

Changing the Narrative

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How many times have you heard “a change agent” or “be an agent of change” in the last 18 months? How about “new normal”? Haven’t we all settled into the reality that every day is a new normal and that change is a constant? We no longer need a broker to sell us on the need for change agents, and my desire to have another “new normal” in our businesses and personal lives is equal to my passion around trimming the toenails on my cat!

It’s time we consider a new word, a new approach for both ourselves and our organizations to thrive. It’s time to explore resilience. As leaders you are pressed to advance initiatives, to build a coalition, and to take on project after project.

Resilience is the skill set that allows us to bounce back when things go wrong and to manage stress when times are overwhelming.

At this particular time in history, when we are still adapting to 10,000 retirements a day, and the largest generation at work is also our youngest, our focus on leadership skills is exceptionally relevant. Technology has become our primary means of communication. That’s efficient, and definitely provides a way to leave work in someone’s “queue” after hours. It is also impersonal and leaves room for interpretation of emotion and intent.

For the kids still in school, technology has become both the primary learning modality and also the social currency of their lives. We have less and less interpersonal time, which means our next generation of workers will learn from their workplace about boundaries and resilience.

How do you know what level of resilience you have now? First, consider how easily you manage a situation that has gone completely differently than you expected. Are you able to communicate the hurt, anger, frustration, etc.? Or do you ‘need a minute’ that is really the language of ‘I need an hour, or many hours’ to get yourself back together?

Kevin Cashman, author of [Leadership from the Inside Out](#) talks about the measures of resilience and how putting attention on these will elevate your resilience, and the ability to guide others in theirs. Here are four to start with:

Smooth and abundant energy. As you go through the day, do you find your energy elevates and then depletes depending on the person or the project? Notice where your energy dips and how that impacts your productivity and your relationships.

Ability to focus deeply. The brain needs about twenty minutes to sink into a project with creativity and innovation and that the average person checks email every three minutes during the workday. So, how do we deeply focus? Check yourself - can you turn off your mail program for an hour? What internal response do you have just thinking about it?

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Internal Motivation. Are you more motivated by deadlines and responsibilities to others than to yourself? That's external motivation, which isn't a bad thing, it isn't as sustainably fulfilling as our internal motivation. Pause and reflect on what motivates you to move through the world, including all facets of your life.

Creativity and Innovation. Where do you feel most creative? Said differently, what is your creative outlet and how often do you engage in it? What is the last innovation you participated in? Where do you have 'thinking time' for your projects? Consider how you can add this in, noticing if your initial (and lasting) response is "I don't have time". Resilience is built in the possible and lost in the impossible.

The next time you find yourself addressing a new initiative, proposing a new project, or asking others to adopt a new policy, process, or project consider how you can bring in these elements of resilience. You'll enjoy a better outcome, and they'll have a heightened ability to respond to the changing world.

For more information and further reading on Leadership, visit our [online library](#).



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Judy understands leadership and teams. And, she knows how to help you maximize the potential of yours. For over two decades, Judy has applied her vast knowledge of team dynamics, emotional intelligence, work/life balance, leadership, and finance to help organizations improve their people, process, performance and, ultimately, profits.

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