

RQ Dimension – Organized

About this Dimension

What is *Organized* as a component of resilience?

In the face of chaos and uncertainty, resilient people find ways to create a level of order and structure that provides them with the focus and stability they need. This can involve setting short-term goals, thinking through their actions before taking action, putting together “to-do” lists, and so forth.

Organized does not, for many resilient people, mean rigid or highly structured structures for managing chaos and instability. Resilient people find a way to create whatever structure they need to provide them with the focus and a level of certainty and stability that facilitates their decision making and daily behaviors. Most importantly, while resilient people need not demonstrate any outward signs of organization, they none-the-less develop the personal systems and structures that provide them with the focus and certainty they need to make it through the day, week, month, and so forth.

Being organized comes in many “flavors.” While some resilient people may find structure and organization in lists and detailed plans, others may be comfortable with simply thinking through their next steps and actions. The most critical outcome from whatever structure resilient people create is a personal sense of continuity and the capacity to focus on moving forward in life in such a way that the journey itself is affirming and positive vs. destabilizing and anxiety-producing.

Why is this Dimension Important to Resilience?

Being organized enables a person to establish a sense of personal continuity and focus in an ever-changing and destabilizing world. Without being overly analytical or rigid, resilient people create just enough structure to enable them to find clarity and focus - especially in stressful and challenging situations.

Without organization, a person may find his or her “footing” and may be more easily destabilized and set back by the chaos and instability swirling around him or her. This dimension of resilience enables someone to create the amount of continuity and stability that he or she needs to effectively rise to meet everyday challenges.

Organized Quotes

The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty; not knowing what comes next.

- Ursula K. LeGuin, American writer (b. 1929)

There is nothing permanent except change.

- Heraclitus, Roman philosopher (b. 535 BCE, d. 475 BCE)

When nothing is sure, everything is possible.

- Margaret Drabble, English novelist (b. 1939)

Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.

- Immanuel Kant, German philosopher (b. 1724, d. 1804)

Plan your progress carefully; hour-by-hour, day-by-day, month-by-month. Organized activity and maintained enthusiasm are the wellsprings of your power.

- Paul J. Meyer, American businessman, author

PLANNING VS REACTING: How organized are you? Could your life be called a ballet or is it a hockey game (or a pin-ball machine)? However, even in a hockey game, good hockey players learn to skate to where the puck WILL BE.

- Anonymous

The trouble with organizing a thing is that pretty soon folks get to paying more attention to the organization than to what they're organized for.

- Laura Ingalls Wilder, American pioneer author (b. 1867, d. 1957)

Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today.

- Benjamin Franklin, American statesman, politician, diplomat (b. 1706, d. 1790)

Strategies for Developing the Organized Dimension

Being organized is a very individualized quality. One person's perfect solution to being organized (e.g. utilizing Outlook's "To Do" list function) might be anathema to the next person. As a result, each person needs to first discover the level of organization that he or she needs to find the desired level of stability in a sea of change/volatility. With a greater self-awareness of their need for organization and structure, individuals can then explore personal strategies for creating this level of organization in their life.

Some ideas to encourage people to strengthen their organized dimension include:

On a personal, one-on-one basis . . .

- Encourage the person to self-assess his or her need for order, structure, and organization. Have the person consider such questions as:
 - *To what extent do things feel chaotic, "out of control," or overwhelming for you now?*
 - *How much structure and organization do you need to feel comfortable with the way things are now?*
 - *To what extent do you need certainty and predictability in your life and schedule?*
 - *What personal structures/systems are you using now to bring organization and order to your life? How effective are these structures/systems?*
- Ask the person to identify three changes that he or she could make in his or her life right now that would help him or her bring a more desirable level of order, structure, and organization to his or her life.

- Ask the person to identify one thing that he or she could STOP doing and one thing that he or she could START doing to bring a more desirable level of organization or structure to his or her life.
- Share Russell Consulting, Inc.'s *Twenty Secrets for Managing Your Time (and Life!)* handout. Ask the person to review this document and identify three actions from this handout that he or she could take to bring a desired level of organization and structure to his or her life.
- Invite the person to identify the single greatest obstacle that he or she sees to him or her bringing more organization and structure to his or her life and then to identify what he or she will do to reduce or eliminate this obstacle to better organization.
- If an individual is facing a significant challenge or crisis, guide him or her in reflecting upon his or her personal assets/strengths to guide him or her through the challenge but also to identify one or two changes that he or she could make in his or her life to bring greater structure and organization to his or her response to this challenging situation.

Either on a one-on-one basis or when facilitating a group discussion . . .

- Use any of the activities from the one-on-one list above, inviting individuals to first work by themselves and then to partner with another person in the workshop and to share and gather feedback on their ideas for change.
- Lead workshop participants in an activity that requires them to identify something that they could change in their daily routine to create a desired level of organization and structure to their environment/life. Have individuals partner up with another person in the workshop and to use their partners for feedback and other ideas.
- Guide workshop participants in developing a *Personal Action Plan* for a given area of personal behavior or performance related to creating an ideal level of organization or structure. This Action Plan should identify a personal goal for the individual to achieve, identify why this goal is important to achieve, and then identify specific steps that the individual will take to move toward this goal. Following the workshop, the facilitator may want to check in with participants (via e-mail, phone call, or face-to-face interaction) to inquire as to the progress the person is making toward enacting and realizing his or her plan.