

# Workplace Resilience: Building Employee Resilience



Resilience is “the universal human capacity to face, overcome, and even be strengthened by experiences of adversity.” ~ Edith Grotbery, PhD

## Resilience Organizations:

- Practice dialogue.
  - Actively practice dialogic conversation for the purpose of learning from each other, understanding each other, and respecting each other. These sessions are about inquiry and not advocacy. They normally have facilitation.
- Have resilient leadership.
  - Resilient leaders are needed to demonstrate the key skills of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and connection for the workforce.
  - An important piece of resilient leadership is finding trust in your workforce.
  - Modeling is the key.
- Use resources in a sustainable way.
  - Sustainability - not being harmful to, or depleting, our resources and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance while effectively producing our product.
  - All resources should be reviewed to make sure there is diversity and/or redundancy so if there is an interruption of that resource the organization does not suffer.
- Expect and accept change.
  - In accepting what each moment brings, we make a calm, balanced decision about what our next step is going to be. We don't have to like something to accept it. And accepting doesn't mean we live with it.
  - Change can and will happen. Instead of dreading it, can we prepare for it and then move on knowing when it happens we have a plan?
- Actively develop resilient cultures. This includes, modeling of
  - Self-Care
  - Boundaries
  - Acceptance
  - Networking
  - Self-Awareness
- Actively invest in diversity.
  - Systems with many different components are generally more resilient than organizations with few components. Diversity allows some components to compensate for the loss or failure of others.

## Personal Qualities of Resilience

<p>Resilient People have the following general characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-Awareness</li><li>• Hope</li><li>• Optimism</li><li>• Confidence</li><li>• Self-Efficacy</li><li>• Self-Compassion</li><li>• Sense of Purpose</li></ul>	<p>The things resilient people often do to develop these characteristics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have self-care habits.</li><li>• Know their boundaries.</li><li>• Cultivate self-awareness.</li><li>• Practice acceptance.</li><li>• Know and use their network.</li><li>• Are on their own side.</li><li>• Get out of their head.</li></ul>
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“Well the situation didn’t change, but I did.” ~ Dan Omish

### Practices:

**Daily Intention Setting:** Altman (2016) points out that a consciously thought out intention aligns you with your deepest values. It helps you *show up* in a way that makes even your smallest actions count. A guiding intention invites a sense of order and clam into your day.

- Start with a daily intention that is small and simple. This could be your intention to treat others with respect and kindness, to be more compassionate, honest, or more peaceful and less reactive when encountering triggering events or persons during the day. It could be the intention to notice when you are distracted or feeling negative.
- State your intention in the positive, not the negative. A daily intention can focus on almost anything, from a significant relationship to your role at the workplace. An example is, “My intention is to meet my deadlines and perform to my best ability with a positive attitude.”
- Write down your daily intention; looking at your intention throughout the day.

## Resilient Organization Preparation – Expecting Change

Work through the following reflection questions. You will probably need to set some specific reflection time aside during the next week to do this more completely.

1. What changes do you worry about your organization facing in the future? Economic? Workforce? Loss of resources? Be as specific as possible about the possible changes and why they would occur.

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2. Do some work around the thought that any of these changes could happen. Accept that these are possible future realities.

3. What kind of resilient practices can you put into place now, so you don't have to worry about them, but you'll be prepared if they happen?

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## Resilience Organization Preparation - Sustainable Resourcing Reflection

As you think about your own organizations, how can it grow and succeed for a long time without depleting its resources? This activity steps you through this reflection process.

1. List the many resources you use every day in your organization.

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2. Is it possible the availability of these resources could be disrupted in any way? i.e. transportation strikes, we run out, high prices, burnout?

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3. For each resource, think about how you could either use the resource in a more sustainable way, or provide yourself with diversity and redundancy so you aren't in dire straits if something does happen to the resource.

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4. Final Thoughts on preparing yourself for resilient productivity by paying attention to the resources you rely on?

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## Resilient Organization Preparation – Investing in Diversity

An organization can actively invest in diversity in a variety of ways.

- An organization can cross train employees.
- An organization can have back up resource lines.
- An organization can diversify its clients or audience.
- An organization can have backup technology.
- An organization may develop partnerships to assure they have space or resources they can share.
- An organization may take the time to assure there is no silo mentality. Sometimes departments can get a silo mentality which encourages them to think they can go it alone. This doesn't support the department, nor the organization.
- There is also cognitive diversity. This is an interesting concept discussed by Zolli in his book, Resilience, Why Things Bounce Back. Cognitive diversity is when your workforce shares the same values, but they think differently, with different perspectives. They have different strengths and skills. They come from different backgrounds and colleges.
- In organizations with diversity, innovation is often encouraged. To encourage and reward innovation, builds confidence in the workforce, while at the same time providing the leadership with options.

Using the above list as guidance. In what ways might your organization invest in diversity?

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Notes:

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## Resources

- The Learning Center at Red Willow: <https://www.redwillowlearning.org/>
- Resiliency in Action: <https://www.resiliency.com/>
- Carroll, M. (2007). The Mindful Leader. Awakening Your Natural Management Skills through Mindfulness Meditation. Trumpeter: Boston, MA.
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