

# Resilience

## Overview

The ability of business leaders and entrepreneurs to enact the notion of “resilience” or indomitable spirit alluded to in the proverb below has taken a central role in entrepreneurship research.

### **“Nanakorobi yaoki” ~Japanese Proverb**

#### **“Fall seven times, stand up eight”**

The ability of business leaders and entrepreneurs to enact the notion of “resilience” or indomitable spirit alluded to in the proverb above has taken a central role in entrepreneurship research. This is because entrepreneurs – more than other professional groups – are likely to experience failure and or high levels of stress due to the increasingly competitive and uncertain environments they operate within.

## Being Resilient

Resilience is defined as “an ability to go on with life, or to continue living a purposeful life, after hardship or adversity” (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p.2) and has been established as an important aspect in entrepreneurs being able to recover from setbacks and in what make some entrepreneurs more resilient than others. Challenging circumstances and the adoption of the behaviour patterns of the surrounding entrepreneurship culture minimize the probability of self-care. In complicating matters, as well as potentially neglecting their health, many entrepreneurs, harbor secret demons such as fear of failure, lack of belief, search for perfection. In particular, new

entrepreneurs struggle through moments of near-debilitating anxiety and despair, times when it seems that everything might fall apart.

Challenging market forces such as (financial risk, severe competition, unpredictable environment) combined with self-doubt can result in entrepreneurs also being vulnerable to mental health issues. Often however, rather than showing vulnerability, entrepreneurs have practiced what social psychiatrists call impression management also known as *"fake it till you make it"*. A lack of recognition or self-awareness may lead entrepreneurs to march on regardless engaging with unhealthy automatic behavioural patterns which can lead to burnout or soul sickness as a result of permanent stress.

Resilient people demonstrate great flexibility, high energy, mental agility and consistently perform at their highest level. They have strong relationships and support networks that help them to amplify their productivity and results.

The beauty of resilience is that whilst it's partly about your personality and your genetic make-up, there are also learnable skills that help you to become more resilient.

## **What are the clues**

When we lack resilience over the long term we might be at danger of burnout. Common symptoms to look out for are:

- Exhaustion – you are dog-tired on one or more of the three energy levels – physical energy, emotional energy and spiritual energy. Your energy bank account is in a negative balance.
- Cynicism – you have lost your ability to care, empathise, and connect with your co-workers, friends and/or family.
- Doubt – you may begin to doubt that your work really makes any difference or question the quality of what you do. You have lost hope and optimism, which are crucial in maintaining resilience.

## Fast acting relief

One of the most useful metaphors to understanding resilience and avoiding burnout is with the metaphor of an *Energy Bank Account*. In this Bank is a store of your energy. This account has a full Mark, an empty mark and it can also have a negative balance depending on how you are living your life.

Within your bank account there are 3 energy categories to keep in mind:

- Physical Energy – your basic “get up and go”
- Emotional Energy – your ability to be emotionally available and compassionate
- Spiritual Energy – your connection to your Purpose in your work ... Your “WHY”

RECHARGING YOUR ENERGETIC ACCOUNT BALANCE BETWEEN WORK DAYS IS CRUCIAL TO MAINTAINING RESILIENCE!

## Long-term solutions

### Resist

Increasing your ability to RESIST the forces, which drain your resilience while you are on the job is incredibly important. By learning to recognise what sustains you and what drains you, you will be more able to resist situations, which are harmful to you and engage with pursuits that build your resilience.

### Restore

Realising that the core to maintaining your resilience is to avoid too many withdrawals from your accounts of physical, emotional and spiritual energy ... the RESTORE step is about restoring your energy and bringing your accounts into a healthy and positive balance.

Sleep, good nutrition and regular exercise are a great start. What relationships, activities, hobbies, experiences build you up & make you smile? What is on your Bucket List?

Restore is also about creating (and defending) BOUNDARIES between your work life and your larger life and giving you that all-important balance.

## Reduce exposure

Reducing exposure is about lowering the stress present in your work life by exerting some control in one or more of the following four ways:

- Agreeing on your definition of success for you and your people.
- Change the stressors that lead to physician burnout without changing jobs.
- Commitment to a healthy, balanced and productive worker should be your collective goal.
- Keep doing what you are doing now ... just less of it.

## Who / what can help

If you are struggling to maintain your resilience you could also try:

- Enrolling on a resilience course
- Embarking on a mindfulness course
- Friends and family relationships will give you a support mechanism

This copy was kindly written by Dr Glenda Rivoallan.

## Relevant Links

> [Wellbeing in the workplace](#)

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> [Stress](#)

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> [Time Management](#)

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> [Physical exercise](#)

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