-  [Brains: The Journey to Resilience – Alberta Family Wellness](#)
-  [Neuroplasticity and Your Resilience Brain – Dennis Charney](#)
and various vids ... [10Minutes2relax](#)
-  Check out episodes from these podcasts:
Hidden Brain with Sankar Vedantam
The Happiness Lab with Dr Laurie Santos
A Slight Change of Plans with Dr Maya Shankar

**In the midst of winter,
I found there was, within me,
an invincible summer.**

**And that makes me happy. For it
says that no matter how hard the world
pushes against me, within me,
there's something stronger
– something better,
pushing right
back.**



- Albert Camus