

**2011 SEC Professional Development Day**

# Understanding and Developing Personal Resilience in an Age of Uncertainty

Strategies for Enhancing Our Capacities for  
Surviving (and Thriving on) Change



With Jeff Russell  
Co-Director

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# Antwone Fisher

- His father was killed by a gunshot blast shortly before he was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1959.
- His 17-year-old mother gave him up for foster care.
- Lived for 14 years in foster family — where he was physically and psychological abused and where he was sexually abused by a neighbor. Withdraws into himself.
- At 16, his Foster parents dump him . . . He is sent by the State to reform school — although he had no criminal record.
- Becomes homeless at 18 when the State gives up its “hold” on him
- Joins the Navy — after episodes of explosive anger, Fisher begins an 11 year healing journey.
- Leaves the Navy. Works as a security guard at Sony Pictures while enrolling in a screenwriting class. Is “discovered” by a producer on the Sony set.
- 2001 publishes his memoirs Finding Fish — becomes a NYT bestseller.
- Writes screenplay of this life. This becomes the bestselling movie Antwone Fisher, directed by Denzel Washington.



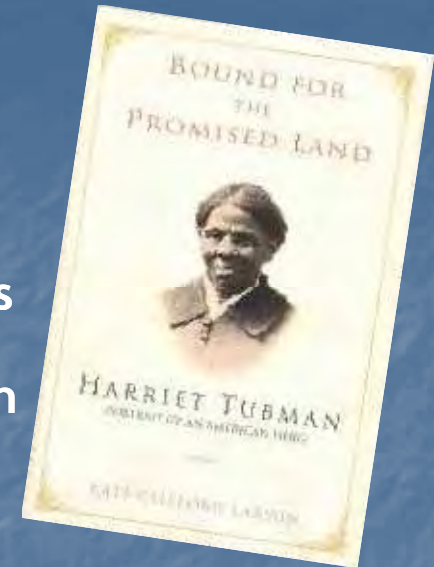


# Nelson Mandela

- 1918, born in a rural black homeland of South Africa.
- Father's death lands him in the care of a powerful relative.
- Runs away from his guardian to avoid an arranged marriage, he apprentices to a law firm — where he is exposed to the injustices of apartheid. Studies law and becomes an attorney.
- He shuns a comfortable life to take up the cause of democratic nonviolent revolution against apartheid.
- Government brutally crushes democratic efforts, bans ANC, and arrests Mandela.
- Incarcerated for 27 years in Robben Island Prison.
- Declares: “**Any man or institution who tries to rob me of my dignity will lose.**”
- Organizes an “Island University” where work details and recreational breaks become classrooms in philosophy, history, economics, politics, literature, etc.
- 1989 begins secret negotiations with government for his release and the peaceful transition to democracy.
- 1990 first democratically elected President of South Africa.

# Harriet Tubman

- Harriet Ross was born into slavery in 1819 or 1820, in Dorchester County, Maryland, USA.
- Raised under brutal conditions, subjected to whippings as a small child. At the age of 12 she was seriously injured by a blow to the head, inflicted by a white overseer when she refused to assist in tying up a man who had attempted escape.
- Marries John Tubman at 25. Five years later leaves her husband and escapes slavery when she feared she would be sold South.
- Given a piece of paper by a white neighbor with two names, and told how to find the first house on her path to freedom. Travels the Underground Rail Road to Philadelphia where she meets William Still.
- Begins relocating members of her family to St. Catherines, Ontario.
- Personally guides more than 300 person to freedom as a Conductor on the Underground Rail Road.
- After the Civil War, moves to Auburn, New York . . . Where she began her work for the rights of women.
- During the Civil War, Tubman served as a soldier, spy, and a nurse.



# Viktor Frankl — 1905-1997

- Born in Vienna, Austria. At age 4 wanted to become a doctor.
- 1930 earns his doctorate in medicine. Continues training in neurology and runs psychiatric unit.
- 1938 Nazis invade Austria. He applies for a VISA to the U.S. — but decides to stay to care for his elderly parents.
- 1942 appointed director of neurological unit at the only Jewish hospital in Vienna. He begins writing The Doctor and the Soul.
- 1942: He marries, but soon his entire extended family is arrested and deported to the camps. His wife, parents, and brother all perish in the camps. Of his family, only his sister survives.
- His manuscript is destroyed upon arriving at the Theresienstadt concentration camp. Helps organize a camp lecture series and concert performances.
- Succumbs to Typhoid fever. Stays alive by focusing on reconstructing his manuscript on stolen pieces of paper.
- Transported to the Turkheim camp, liberated by the Americans in 1945.
- Publishes his reconstructed book and then writes Man's Search for Meaning in only nine days — selling over 5 million copies in U.S. alone.



# Helen Keller – 1880 - 1968

- At 19 months, she lost her vision and hearing due to a high fever.
- Helen hung on to her mother's skirt to get around and used her hands to feel what others were doing and recognized people by touching their faces and clothes.
- She made up more than 60 “signs” that she used to communicate to her family: when she wanted bread she would make cutting motion with her hands; when she wanted ice cream she would hug herself and shiver.
- As she grew older and found it more difficult to communicate with others she became more and more frustrated and angry. She would throw temper tantrums.
- Anne Sullivan arrived at Keller's house in March 1887, and immediately began to teach Helen to communicate by spelling words into her hand, beginning with d-o-l-l.
- Anne attended college with Helen . . . Spelling out teachers' words in Helen's hand. While at college, wrote “The Story of My Life.” With earnings from her book she bought a house.
- She was the first deaf/blind graduate of Radcliffe College.
- Helen travelled the world lecturing and raising money for a variety of causes



# Resilience: re-sil-ience, *n*

. . . the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

. . . the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape — to bounce back — after being subjected to adversity or stress.



# What Resilience Looks Like . . .

Resilient people . . .

- View problems and challenges as opportunities.
- Learn from their mistakes/failures.
- Succeed despite their hardships.
- Seek out new and challenging experiences.



# What Resilience Looks Like . . .

- Don't let anxiety and doubts overwhelm them.
- Have a sense of humor and realistic optimism under stress.
- Don't feel shame or depression in the face of failure.
- Transform helplessness into power.
- Move from being a victim to being a survivor.



# Why We Need Resilience @ Work

- Rapid changes in our environment.
- Pressures to do more with less.
- The need to play multiple roles, wear multiple hats, and satisfy multiple customers in our jobs.
- Work/life balance OUT of balance.
- Greater workplace diversity.
- Changing job descriptions.

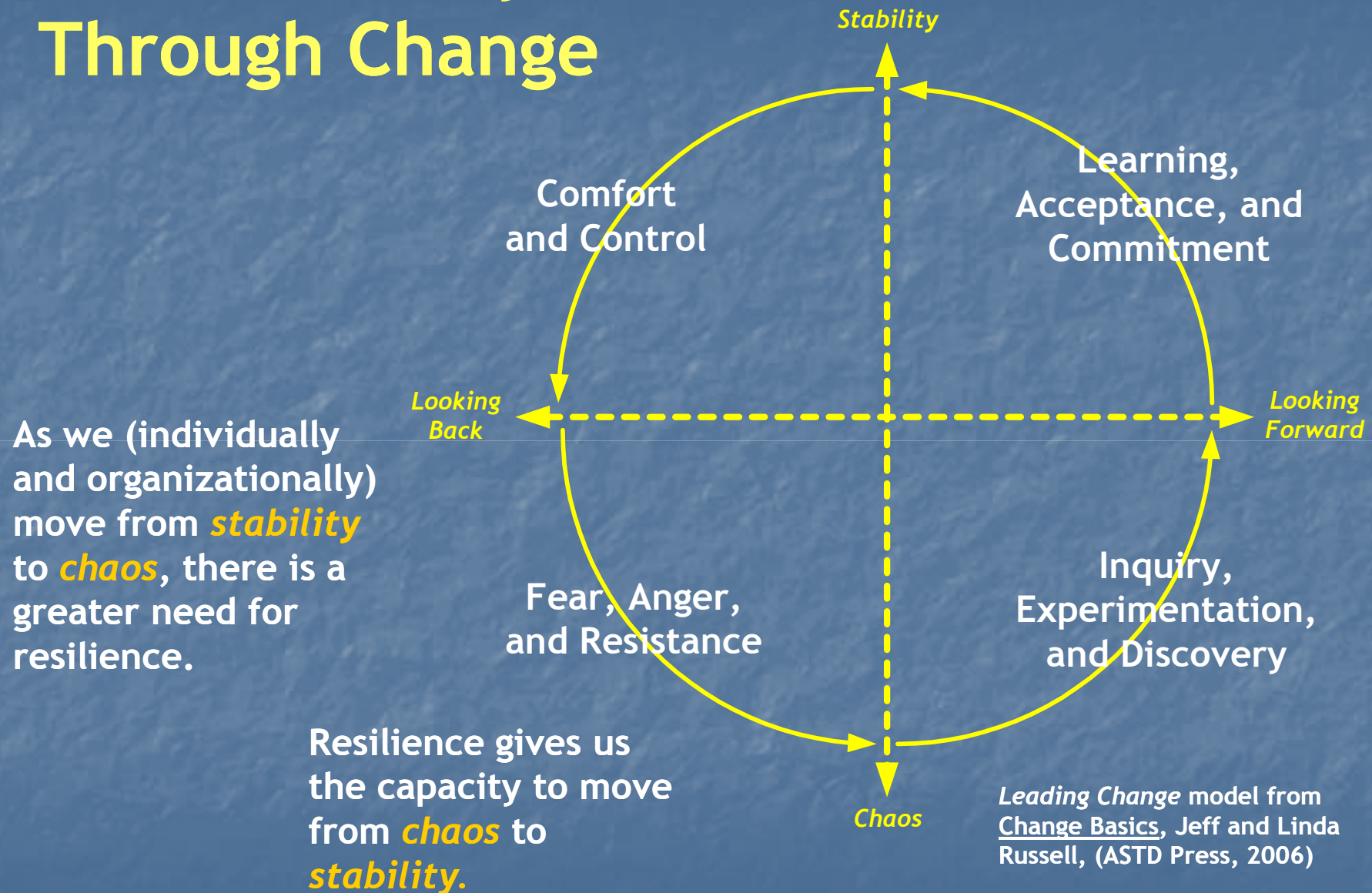


# Why We Need Resilience @ Work

- Increasing pressure to achieve higher levels of performance.
- Outsourcing, downsizing, and the fear of job loss.
- Project overload.
- Loss of control over our work.
- Uncertainty about the future.



# The Journey Through Change

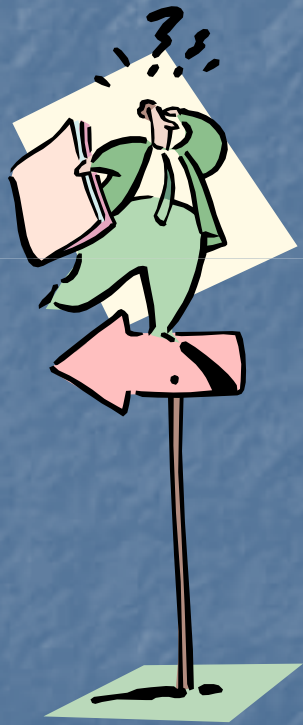


# Resilience is a Mindset . . .

- Resilience is less about who we are than about how we **think**.
- Our mindsets or “**mental models**” directly influence and shape how we view the world and how we view ourselves in the world.
- This view of self, in turn, influences how we **respond** (our behaviors) to adversity and stress – with a healthy/productive response or an unhealthy/unproductive response
- The strength of our resilience mindset and the force of our behaviors enable us to, in turn, influence or **shape our environment**.



# Human Nature . . .



1. People want to maintain control over their lives.
2. People develop self-confidence and psychological health by building stable and effective relationships with others.
3. Our sense of control, comfort, and well-being results from the degree of certainty we have about our life.
4. Change disrupts our ability to predict what's in store for us.
5. The more a change disrupts our ability to envision our future, the greater our confusion, fear, anxiety, and self-doubt.
6. Resilience enables us to survive, even thrive, on the challenges posed by a changing environment

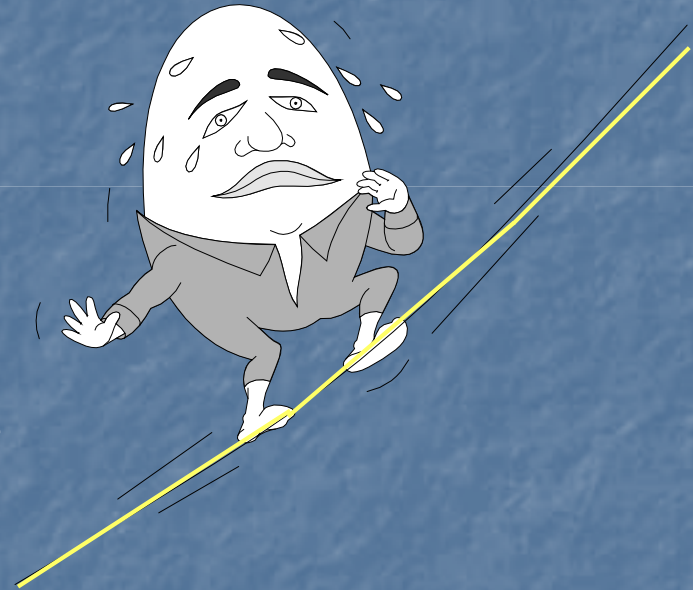
# What Enabled You to be Resilient?

- Reflect upon an incident that you found especially challenging for you.
- What enabled you to make it through this period?
- What characteristics within and outside of yourself enabled you to survive (perhaps even *thrive* during) this challenge?



# Resilience Dimensions

- Self-Assurance
- Personal Vision
- Flexibility
- Organized
- Problem Solver
- Interpersonal Competence
- Socially Connected
- Proactive



# First Dimension: Self-Assurance

- Viewing the world as complex and challenging . . . But filled with opportunity.
- Holding a positive self-perception.
- Confident in one's ability to meet any challenge with hope and realistic optimism.

California Headlands, South of San Francisco

You gain strength, courage and confidence  
by every experience in which you really stop to  
look fear in the face. You *must* do the thing  
you think you cannot do.

— Eleanor Roosevelt  
American stateswoman  
b. 1884, d. 1962

# Second Dimension: Personal Vision/Purpose

- Knowing what you believe in.
- Having a clear vision of what you want to accomplish/achieve.
- Approaching adversity and stress with a sense of hope.
- Belief and purpose carries you forward into life.


Portrush Harbor, Northern Ireland

Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice: It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.

— William Jennings Bryan  
U.S. statesman and politician  
b. 1860, d. 1925


# Third Dimension: Flexible/Adaptable

- Aware of and sensitive to changes in the environment.
- Able to shift gears in response to what is happening.
- Remaining true to your purpose/vision while making room for other's ideas and opportunities . . .



Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not  
be bent out of shape.

— Dr. Michael McGriffy



It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change.

— Charles Darwin

British naturalist

c. 1809-1882

# Fourth Dimension: Organized

- Creating structures and methods to bring order and stability on your own terms.
- Setting realistic goals for yourself.
- Managing the moments with calm and clarity of purpose . . .

# Fifth Dimension: Problem Solver

- Thinking critically and reflectively.
- Viewing impossible problems as challenges and opportunities for learning and growth.
- Collaborating with others.
- Anticipating setbacks and missteps.
- Solving problems for the long-term.
- Viewing failures as opportunities for inspiration

Wild Surf at Pfeiffer Beach

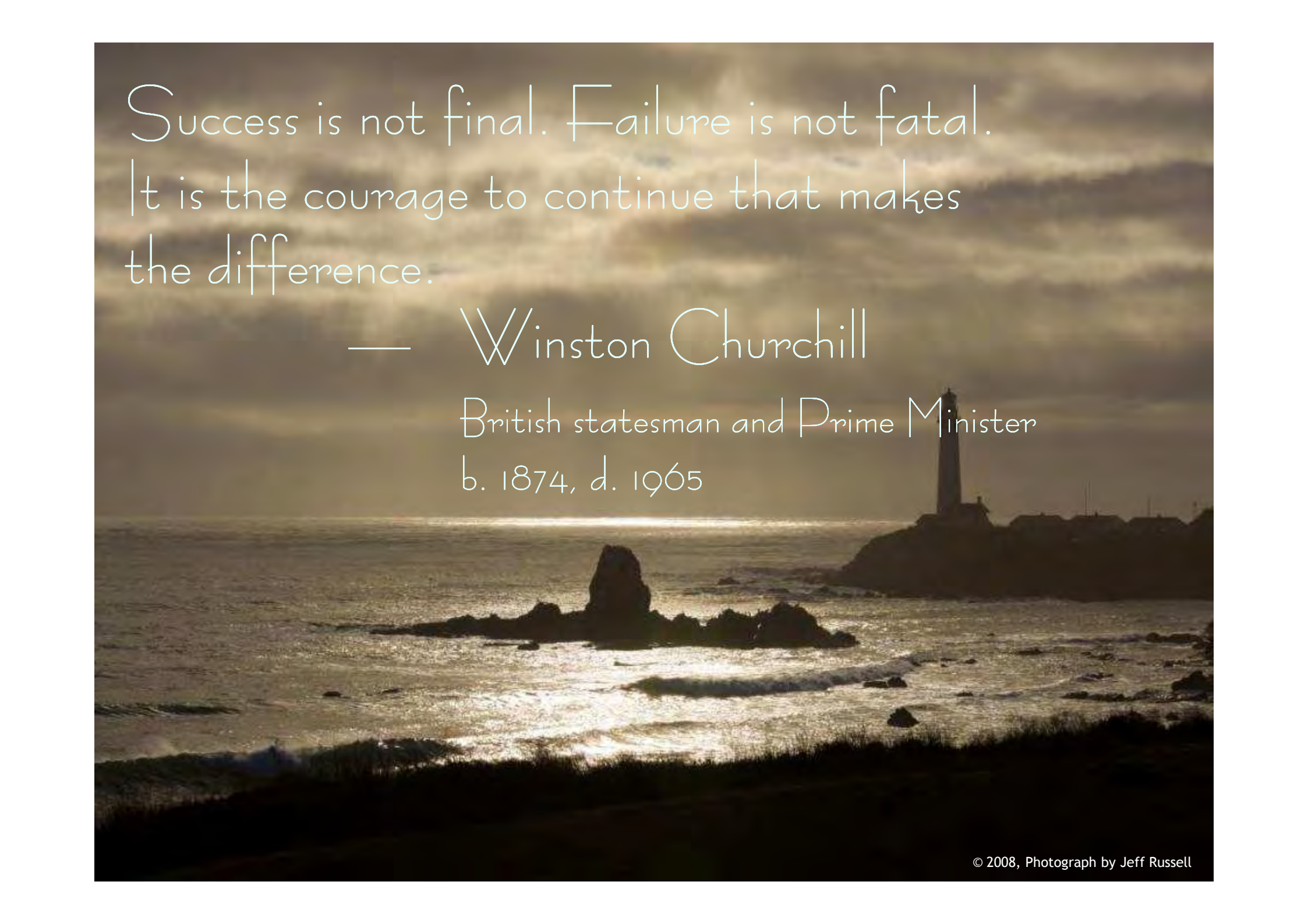
The greatest glory of living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time you fall.

— Nelson Mandela

South African anti-apartheid activist

First President of post-apartheid South Africa

b. 1918



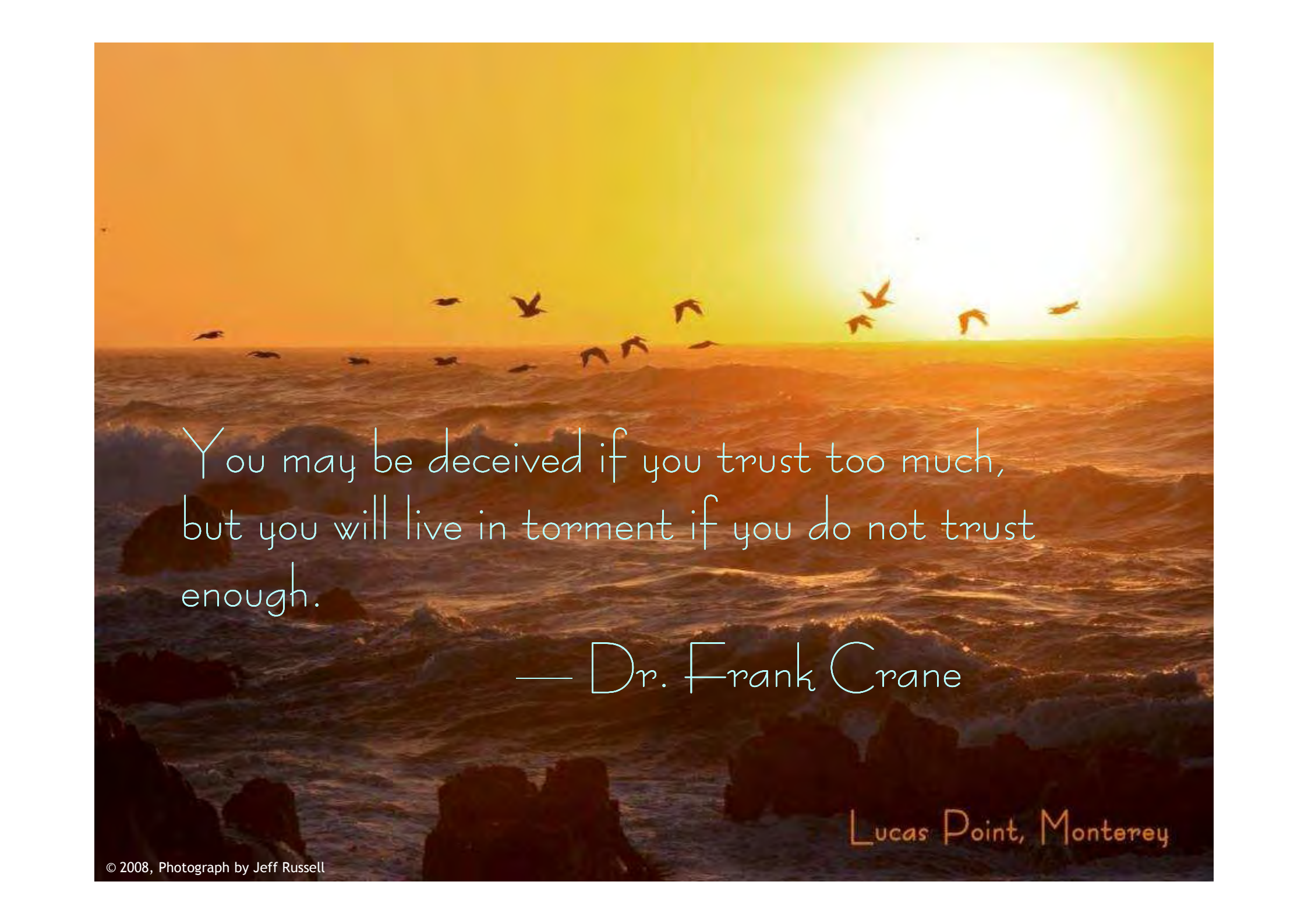
Success is not final. Failure is not fatal.  
It is the courage to continue that makes  
the difference.

— Winston Churchill

British statesman and Prime Minister  
b. 1874, d. 1965

# Sixth Dimension: Interpersonal Competence

- Demonstrating empathy and understanding for others.
- Displaying emotional intelligence — self-awareness, self-control, and social awareness.
- Laughing at yourself.
- Seeking out others' perspectives.

A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sky is a vibrant orange and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. Numerous birds are seen in flight across the sky. The ocean is dark with white-capped waves breaking. In the foreground, dark, jagged rocks are visible.

You may be deceived if you trust too much,  
but you will live in torment if you do not trust  
enough.

— Dr. Frank Crane

Lucas Point, Monterey

# Seventh Dimension: Socially Connected

- Reaching out to others.
- Building bridges, sharing solutions, exploring opportunities together.
- Discovering common ground.
- Contributing to other's welfare — giving of yourself.
- Touching others' hearts . . .



Friendship is a sheltering tree.

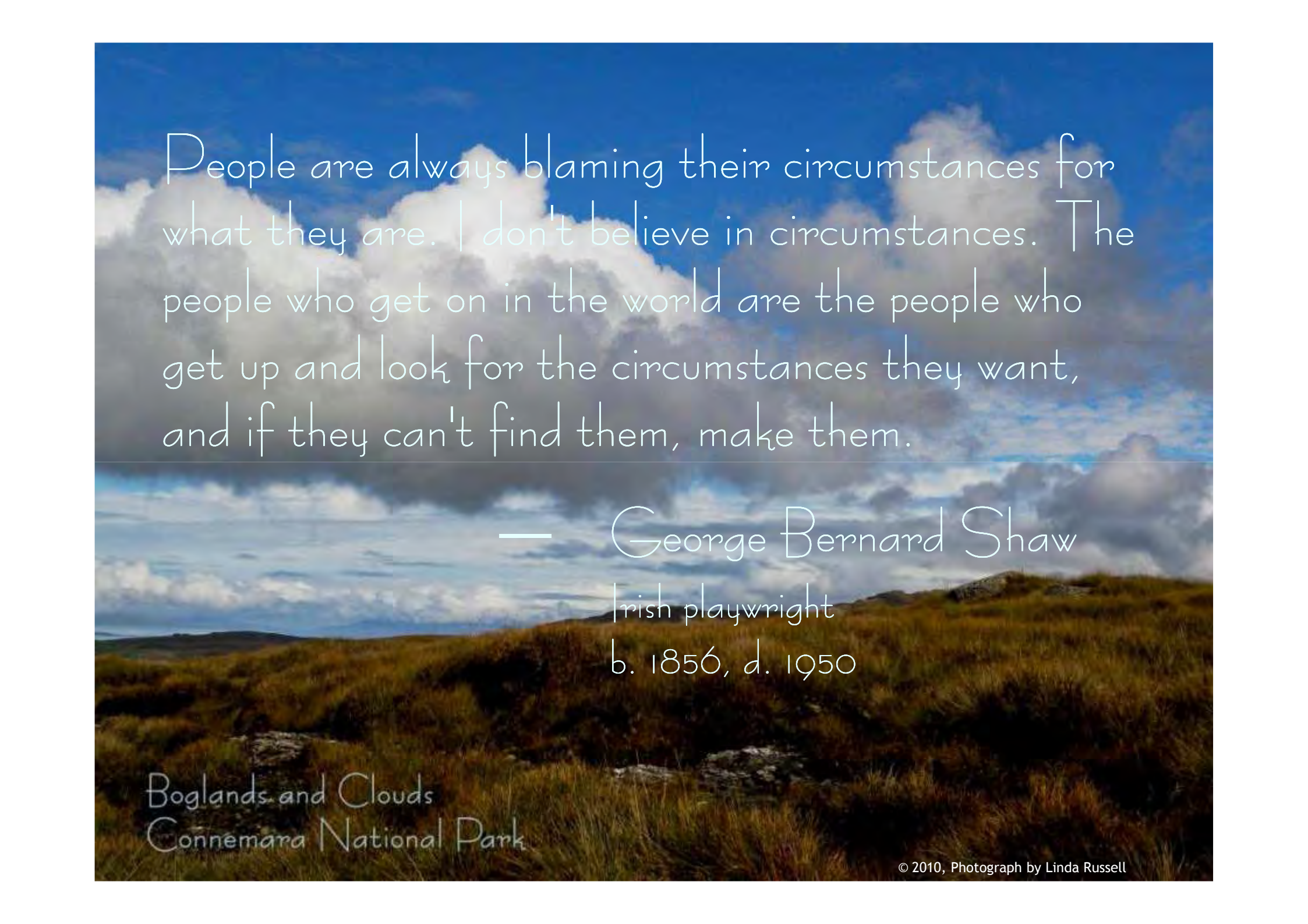
— Samuel Taylor Coleridge

British poet and philosopher (b. 1772, d. 1834)

Edge of the Burren  
County Clare

# Eighth Dimension: Proactive

- Engaging change directly.
- Focusing on – and expanding – your sphere of influence.
- Focusing on actions that you can take vs. waiting for others to act.
- Experiencing small victories . . .
- Leading others through change by setting the example . . .



People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in the world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.

— George Bernard Shaw

Irish playwright

b. 1856, d. 1950

Boglands and Clouds  
Connemara National Park

## Samish Bay Sunrise, Washington

We who lived in the concentration camps can remember those who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread.

They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a person but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

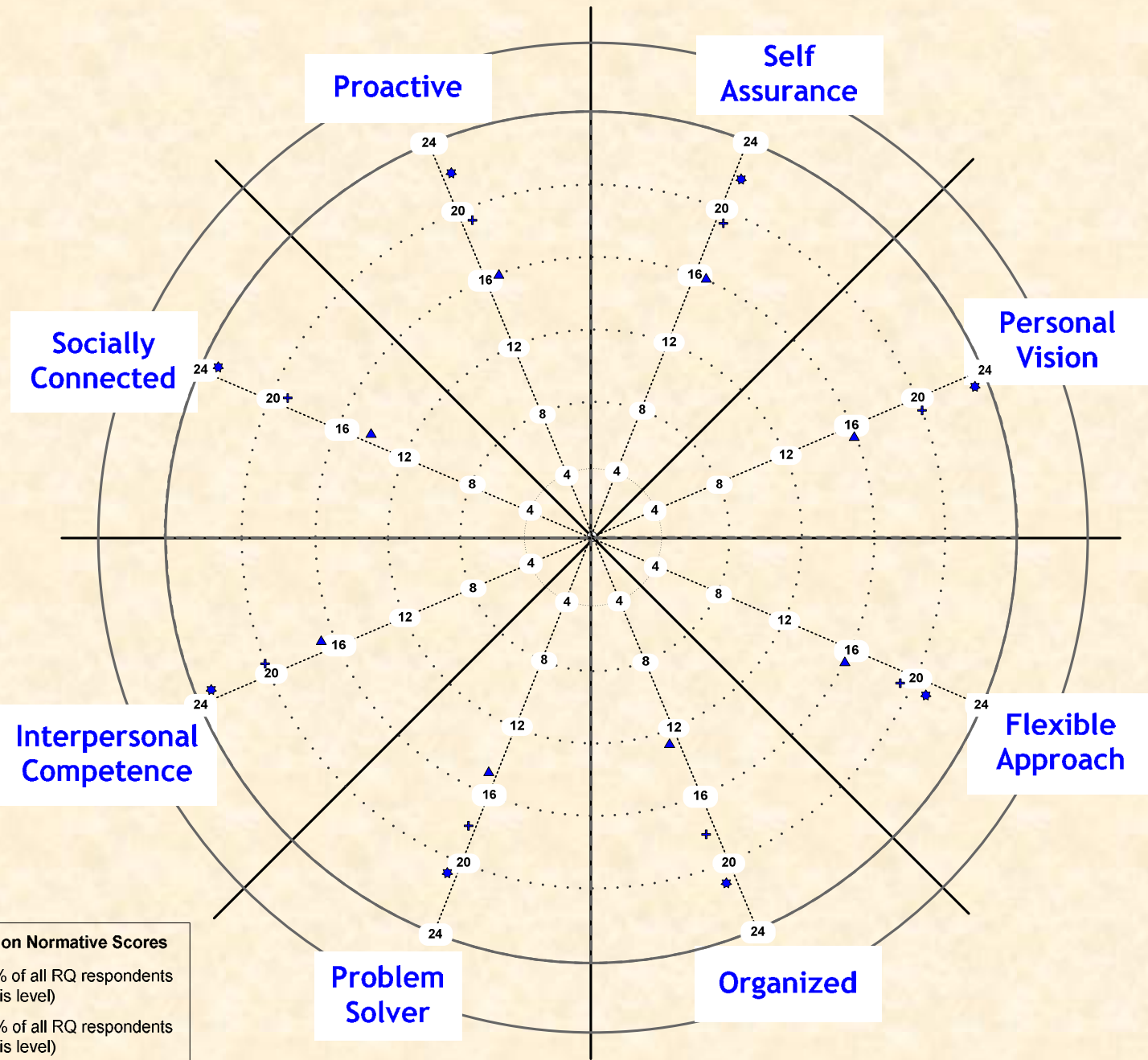
— Victor Frankl

Austrian psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor

b. 1905, d. 1997

Author of "Man's Search for Meaning"

# Your RQ



**Legend for RQ Dimension Normative Scores**

- ★ = 90<sup>th</sup> Percentile (10% of all RQ respondents scored at or above this level)
- + = 50<sup>th</sup> Percentile (50% of all RQ respondents scored at or above this level)
- ▲ = 10<sup>th</sup> Percentile (10% of all RQ respondents scored at or below this level)

# Strengthening Your Resilience

- Know what's important to you – define your personal vision and your core values.
- Reframe your mental models – challenge your assumptions about yourself and others.
- Identify what you can change/influence and what you can't and focus on what you can influence.



# Strengthening Your Resilience

- Assume a “can do,” proactive attitude.
- Take care of yourself – mentally and physically.
- Reach out to others – find new connections and strengthen existing ones.
- Create/build a discipline that gives you the structure/stability/order you need.



# Helping Others Strengthen Others' Resilience . . .

- Remind people what ISN'T changing.
- Increase opportunities for social connections.
- Increase communication about the coming changes/challenges.
- Shift grouching and whining toward problem solving.
- Listen to their anxieties and fears.
- Acknowledge their losses.
- Engage staff in developing a shared vision of a realistically optimistic future.



# Helping Others Strengthen Others' Resilience . . .

- Encourage a healthy work/life balance.
- Hold “brown bag” seminars on health, wellness, stress management, taking care of yourself, etc.
- Promote EAP!
- Explain the “whys” of the change/challenges.
- Celebrate the little victories along the way.
- Keep the team together.
- Break problems/challenges into bite-size pieces.





Change is inevitable,  
growth is optional . . .

(Resilient people choose *growth*)

Kylemore Abbey  
Connemara, County Galway

Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, "Where have I gone wrong?" Then a voice says to me . . .

"This is going to take more than one night!"

— Charles M. Schulz  
Charlie Brown in "Peanuts"  
American Cartoonist  
b. 1922, d. 2000

A misty landscape with a lake, trees, and rocks. The scene is captured in a soft, hazy light, likely during dawn or dusk. The foreground is dominated by green grass and scattered rocks. In the middle ground, a calm body of water reflects the surrounding environment. The background is filled with a dense line of trees, their forms softened by the mist. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Somebody has to do something . . . .  
and it's just incredibly pathetic that it  
has to be us.

— the late Jerry Garcia  
(of the Grateful Dead)  
b. 1942, d. 1995

Thank you for the opportunity of  
guiding you in an exploration of  
resilience!



Lucia Lodge Wildflowers

© 2008, Photograph by Jeff Russell