



How to Be a
Resilient Leader



Build forward better





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What is resilient leadership and why is it important?

The resilient leader emerges at times of adversity and uncertainty.

Great leaders have many qualities and attributes in common and over the years much research has been conducted into what makes great leaders great. One essential quality of great leadership is resiliency.

A leader's ability to bounce back and overcome adversity, change and challenge is essential. Perhaps a leader has even more responsibility to develop resiliency than those that are not in a leadership position, as people are relying on the leader for direction and people often look towards the leader for a sense of certainty when change or crises hits. A leader is someone whose sense of resiliency is not just for themselves but for those around them at times of great challenge.



1 What is resilient leadership and why is it important?

Resilient leaders display emotional strength, courage, and professionalism during the most trying times. The resilient leader can keep focused and calm during times of disruption and transition, through periods of high employee turnover, when team morale and potentially business profits are low.



“Never give in – never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in.

If you are going through hell, keep going!”

Sir Winston Churchill

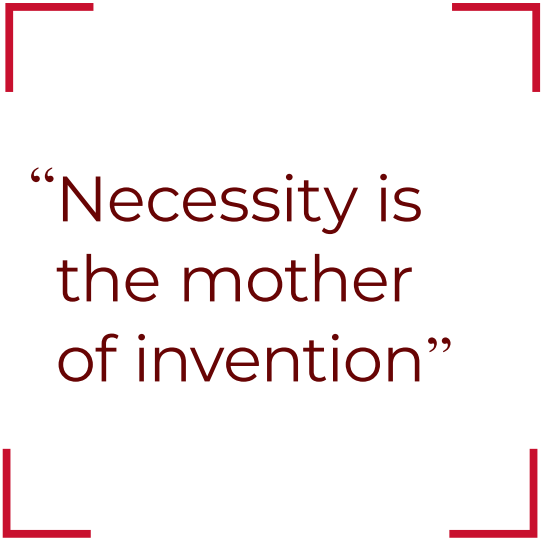




2

How do resilient leaders navigate change?

Many organisations are constantly in a state of flux and change. Changing their focus, expanding, or contracting their activities, and rethinking their processes and services especially in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic.



“Necessity is the mother of invention”



2 How do resilient leaders navigate change?

1.2 Key traits of resilient leaders

1. **They change with change, and are solution focused rather than problem focused** – Resilient leaders do not dwell on the things that they cannot change and have little control over, instead they focus their attention on what they can change and what they have some degree of control over.
2. **They have a vision and a plan** – Resilient leaders may not have all the pieces of the plan mapped out perfectly, but they provide a direction. The vision provides momentum whilst they remain flexible with the specifics. Jeff Bezos put it well when he said, “we are stubborn on the vision but flexible on the details.”
3. **They tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity better** – We all like things to be predictable but life just does not work this way. Resilient leaders can be ok with not knowing all the details of exactly how things will unfold but they follow the next logical step. They are good at regulating their own stress and emotions.
4. **They are not afraid to take calculated risks and make bold decisions** – Leadership boils down in many ways to responsibility. The responsibility to make decisions and to take calculated risks, it does not mean they do not consult but they have an inner confidence to try new ideas.



2 How do resilient leaders navigate change?

1.2 Understanding your team's reactions to change

Resilient leaders can understand and manage the emotions and responses of others during times of change and uncertainty.

Four typical responses to change are:

1. **The Navigator**

This is the person who adapts to the change well.

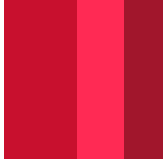
Q. Think about times in your life, when have you handled change well, took the change in your stride, or felt comfortable or excited by a certain change?

2. **The Critic**

The critic can be frustrated at the change, or they can be less emotional but more analytical about the drawbacks of a particular change.

Q. Think about changes that you have been critical of in the past, do you think a critic is a good or bad thing on a team?

The critics can come in two types. The critic that is just simply upset by the change, or the critic that has some constructive criticism regarding the change. A critic with constructive criticism may have valid points and needs to have their questions and objections answered, and maybe looking to find a solution.



2 How do resilient leaders navigate change?

3. The Victim

This is the individual who feels upset by the change taking place, they may feel helpless and overwhelmed.

- Q. Think about the major changes in your life, what changes have you struggled to cope with, making you feel out of control or helpless?

It is your job as a leader to help those that feel like victims to move them towards coping with the change better. This could be by listening to them, showing empathy for their feelings, or gently moving them towards better coping strategies.

4. The Bystander

This is the person that when a change is taking place has a neutral response and it can be challenging for a leader to know what is really going on with them.

- Q. Think about your own team, can you recognise the navigators, critics, victims and bystanders? What is your leadership approach to helping them deal with change?

Once again it is your job as the leader to try to understand what is going on with a bystander and get them involved and engaged in the process. How about teaming them up with a navigator, or through 1 to 1 coaching conversations? Make sure to check-in with them and ask them how they are feeling about the change.



3

What is a growth mindset?

3.1 Resilient leaders and the growth mindset

As a leader what you believe about yourself and your ability, and what you believe about others and their ability is so important. Resilient leadership is about developing a growth mindset.

Growth Mindset

The belief that people have the ability and capacity to learn, grow and develop their skills, improve, and get better.

Fixed Mindset

The belief that our ability, skills and potential is fixed.

The resilient leader is comfortable not having all the answers, but are comfortable asking other people for help, and leveraging the team's expertise in areas they fall short. They are humble and coachable with a genuine desire to listen to feedback and improve.



3 What is a growth mindset?

3.2 Growth mindset and developing others

Resilient leaders apply the growth mindset they have for themselves to their teams, and it makes a huge difference to the culture of a team as leaders with a growth mindset tend to focus more on the process rather than just the results. Failures and mistakes are seen as opportunities to grow, develop and learn.



4

Coaching questions

Ask yourself about your own style of leadership:

- Q1. As a leader, what are your values, and what is most important to you right now?
- Q2. How do you think people view you as a leader?
- Q3. What have been some of your successes and failures as a leader?
- Q4. Do you truly understand each member of your team and what drives them? How could you understand them better?
- Q5. As a leader am I communicating the big picture?
- Q6. How could I improve my communication?
- Q7. As a leader how could I help my team excel?

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