

Resiliency

At some level, many of us are experiencing mentally challenging situations as an aftermath of COVID-19, layoffs, and workplace and personal situations in its aftermath. On a previous video post on LinkedIn during the Pandemic, I suggested that “something psychological” had been exposed within most of us that would not be conveniently re-bottled. That something appears to be associated with the present conversation regarding “mental health.” More like a “*psychological realization.*” Our varying *abilities and willingness* to constructively address these individual situations is a measure of our resiliency.

Resiliency is a very *powerful experiential concept* because it implies something about our individual *durability* with respect to how we handle our day-to-day living. In essence, it’s a measure of how well we manage the toll life takes on our mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Therefore, we begin this conversation by defining resiliency within the context of our work and life experiences. *Resiliency is the ability to constructively adapt to difficulties, adversities, and even life-changing experiences; as well as prevent patterns of stressful situations.* Therefore, resiliency is not only about *adaptation* to stressful events and how we respond to them but it is also about learning the cognitive and behavioral skills necessary to *prevent* patterns of reactive responses we have previously experienced. The six fundamental resiliency skills associated with *adapting* to and *preventing* physical and mental stressful situations are:

1. **Perseverance** in succeeding despite adversity.
2. **Confidence** in reconciling challenges we experience.
3. **Emotional Calmness** in response to unforeseen crisis.
4. **Openness** to express, expand, and grow in terms of wisdom.
5. **Personal Responsibility** for creating and owning our life situations.
6. **Realistic Assessment** of the future and our ability to positively adapt.

A natural outcome of mastering these skills is that they complement the popularity of physical resiliency through training and meditative programs as well as exercise regimens to create a strong connection between body,

mind, and spirit. They work in concert to create a formidable shield of physical and psychological protection.

Of the six resiliency skills, **Personal Responsibility** is, by far, the most *powerful* in dictating one's life path, and yet, it is also, by far, the one which is resisted most by many individuals. Specifically, resistance to the acceptance of responsibility approaching 90% and beyond. As an alternative to avoiding responsibility in challenging situations, I would offer the following quote:

***“If you can master personal responsibility,
you can master the human experience.”***

For example, as a working principle of life, if a situation involves me, then I accept responsibility for my role, which means, I automatically accept ownership for how I respond or react to many, if not most, conflicting situations I encounter. For example, as a person of color, I often reflect on how on how I transformed my mind-set about unfairness from a debilitating obstacle on my road to success to one requiring a unique, creative response. Perhaps, those who presently experience unfairness are not as severely impacted by this phenomenon as I previously experienced it. Regardless of the severity, the point I would like to make is my “shift in perspective” set me onto a different course of approaching obstacles, in general. My key realization was to learn “interpersonal creativity” in utilizing people around me, regardless of color, race, ethnicity, generation, or gender in resolving such obstacles. My well-being and general outlook transformed to a view of equity, opportunity, and equality.

If on the other hand, I automatically abdicate responsibility, then the resolution of *my* problem requires someone else to resolve it for me. In reality, there are situations that I do not have the authority, control, or power to resolve alone. Responsibility, in these situations, usually requires my willingness to acquire a coach, mentor, or a trusted support person who can coach me how to be proactive in resolving my role in a difficulty—including new adaptive interpersonal skills to achieve success anyway. Like resolving counterproductive behaviors when I experience unfairness.

In conversations with several generations and inclusion survey results, instead of one major contributing issue an individual is dealing with, there also appears to be several occurring either simultaneously or sequentially. Thus, resiliency is an essential competency which includes several of the six skills shown above. The variety of issues may include:

- *work-life integration and accommodation* I still experience in terms of anxiety, stress, and fear of unknown causes;
- *human equity and equality* when I don't feel like I am really part of the organization or accepted as a person, despite my success;
- *job security* in terms of anxiety I experience wondering if I am next to be let go;
- *technology integration* in terms of new accelerated AI applications and keeping pace with new computer software applications; and
- *interpersonal trust among employees*, particularly in virtual/hybrid work arrangements.

The overall result is mental anxiety, confusion, stress, and in many cases fear about the future.

Despite these issues, most employees are both meeting and exceeding job expectations regardless of their work arrangements. Most also have some degree of inherent and learned resiliency abilities based upon their life experiences and adaptation. To become naturally resilient while continually achieving workplace expectations, the mastery of the six skills above can be applied to any of the issues cited above in the following manner, when any stress-producing situations occurs.

- Instead of becoming mentally defeated, create a space in time between your stress-producing experience and a corresponding self-defeating behavior.

In this timeframe, create **Emotional Calmness** using a breathing-relaxation process for stress reduction.

- In this relaxed state, have a conversation with yourself about **Openness** regarding accepting **Personal Responsibility** for your unique role in the propagation and reinforcement of the situation you are experiencing. (These counterintuitive questions can often provide an alternative approach to responsibility which leads to new insights.)

As you proactively claim greater responsibility for **your** role, the stressful situation reduces in intensity along with different constructive strategies.

- You are now prepared to make a **Realistic Assessment** of the consequences of the choices available to you. Take a pat on the back. More specifically, consider what level of performance expectation and new competencies you must acquire. You might view these new competencies as a positive opportunity necessary for greater adaptation to inevitable external change. More specifically, are you **Confident** that you can accomplish the challenge and emerge with greater resiliency using a similar approach in the future?
- You might ask yourself, “Is this a valuable learning lesson—not only for learning new competencies—but also with respect to continually expanding my **performance capability** in response to external change?” A “Yes” answer is a measure of your **Perseverance**.
- This sequential process can be applied to any of the issues above, as well as those unique to you, for reinforcing and mastering the six-part Resiliency Competency in whatever order you determine.

You might remember, it was suggested that resiliency not only involves adaptation, but also prevention of a unique self-limiting pattern relating to each of the six skills. If the source of this pattern can be permanently resolved, then any experience relating to it will simultaneously be permanently resolved. Thus, in the future, any previous experience of this nature will result in Emotional Calmness! And the process of resolution begins.

The process of achieving this level of mastery is *personal transformation*. Personal transformation is the invalidation of self-limiting programming that we **all** possess with respect to achieving our **performance capability**. I make

a distinction between **ability** and **capability**. Ability is what we are presently performing up or down to, in the process of achieving what we are capable of becoming, as an end state. Capability is most effectively achieved as an experiential process and/or a facilitative process with an individual who practices personal growth. However, selected single-user online programs are very effective, but they do require commitment on the part of the user. (An Innovations Single-User Program: **A Framework of Resiliency**) Any organization interested in freely testing this program, drop me an email.

The point is that a stress-producing issue can be permanently resolved and disabled as a self-limiting element of one's psyche. In this sense, personal transformation serves as a preventative means of achieving greater resiliency.

The ideas below include a more extended list of suggestions:

1. Ask for support when the going gets (really) tough: **Humility**.
2. When you feel like giving up, focus on the end-state of success: **Love**.
3. Acknowledge the power within yourself: **Self-Confidence**.
4. Get a mentor who will stretch your imagination: **Openness**.
5. Learn to "DO NOTHING" when you are emotionally upset: **Emotional Calmness**.
6. When you achieve emotional calmness: **Accept Reality**.
7. Learn to listen more and talk less: **Presence**.
8. Substitute the phrase "I am unwilling" rather than "I can't": **Responsibility**. Can't denotes an inability rather than an unwillingness.
9. Keeping track means, "*Birds of a feather flock together*": **Self-Reflection**.
10. Consider giving up _____ (an expectation) to have an authentic relationship with someone different: **Introspection**.

William A. Guillory, PhD
President
Innovations International, Inc.
bill.guillory@innovint.com