



## RESILIENT!

LEADERSHIP & THE INTEGRAL LIFE

August 2008

Edited by Dr Sven Hansen

Welcome to RESILIENT! - Our client newsletter which aims to bring you topical and practical ideas to improve leadership, build resilient organisations and create a meaningful life.

### Physical Fitness – Part 3 of 3

By Dr Sven Hansen

In the last two newsletters we focused on the formal elements of exercise where research benefits are well established.

In summary:

- Be active five days per week
- Include one vigorous activity
- Include a session of resistance work
- Stretch daily
- Hold good posture

So, if you have read these newsletters – or read similar information somewhere before – what have you done!!

The truth is: we all know about the benefits but only about a quarter of us have the “mojo” to put exercise into action. Despite the unequivocal standing of exercise as the single most powerful step towards better individual and community wellbeing, execution is hard.

I have rejuvenated my own exercise practice over the past 6 months. It has been a blast with a raft of very obvious benefits and I think some valuable lessons.

Five themes present:

1. Look for collateral benefits
2. Engage your family with skill
3. Team up for interaction and competition
4. Build fun and learning into your activity
5. Conduct your own little experiments

#### 1. Collateral benefit

This is the hook for those who get it! Once you have set up an exercise habit, the benefits are wide-ranging – deeper sleep, abundant focused energy, creativity,

reduced grumpiness, playfulness and calm confidence – being the obvious hits I enjoy. When the habit runs your life rocks and if you stop it withers.

Set your standard for a life that rocks!

#### 2. Engage your Family

It is no secret that kids need exercise and that we do not spend enough time together and engaged as a family. Organising activities around learning, fun and exploration are both fun and set your children up for life. An hour's drive can open up hundreds of daytrips.

This weekend we all went to Tawharanui where we surfed, swam and joined family friends for a 2.5hour walk. Social connection, aerobic exercise, speed work and sandcastles all contributed to a fabulous day and a great night's sleep for all.

In this part of the world we are blessed with abundant opportunities to get out. It is great fun introducing your children to new activities outside the school and electronic curriculum. Walking trips are superb exercise, a good time to connect and develop conversations that would not arise in front of TV.

Most parents quickly recognise and enjoy the behavioural benefits that flow from children who have expended physical energy. Be sensitive to the input of all



members but sometimes you will have lead with strength and demand compliance.

### **3. Team up**

It is easy to allow your social circle to constrict around work. Joining a group of committed exercisers is a key to success. We are blessed with a social maven who set up and cajoles a group us older parents to get out for a paddle 4 mornings a week. A committed group has formed around tackling an event.

Four months later I am fit and achieved a personal best in an international race. More importantly, I have met a new social circle and learned how smart professionals are arranging their lives to make their sport a leading element of their lives (I had forgotten how important sport is for optimum enjoyment of my life).

In a group you will enjoy friendships, laughter, competition, support and the motivation of "not piking" and being named in the daily e-mail chatter as a slacker.

Find the right group. Be a leader in bonding and motivating others. This can be a great way to develop different leadership skills and refine your emotional intelligence.

### **4. Learning, Fun and FLOW**

Over the past decade (work, kids, age) I have let exercise become rule-bound, dull and repetitive. "I must" was the thought. Resentment was the feeling. Inspired by two bottles of champagne with an ex-windsurfing friend, I bought kite surfing gear and set out to learn.

Several expensive and painful errors notwithstanding, I have enjoyed the most thrilling and engaging learning curve. As my skill has slowly risen to meet the challenge (FLOW), I have had a joy forgotten for 25 years.

This combination of learning and joy is the play that develops our brains as kids, keeps

us young and stimulates creativity.

Let the champagne peel back your fear and do something outrageous – once you have sobered up!

### **5. Experiment**

Rather than setting difficult objectives and risking failure, run small experiments in your activity programme. Research suggests that no more than three small goals work best. One is likely to fail but you will get traction on the other two.

We are all different with our own physical capacities, body types and tolerance of risk. Try things out for yourself and your family. Experiment with different routines, find out what others are enjoying and be prepared to adjust your plan based on experience.

I am currently trialling a 90 day pattern of experimentation by setting quarterly goals for myself and the family. This may be to learn a new activity, explore different walkways or to train up for an event or ski-trip. Once again pay attention to the collateral benefits.

Children seek and thrive on variety and new learning challenges. Sometimes we can get stuck in a routine and need to rejuvenate.

Always review your experiments. Discuss the benefits with others – particularly your family. Encourage different family members to set goals for the next quarter.

### **Hot off the Press: Stress & Heart**

Follow-u of the famous Whitehall study showing that lack of control is the key variable in Cardiac risk now shows:

- 1/3 of Cardiac risk is lifestyle-related
- 2/3 is a direct biological effect of stress (measured in morning cortisol and heart rate variability- e.g. Freeze-Framer)

View online in *European Heart Journal*, Feb 08.



## Staff Profile – Resilience in W.A. - Helen Walters

Helen is a Resilience Institute consultant based in Perth. She is experienced in building effective cultures with a strong focus on organisation and people development strategies that underpin the achievement of personal, team and business performance and success.



Helen has a background in Finance and Telecommunications and holds a degree in Training and Development. Prior to joining The Resilience Institute, Helen spent the last seven years with a furiously competitive global challenger brand in the telecommunications industry. Her work involved extensive travel and constant challenge. Several years in and she was heading towards burnout.

Helen's decision to build her resilience and master an active lifestyle has helped her to thrive and grab new challenges with confidence and boundless energy. More recently, faced with personal setbacks her commitment to building resilience helped her to recognise the early signs of decline, get herself right and bounce back with optimism. She attributes her ability to bring her best to every day and sustain greater levels of performance to her daily resilience practices.

Tel: +61 414 210 762

Email : <mailto:helen.walters@resilienceinstitute.com.au>

### About Us

Based in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, The Resilience Institute works with senior executives and the entire employee base to build organisational and personal resilience. The Resilience Institute uses an evidence-based approach to introduce the personal disciplines of sustainable high performance within a meaningful life. The Resilience Institute achieves sustainable and measurable improvements using assessment instruments, consulting reviews, workshop interventions and personal coaching.

#### For further information...

Website [www.resilienceinstitute.com.au](http://www.resilienceinstitute.com.au)  
Phone Australia +61 3 9509 2881 (new number)  
New Zealand +64 21 730 995  
Canada +41 6 358 4417  
Email [info@resilienceinstitute.com.au](mailto:info@resilienceinstitute.com.au)