



Head & Heart is a collection of ideas, resources and frameworks to support your personal and professional development in leading yourself, others and organizations with head and heart.

Fall 2011

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

We're pleased to share our fourth and final Head & Heart in 2011 with you. It's been an exciting challenge this year to respond to your requests and write on themes that you (and we) deem mission critical to leadership success. Our overarching themes this year have included Lessons from the Downturn, Leadership for Growth and Confidence. We'll close our Head & Heart series this year with Leadership Resilience because we will all find ourselves confronted with situations that will at the time seem impossible to overcome.

Understanding how to overcome setbacks and more importantly, how to help others to weather the storms of uncertainty and find their resiliency ranks high for desired leadership competencies. We trust you will find one or two ideas in the following articles to stimulate this ability in you.

Enjoy your read and best wishes for a successful close to 2011!

Dan Norenberg

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Thought Leadership

Leadership Resilience

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing but in rising every time we fall"

Confucius

Resilience is an instinct, a way of facing and understanding the world that is deeply etched into a person's mind and soul. Resilient people and resilient companies face reality with a firmness and resolve. They will improvise solutions. They make sense of their hardship instead of 'crying out in despair'. They have a 'capacity to bounce back from adversity and to restore or even improve a level of performance'.

This is the nature of resilience and some people have it, others do not. It has become, in recent years, a very fashionable subject to research and after many studies, it is said that it 'never will be really understood'. This probably explains why it does not appear in many company competency frameworks and yet more and more companies today, with the increasingly turbulent times of change, are realizing that resilience is possibly the key factor to look for when selecting a leader.

At school, I was intrigued by the notion of elastic limit, the point beyond which, when you stretch a wire, it will not return to its original shape and length. I suppose each of us has an elastic limit and up to that point of 'ad-

versity', we may be able to be resilient but beyond that point we will lose our capacity and desire to perform. We will be stretched out of shape.

There are those who never want to fail and who have developed very powerful inner drivers to ensure, as far as they can, that they will always be successful in what they set out to do. The paradox here is that whilst success may come their way for many years, their obsessive desire for success

becomes a limiting factor in their personal development and the pace and complexity of change will become too much for them to be able to adapt to be successful.

The power of what Confucius is saying is that our greatest glory lies in understanding ourselves and our own individual capacity to be resilient. As leaders, this calls for a profound awareness of self, the formative experiences we have had, the nature of support we have received, how we have dealt with setbacks. We need to understand our own inner drive to want to grow from tough situations so that we may be always 'resilient to rise' to the ever increasing challenges of times ahead.

Ed Norman



Leading Self

Good Things Come to Those Who Persevere

Tips for building resilience in the 21st century.

Just as an Ivy League MBA no longer secures that top job at a Fortune 500 firm, guaranteed work based on reputation or a past relationship alone no longer secures the contracts that would have been a sure thing in the past.



Globalization, technology and the global financial crises are powerful forces that have created a new work environment. In this new age where technology allows people to be connected to their jobs 24/7, the competition works harder and longer than ever before. As a result, the need to separate oneself from the pack has never been greater.

Creativity and flexibility are two skills that have been in high demand since the end of last century. With increased competition and shrinking financial resources, "resilience", the ability to stick to things even when the immediate reward isn't clear, has joined this in demand skill set.

In a recent interview in the Harvard Business Review, Disney CEO Bob Iger remembers early in his career when a boss told him that he was not promotable. He explains his reaction: "I knew he was wrong and I wanted to prove it. I think it was a defining moment because it forced me to completely comprehend that part of me. I believed in myself." Without a healthy dose of resilience Mr. Iger could not have bounced back from this discouragement and persevered with his goals.

Anyone who has ever set an ambition goal for themselves knows that without self-discipline that goal will never be reached. Espousing the importance of discipline for emotional, spiritual and psychological health in his book *The Road Less Traveled*, M. Scott Peck sees the ability to delay gratification as the most essential element to developing this skill. In his book,

Peck's "sacrificing present comfort for future gains" is synonymous with resilience.

So how can I build up my resilience to enhance my unique 21st century tool kit?

1. Never stop learning. Learning builds resistance to economic and technological change. Strive for "serial mastery" by acquiring a new expertise every few years.

2. Always put forward your best effort. A successful athlete or professional doesn't save themselves for later. Play every point as if it's match point.

3. Don't give up. Stay focused on your goals, delaying gratification when necessary. Good things come to those who wait and those who persevere.

A strong belief in yourself and a strong sense of purpose might not take you to the top of the most profitable media conglomerate in the world like it has for Bob Iger, but the resilience to pick yourself up after you've been knocked down will take you much further on the road to your own goals.

Tim Nash

Point of View

*"If you can keep your head when
all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it
on you,
If you can trust yourself when all
men doubt you,
But make allowance for their
doubting too;"*

*These are the opening lines of "If"
by Rudyard Kipling, one of the most
popular poems ever written.*

In just four verses, Kipling captures the essence of maturity: the difference between adulthood and childhood. Much of his poem centres on what it means to be resilient.

At these times ongoing change and, for many, confusion and frustration, we are advised to have a resilient approach to conflicts and tensions. But what is a resilient approach?

In part, it is endurance: the stamina and strength to keep going, both psychologically and mentally, especially when you are tired or under pressure.

Determination also plays a role. This is sticking to your purpose, without being stubborn about the path you take to reach it.

Which naturally brings up flexibility: the ability to recognize and overcome resistance from other people and from inside yourself.

Resilience combines all of these. It's a balance of endurance, of determination and of flexibility. Which of these components you choose to emphasize clearly changes depending on the situation and your point of view. Achieving that balance feels fantastic; to quote Kipling, "Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it, And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!"

Steven Hunt

Word Watch

Resilience

The roots of the word “resilience” are from Latin. It combines two parts: “re” meaning “back” with “salire” meaning to “jump or leap”. To put a modern twist on it, “resilience” is the ability to return to the original form after being bent, compressed, or stretched out of shape.

When people get criticized and condemned, they may feel bent out of shape. When they are put under intense pressure, they experience being compressed. When their work is too difficult or too much, they are stretched. Resilience is our ability to recover quickly from these and other disruptive changes, or misfortunes without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways.

In the world of leadership, people like Nelson Mandela and Gandhi are admired for their resilience. Despite being pushed to their limits, both men managed to keep their shape and continue to act in constructive ways.

At first, the challenge to becoming more resilient is to know how far we can push ourselves, without breaking ourselves.

Although stretching our limits is important, it is vital to match this with a “community of support”. It is clear from his autobiography that Mandela, for example, created and took strength from the support of his fellow prisoners and activists.

When we define resilience as ‘responding to challenge and creating support’, we can see that there are many people who show resilience every day. For leaders, setting demanding goals and creating an environment of support (in their organizations) is the true challenge. This is resilient leadership in action.

Steven Hunt

Leading Others

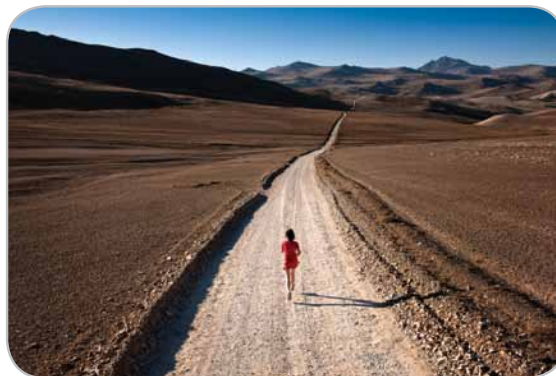
Decoding Resilient Leaders

“Everything that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable.”

Ben Jonson

Intelligence. Creativity. Teamwork. All are important ingredients in the formula for success. But without resiliency, that is the ability to adapt and work through stressful situations and crises, the above attributes are of little value to us.

If we look at resiliency in the context of leading others, how is it possible to support and develop resiliency in others? How can leaders and managers develop people to create their own energy and inner ability to adapt to



stressful situations and crises and not to be tipped over by unexpected challenges and uncertainty?

Looking back at my first decade of professional experiences, which involved two corporate start-ups as well as my first entrepreneurial ventures, I often needed double and triple doses of resiliency to survive and thrive in those times.

I asked myself how those that led and mentored me during those trying times encouraged and stimulated my resiliency. Although their leadership style differed greatly, here’s what they did to ignite the resiliency in me:

They spoke with **balanced optimism and perspective**. Sharing optimism meant that while they acknowledged the challenges of the day, they continually referred to “a future upside” that I could relate to. They reminded me that bad events are temporary and there is always tomorrow and this helped me develop perspective, which fueled my resiliency.

They were **emotionally present**. They treated my perceptions, however wildly negative they were, with unconditional positive regard, and then would gently nudge me to consider other possibilities.

These leaders were able to help me build my “resiliency fire” by pointing out that I was, day by day, week by week, **mastering my challenges of the day** and doing a good job, despite the surroundings. This **made me feel good about myself**, and as long as I was feeling good on the inside, nothing on the outside could get me down.

And the final piece of my “resiliency code” was something I’d today call connecting with the **“mission of the man”**, meaning that I felt these people knew where we were going, even if I or they weren’t entirely sure how to get there. They made me feel right to my core that **I was a part of their mission** and our futures were intertwined.

Each of us has a “resiliency code” within us – one of the secrets to effective leadership is unlocking the resiliency code in others.

Dan Norenberg

Leading Organizations

How resilient is your organization?

Why can some organizations withstand a serious crisis in their industry while others do not? What enables some companies to absorb a major blow while others get knocked out? One factor is resiliency. What makes an organization resilient? Here are three signs to look for:

1. The ability to adapt to change while retaining core competencies and functions.

Resiliency is about the ability to be stretched, pulled or hit very hard by external (or internal) events yet return to something similar to the original shape. Companies which survived the financial upheaval of 2009/10 and are currently thriving are a great example of this. They truly understand what their core competencies are, allowing them to flex processes, change systems, etc., without changing who they really are. This proactive adjustment, not reactive panic, allowed them to maintain their core objectives, even in the face of great adversity. Does your organization truly know its core competencies and how to use them in times of adversity?

2. Anticipate future market needs, possible disruptors and make plans to meet them today. A company with

a robust process in place to involve key business functions in anticipating different future scenarios is more likely to react in a functionally aligned way when a major disruptor or opportunity presents itself. This is both future risk and future opportunity management. How good is your process for exploring future scenarios and, based on these scenarios, planning for success?



3. Resilient Leaders. Having a leadership team who role models, i.e. resilient in the face of adversity, is essential. Leaders have a huge impact on the daily culture and ethos of a company. They create an environment that anchors resiliency in the organization. Are your leaders providing focus on how to adapt to unexpected adversity in the present and leading the

debate in how to respond to future challenges?

These are only three of the many factors that contribute to a resilient organization. It's important to remember that resiliency is never "done". It takes constant focus and attention but in an ever more volatile world, it is the resilient that will survive and thrive.

Michael Couch

Food for Thought

The leaders I met, whatever walk of life they were from, whatever institutions they were presiding over, always referred back to the same failure – something that happened to them that was personally difficult, even traumatic, something that made them feel that desperate sense of hitting bottom – as something they thought was almost a necessity. It's as if at that moment the iron entered their soul; that moment created the resilience that leaders need.

Author: Warren Bennis

Leadership Facts and Figures

Resilience is more accessible and available to some people than for others, but everyone can strengthen their resilience.

Important Facts about Resilience
Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D.,
Research Director Melissa Institute

Challenging Situations?

What challenging situation would you like us to deal with in a future issue of Head & Heart? Get our perspective.

Send us an e-mail at:
headandheart@nvision-learning.com

We will of course ensure that your challenging situation remains anonymous.