



Discovering Resilience

 hello@focusu.com



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Doing Business in an Uncertain World..... 2

Chapter 2: Defining Resilience..... 4

Chapter 3: How Employees Can Discover Resilience..... 7

Chapter 4: How Leaders Can Become More Resilient To Failures?..... 12

Chapter 5: Your Guide To Building A Resilient Team..... 17

Conclusion..... 22





Chapter 1: Doing Business in an Uncertain World

It is clear that today, we live in a VUCA world – one that is characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. The Coronavirus pandemic has been one of the worst challenges to blindside humanity in recent times.

According to a [McKinsey & Company report](#), the world is in the grips of a recession, because of the Covid19 crisis. Global growth is somewhere between -1.5% and 0.5%.

Everywhere companies are shutting down or are slowing down their operations, as demand screeches to a halt. Depending on which country they come from, 20%-60% of employed individuals fear job loss in 2020.



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The Covid19 pandemic joins the ranks of countless other economic crises, wars & genocides, political collapses, and epidemics, which have brought businesses to their knees. Through all these terrible experiences, businesses have had to display immense grit and resilience in order to get back to form.

If your business wishes to return to normalcy and regain your top spot in the market, you must also develop resilience. More importantly, your leaders and the teams they helm, need to discover and build resilience at an individual level.





Chapter 2: Defining Resilience

Every company has its fair share of failures. We fail because of a variety of reasons, from poor planning to non-availability of data to zero employee engagement to poor change management. But the only way to really succeed in the market is to become resilient.

But what is resilience?

Resilience can withstand any challenge/failure that we are faced with and bounce back from this experience as more mature, aware and emotionally stronger individuals/teams. When we discover resilience, we are better-equipped to handle any problems that may occur in the future.

BENEFITS OF RESILIENCE

To companies

- Better able to anticipate business continuity issues.
- More optimal management of company resources.
- Improved communication across the organization to avoid ambiguities.



- More efficient, productive and organized operations.
- Reduced attrition rate.

To leaders

- Better equipped to give direction and support.
- Improved inter-team collaboration & communication.
- Able to set more realistic goals for the team.
- Better able to manage change.
- Mentally and emotionally ready to motivate team members.

To team members

- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Better placed to identify skills gaps and acquire the skills needed to improve performance.
- Higher motivation and satisfaction at work.
- Increased sense of belonging & community.
- Reduced burnout and more positivity towards work.



TYPES OF RESILIENCE NEEDED IN A COMPANY

Resilience isn't a uni-dimensional thing. There are many facets to it. Both employees and leaders need to discover and build different types of resilience:

- **Psychological resilience** – To develop the mental courage and forbearance necessary to face any failure/challenges.
- **Emotional resilience** – To become more emotionally enduring and manage negative emotions in a positive way.
- **Physical resilience** – To maintain physical health and wellbeing and not allow stress to cause illness.
- **Community/team resilience** – To develop the entire team's fortitude towards the problems and failures they may face.

The truth is, we are all resilient. It is a quality that is innate to all of humanity. But often this resilience stays hidden and only surfaces when we proactively channel it. Leaders and employees need to remember this and actively work to discover this latent resilience and strengthen it.

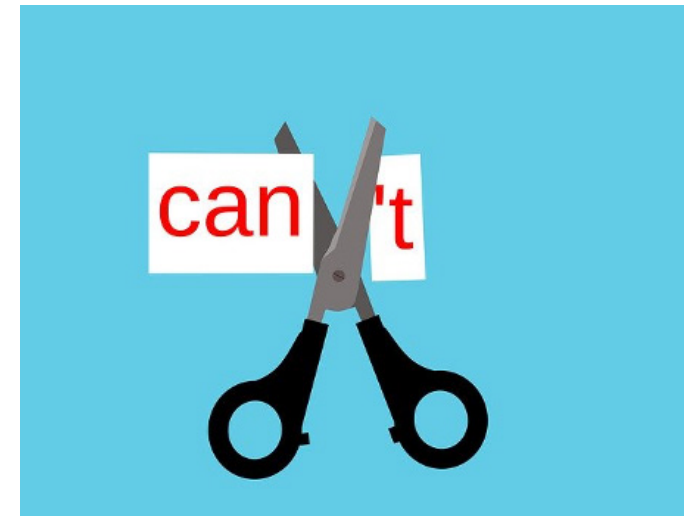


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Chapter 3:

How Employees Can Discover Resilience

Resilience is a quality that needs to permeate every level of an organization. The employees at the lowest rungs of the ladder too must display resilience, if the company as a whole needs to flourish during difficult times.

Here are some steps that employees can implement, to discover and develop resilience:



1. Acknowledge that you can overcome any challenge or failure

The most important step towards discovering resilience in yourself, is to develop the mind of a survivor i.e. acknowledge to yourself that you can survive anything that life throws at you.

When you believe in your ability to overcome any type of problem or failure, you are more likely to handle stress better. You won't experience as much anxiety and you will be aware of your own strengths, which can help you create the successful results you want.





2. Adopt a positive mindset

Failures can make anyone feel defeated and worthless. But these feelings can impact the way you handle the aftermath of the failure. As an employee of a company, you are instrumental in the achievement of the company's goals. If you fall apart because of a negative mindset, you will be unable to do what is needed to overcome the failure.

When you proactively develop a positive mindset, you don't allow any challenges to overwhelm you. As a result, you remain more focused, observant and committed towards creating a brighter tomorrow.



3. Challenge your beliefs and preconceptions

A lot of times, negative attitudes are a result of our preconceptions and wrong beliefs. Only when you challenge such beliefs and adopt a healthier thought process, will you get clarity of vision.

Always question each belief you hold. Your thoughts should empower you and allow you to do anything you set your mind to. That's true resilience.





4. Start with small goals

After failure, many employees feel unmoored. They lose their sense of purpose and are unable to focus their faculties and efforts in the right direction. The only way to prevent this, is to actively seek your purpose and set goals.

The trick is to set achievable goals. For example, instead of saying, “I must achieve a sales target of \$500,000 by the month end”, say, “I will acquire 1 customer by the end of this week, notwithstanding the business they bring.”. The latter is a goal that is easier to achieve, because you don’t have the pressure of a large target (i.e. \$500,000). You can use this small goal as the starting point and then slowly work your way to the primary goal.



5. Be curious & learn continuously

Your skills are the tools that you use to become more resilient. In order to really strengthen your resilience towards problems, you need to constantly upskill yourself.

For example, problem solving is a very important skill needed to develop resilience. The better you are at problem solving, the less-likely you will be to give up when faced with a challenge.

The longer you hone your skills and the more knowledge you accumulate, the higher your resilience is.





6. Develop a social network

Humans are social beings and we need other people to stay emotionally fulfilled.

Research shows that the right social support can increase our resilience to stress. Your team members, leaders and mentors act as safety nets who provide you with the emotional support, resources and help you may need, while at work. They also act as role models to you and can teach you how to handle failures and stress the right way.



7. Lend a helping hand to others

This brings us to the next step – don't just seek help, but become a helper or mentor to the colleagues who need you.

Often, failures, stress and challenges can make us feel helpless. But when we're able to help others with their problems, we won't feel so helpless anymore. It will make us feel empowered.

By helping your colleagues become resilient, you will automatically tap into the resilience that's already in you.





8. Practice mindfulness

Finally, employees who wish to discover resilience and strengthen their resilient spirit, must practice mindfulness.

Mindfulness increases self-awareness. Practices like meditation and journaling can be very therapeutic and revealing about your strengths and weaknesses.

You should also incorporate sleep and exercise in your daily schedule. This will allow you to recharge, shake off stress, and get the clarity you need to look at your failure in a new way.



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Chapter 4:

How Leaders Can Become More Resilient To Failures?

Resilience is one of the most important personality traits necessary in leaders. Your primary responsibility is to mobilize your people to achieve company goals. If you're not resilient yourself, you can't expect the same from your team.

The good news is, you can discover resilience in yourself by following these steps:



1. Re-frame your thoughts

It is very easy to get stuck in a cognitive rut. As a leader, there is nothing worse than this, especially during times of crisis. You need to be creative and courageous and do things differently, in order to ensure a successful outcome.

When you re-frame your thoughts, you are able to see the hidden opportunities in challenges. You will notice the mistakes you made in the past and know how to avoid them. You will be able to lead your teams the right way, to get the desired results.





Essentially, reframing of thoughts can help you become more resilient to the negativity that arises out of failure.



2. Be open to change

It's true that a leader's job is to be a change agent. But due to a variety of reasons, some leaders don't lead change. When you become too comfortable with a particular way of working and don't welcome change, you lose the ability to respond to unexpected crises.

Change is the essence of resilience. Only when you change the way you think, plan, delegate tasks, allocate resources, use technology and manage conflicts, do you gain the opportunities, resources and capabilities needed to overcome any setback.



3. Be open to receiving re-training or coaching

A great way for leaders to discover and build resilience, is to become open to feedback, re-training and coaching.

When you welcome feedback and criticism from others, you get more clarity about the things you should have and shouldn't have done in relation to the failure. You are able to understand your own strengths, weaknesses and leadership style.





Re-training and coaching can help you hone the skills you need to become a good leader. Your experiences with failure will allow you to learn new lessons from this training/coaching and you will be able to turn the failure into a success.



4. Develop a good relationship with your team

A leader is as much influenced by his/her team, as the leader influences the team. When you don't have a good relationship with your team, you may feel isolated and disconnected from them. In the event of any stress, challenge or failure, you may feel abandoned by them. This can have a deep psychological impact and affect your ability to be resilient. It can even impact your leadership style.

When you have a positive and trusting relationship with your team, you literally have each other's backs. Your team will unconditionally support you and you'll be able to discover resilience in yourself through their help.



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6. Exercise control

Control over your life and your current situation can make you feel more resilient to stress and failure. In fact, psychologists advise people who have experienced personal trauma to make deliberate decisions and regain control over an aspect of their lives. This helps them cope with the stress better and enables them to take other major decisions more calmly.

This is true even of leadership. As a leader, you have the power to take key decisions for the team. You should leverage this power and authority during times of crises. If you feel your team is ill-prepared to handle the crisis or you have the skills to avert failure, take the necessary decisions and do what you need to do.





7. Reach out to mentors for advice

Many companies have mentorship programs and leadership grooming programs in place. If you're a product of such a program, you'll have a mentor you can reach out to. Speak to your mentors and find out their opinions about your predicament. Ask them what they'd do in your place. Mimic their resilience in your own work.

Even if you don't have a mentor, you can always reach out to a senior employee who you've always admired. Speaking to them and seeking their opinions can help you determine what you need to do to become resilient.



8. Take time for yourself

Leaders experience immense stress on-the-job. It's very likely that you'll be very stressed because of the challenge, crisis or failure. You won't be able to take any effective decisions when you're so physically tired, emotionally drained, and mentally taxed. You must detach from work and rejuvenate yourself.

This is where activities like yoga, meditation, journaling, exercise, and sleep help. Take some time for yourself and come back refreshed and resilient.





Chapter 5:

Your Guide To Building A Resilient Team

So far we know how team members and leaders can individually and personally discover resilience. But for the business to become resilient, both team members and leaders must work together and build resilient teams.

Here are some things that leaders and team members can do:



1. Identify your roadblocks & address them together

Usually, teams suffer from one or more of these roadblocks:

- Absence of shared values
- Lack of focus towards the goal
- Non-availability of data required to do the job
- Overthinking & complication of tasks
- Too many doubts about the abilities of the team
- Tendency to procrastinate





- Fear of future failure
- Lack of motivation
- Improper planning

These roadblocks can affect your team's ability to become resilient towards change, failure and crisis.

Training & development, upskilling, team engagement activities and mental reframing are some of the ways to address these roadblocks.



2. Become self-aware

When teams are aware of their unique strengths, weaknesses, attitudes and preconceptions, it becomes easier to identify how the team will respond to a crisis. Psychometric tools like **MBTI** and **Emergenetics** go a long way in helping teams achieve this.

You will be able to judge when your team will be at its most vulnerable. This information will help you anticipate failures & stressful situations in advance and take the necessary precautions to quickly bounce back from the poor outcome.





3. Develop a psychologically safe climate

Team resilience is developed only when every person contributes to the team post-crisis. When we speak of contribution, we aren't just talking about the skills the team brings to the table. We also include their doubts, fears and concerns.

Your team will be open to sharing their doubts, fears and concerns only when they feel emotionally safe. This is why it's necessary to create a psychologically safe climate in your team.

Psychological safety starts with the leader. You must become an active listener and be more empathetic towards your subordinates. You have to create an environment of inclusivity, where everyone feels empowered to chip-in with their ideas. As the leader, you must be open to feedback and be willing to make the changes needed, to enable your team to feel satisfied and happy.

When your team feels psychologically safe, they are more-likely to become resilient to anything that comes their way.



4. Put a support structure in place that facilitates resilience

Teams often fail to be resilient when members feel that the team doesn't have a support structure in place. The Goal, Roles, Interpersonal





Relations and Process (GRIP) model can help you here.

The GRIP model is a four-step model designed to improve teamwork. It provides the structure and direction that teams need to perform in times of crisis. It helps teams develop resilience.

To implement GRIP, the leader must:

- Identify the group's core goals.
- Provide clarity about the role/responsibilities of each member and educate them about the expectations from them.
- Put in place processes and technologies that can enable quick decision making, easy collaboration and open communication. Share the information they need to do the job.
- Develop strong interpersonal relationships and foster trust and honesty between each other.



5. Make team members accountable for their tasks

There is nothing better than accountability, to build a resilient team. When leaders and team members are held accountable for their actions, they are





less-likely to put up with failures.

Accountability reflects on the individual's performance in the workplace. There is always the fear that top management may judge the team's performance based on this one-off failure. To prevent giving senior managers a negative impression, the team will proactively become resilient towards any failure or challenge they have faced and will work to achieve the desired outcome.





CONCLUSION

Crises, pandemics and political downfalls will continue to ravage the world for ages to come. Businesses will continue to be victims of these events. By following the above steps, you can ensure that your company, leaders and employees are resilient to these crises, challenges and failures.

By discovering resilience and by strengthening it, you will poise yourself to succeed in a world that is plagued by trying times.



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A few books that we recommend:

