

Developing Employee Resilience

Strategies for Strengthening Employee Capacities for Surviving Organizational Change



Presented by Jeffrey L. Russell
Co-Director

Antwone Fisher

- His father was killed by a gunshot blast shortly before he was born in 1959.
- His 17-year-old mother gave him up for foster care.
- 14 years in foster family – where he was physically and psychological abused and where he was sexually abused by a neighbor. Withdraws into himself.
- Foster parents dump him . . . Sent to reform school – although he had no criminal record.
- Becomes homeless.
- Joins the Navy at 18 – after episodes of explosive anger, 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 memoirs Finding Fish – NYT bestseller.
- Writes screenplay of this life. This becomes the bestselling movie Antwone Fisher, directed by Denzel Washington.





Nelson Mandela

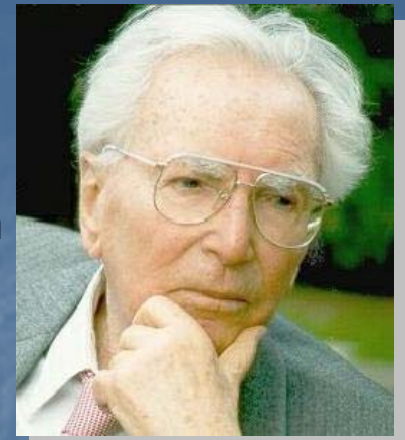
- 1918, born in a rural black homeland of South Africa.
- Father's death lands him in the care of a powerful relative.
- Runs away from his guardian to avoid an arranged marriage, he apprentices to a law firm — where he is exposed to the injustices of apartheid. Studies law and becomes an attorney.
- 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 who 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.
- 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 Wm. 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.
- During the Civil War, Tubman served as a soldier, spy, and a nurse.
- After the Civil War, moves to Auburn, New York . . . Where she began her work for the rights of women.



Viktor Frankl — 1905-1997



- Born in Vienna. At age 4 wanted to become a doctor.
- Began corresponding with Sigmund Freud while in high school.
- 1928 organizes free counseling centers for youth in Vienna.
- 1930 earns his doctorate in medicine. Continues training in neurology and runs psychiatric unit for suicidal women.
- 1937 opens his own practice.
- 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 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.
- His manuscript is destroyed upon arriving in Auschwitz.
- Helps organize lecture series, concert performances.
- Succumbs to Typhoid fever. Stays alive by focusing on reconstructing his manuscripts on stolen pieces of paper.
- 1945 Auschwitz liberated.
- 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.

What Resilience Looks Like . . .

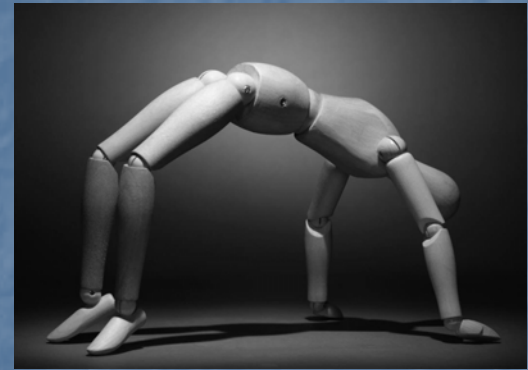
Resilient people . . .

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

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.

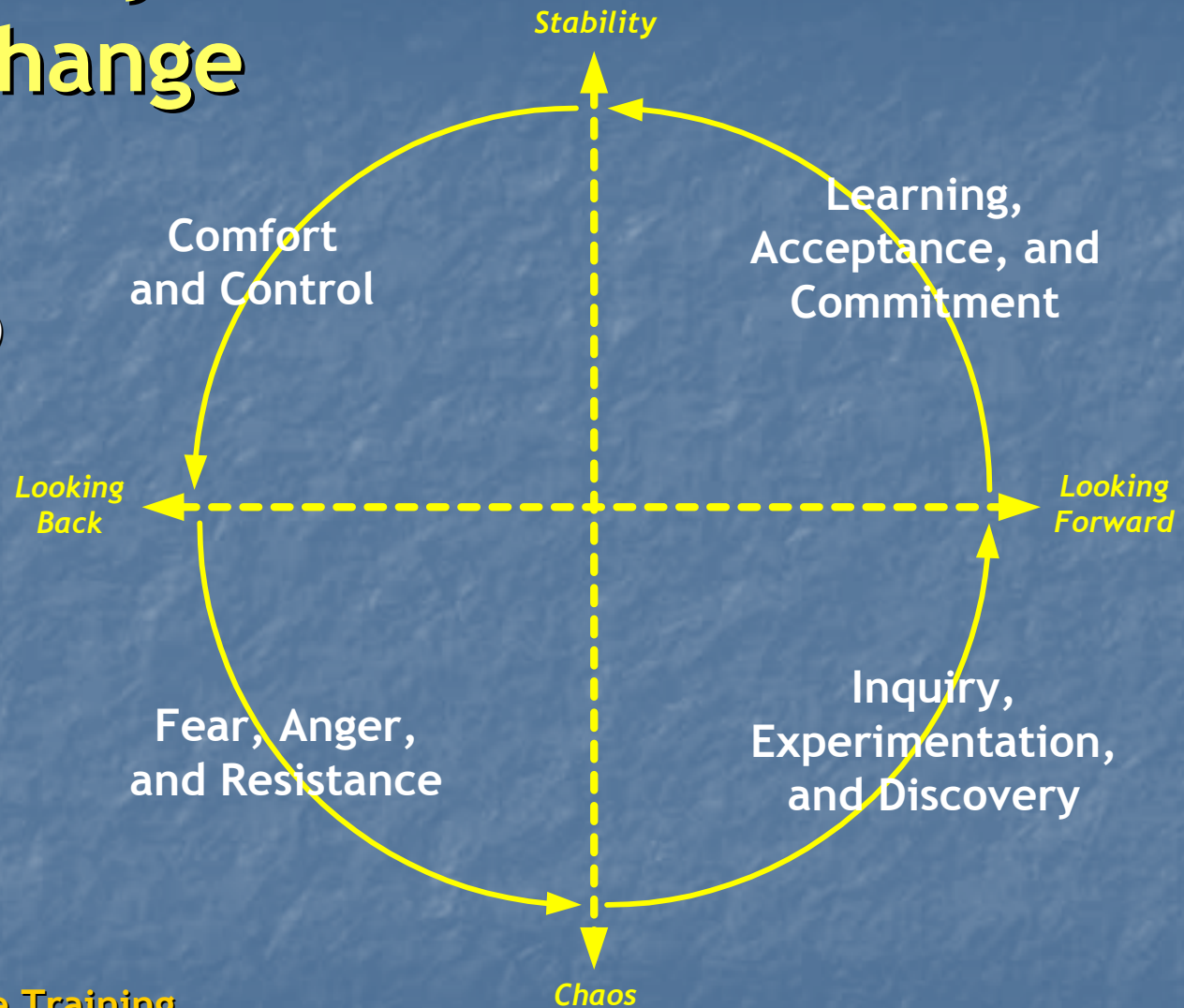


Why We Need Resilience @ Work

- Rapid changes in our industries.
- 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.
- Increasing pressure to achieve higher levels of performance.
- Outsourcing, downsizing, and the fear of job loss.
- Project overload.
- Loss of control over our work.
- Mergers and acquisitions – blending (and the clash) of organizational cultures.
- Uncertainty about the future . . .

The Journey Through Change

As we (individually and organizationally) move from *stability* to *chaos*, there is a greater need for resilience



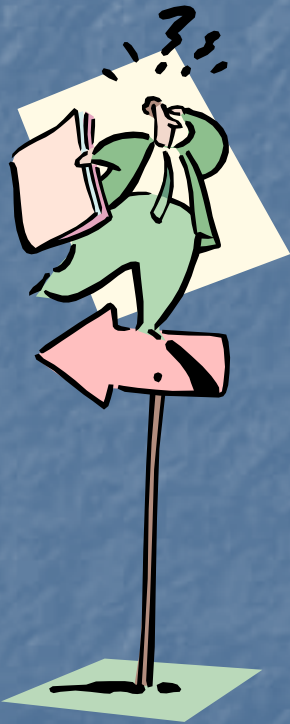
From: [Leading Change Training](#),
Jeff & Linda Russell, ASTD Press, 2003

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 . . .

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



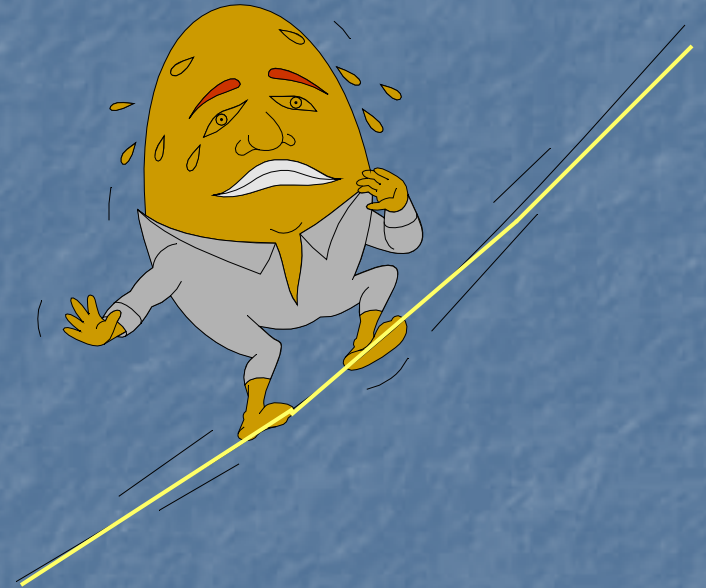
Characteristics of Resilient People

- What enables someone to be resilient?
- What characteristics might people develop in themselves to strengthen their resilience?



Develop Your *Resilience*

- **Feel Self-Assured**
- **Create a Personal Vision**
- **Be Flexible**
- **Get Organized**
- **Be Able to Solve Problems**
- **Be Socially Competent**
- **Get Connected**
- **Be 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.

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

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.

**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

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

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 and opportunities for inspiration

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

— Nelson Mandela

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

– Winston Churchill

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.

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 . . .

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

The Crisis of Change . . .



Danger!

Hidden Opportunity

Developing Resilience in Yourself and Others . . .

- What actions or new ways of thinking can you take/embrace to strengthen your resilience?
- In your HRD/OD/HR role, how could you guide others in developing or strengthening their resilience in the face of change/adversity?

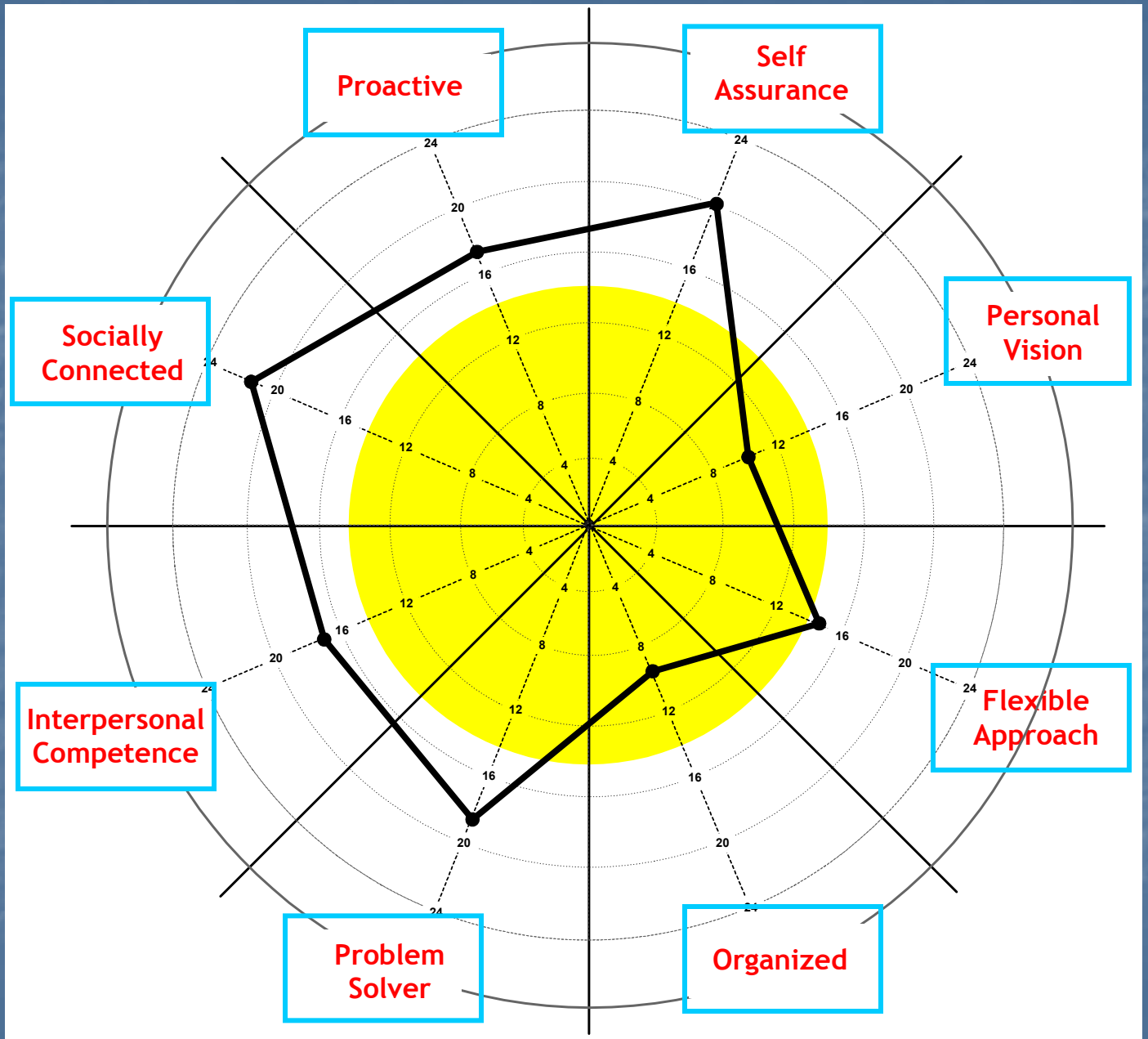
Strengthening Your Resilience

- 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
- 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 Their Resilience . . .

- Remind people what ISN'T changing
- Increase opportunities for social connections
- Increase communication about the coming changes/challenges
- Shift grouching/whining toward problem solving
- Listen to their anxieties/fears
- Acknowledge their losses
- Engage staff in developing a shared vision of a realistically optimistic future
- Encourage a healthy work/life balance
- Hold “brown bag” seminars on health, wellness, stress management, taking care of yourself, etc.
- Promote EAP services
- 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

QR THEORY



Change is inevitable,
growth is optional . . .

(Resilient people are able to choose *growth*)

Recommended Reading

- The Resilience Factor, by Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté (New York: Broadway Books, 2002)
- The Power of Resilience, by Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein (New York: McGraw-Hill Contemporary Books, 2004)

Thank you for the opportunity to guide you in this exploration of resilience!

Explore the issue of resilience in the context of the challenges of leading others through change. Read our book [Leading Change Training](#) – available from the RCI Online Store!



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