



RESILIENT!

LEADERSHIP & THE INTEGRAL LIFE

September 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.

Leadership in Challenging Times

Resilience as Critical Success Factor

By Dr Sven Hansen

Leadership in testing times is difficult, frustrating and can breed fear and despondency. Yet we know this challenge will shape the leaders of the future. Leading in a growing economy is easy. Adversity is the crucible which differentiates greatness from mediocrity.

Resilience shifts from a want to a need. Many of our leadership teams are wrestling with this. The literature strongly suggests that an investment in your Resilience right now will have huge dividends in the future.

In this paper we share the key points of focus from the perspective of a leader of people.

1. Resilience in Adversity

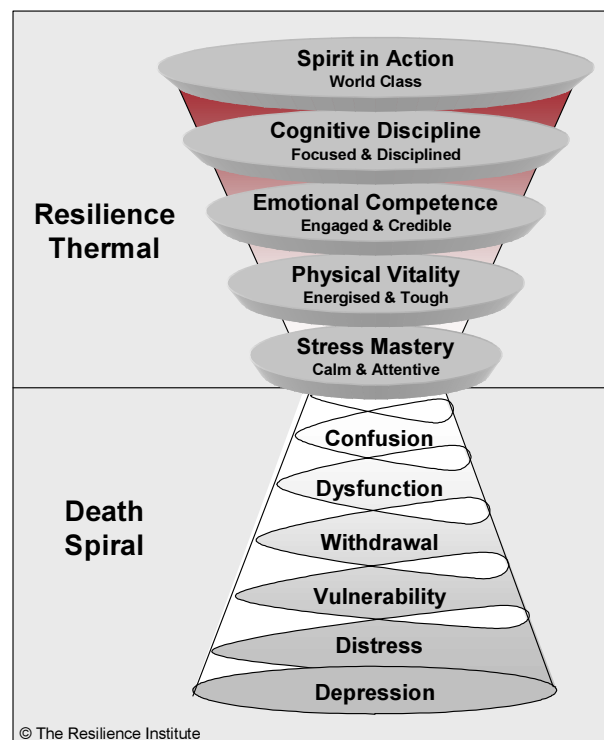
For decades we have known that most great leaders have had to face a significant adversity in their early years. We define the core outcomes of **Resilient Leadership** as:

1. Staying calm and focused
2. Radiating confident presence
3. Compassion and credibility
4. Generating hope
5. Strategic and creative energy

These outcomes are built into our Resilience Model. Under the threat of adversity it is easy to slip into the Death Spiral making these outcomes very difficult to secure.

Bounce back is critical competence to master while you continue to hold steady as Resilient Leaders **while still** supporting their people who may be in the Death Spiral.

Therefore it is critical that Leaders pay



attention to their people making particular efforts to:

1. Focus attention (combat confusion)
2. Encourage rejuvenation (combat disengaging)
3. Be present & available (combat withdrawal)
4. Supporting self care (combat vulnerability)

We frequently see leaders shift to defensive decision-making if still strong and sometimes slipping into their own Death Spiral. Thus,



time and attention for their people is reduced.

Leadership Practice 1

Not only do your people need your help and support but by giving them time, honest progress reports and support they are far better able to assist in organisational recovery, problem-solving and mutual support.

Tools

1. Read relevant literature and history
2. Get a coach
3. Involve your team in Resilience training

2. Perspective

The flood of unexpected dramas, external pressures and cash flow strain forces most leaders into short term thinking. Excessive focus on short term profit objectives and KPIs must be reined in. Short term objectives will simply intensify Death Spiral behaviours. This will squeeze peoples' capacity to stay engaged, optimistic and part of a longer term solution.

Leadership Practice 2

Leaders must hold a long term view in adversity, absorbing economic contraction and holding a focus on the long term recovery while still working on short-term viability. Balancing these demands must be built into your planning and communication. Celebrate successes.

Tools

1. Stay focused on your vision and purpose
2. Take time for fun and variety

3. Stay steady

Maintaining calm, composed and positive presence is a defining feature of resilience in adversity. Your people are watching closely for signs of distress. When leaders become despondent, cynical, angry or fearful the impact is immediately broadcast through the organisation and key stakeholders.

Resilience covers the key tactics to master

stress including breath control, relaxation practices, rejuvenation breaks and engage-relax cycles. We underestimate both the burning need for this and the immediate benefits from a daily discipline of rejuvenation.

Leadership Practice 3

Refresh your stress mastery practices. Get help by joining a meditation group, yoga class or purchasing a relaxation CD. Construct a practice that you can simply execute on a daily basis. Morning is the best time. Refresh yourself regularly through the day. Lock down the skill.

Tools

1. Read *Mastering Stress* (Hansen, 2006)
2. Consider biofeedback (www.heartmath.com)
3. Join a relaxation class
4. Breath deliberately and focus on exhalation

4. Hardiness

We cope far better with adversity if the body is strong and trained. Leaders tend to drop their rejuvenation and fitness disciplines when under pressure. This is simply reckless! Fix it!!

The science (and your experience?) is crystal clear on the benefits that accrue from daily physical training. Athletic prowess is not required. You may simply lock in a stretch and a brisk walk with family, friend or dog.

Many leaders find the value of strength (resistance) training is amplified under pressure. Strength training counters the destructive effects of distress (increased cortisol and insulin) by stimulating Growth Hormone, DHEA and insulin sensitivity. The metabolic benefits to weight management, capacity to absorb pressure and sleep are immediately felt. A couple of barbell exercises, sit-up, squats and press-ups suffice.



Leadership Practice 4

Do something physical today. Notice the collateral benefit. Buddy with a colleague, get a coach or play with your kids. Even if it a 5 minute blast of activity you have made a significant contribution to your hardiness. Make enough time for sleep.

Tools

1. Read *Energise your Body* (Hansen, 2006)
2. Book a health assessment
3. Use your stretch sheet
4. Take vitamin D in winter (2000 IU/day)

5. Empathy & Compassion

The pressures of adversity collapse our thinking inwards toward a focus on self preservation. Your job as leader is to support and lead your people. To do this well you must be able to maintain your capacity to listen and respond to their needs.

While you may be able to exercise empathy in good times the combination of adversity and self neglect creates a dangerous blind spot. We believe this is the critical tipping point for leadership failure in adversity.

Uncertainty creates a need for clarity but more specifically for support. Our mind tends to focus on the need for information and this is really hard to give with confidence in challenging times.

What people need most is to know that you understand and that you care. They will understand that you don't have all the answers but will respond dramatically to your care.

Leadership Practice 5

Take time to walk about, listen and show that you understand. Be close and provide evidence of your appreciation for their efforts.

Tools

1. Read *Engage your Emotions* (Hansen, 2006)
2. Review Facial expressions (www.paulekman.com)

3. Take time for teambuilding and communication

6. Presence

People and organisations need strong, engaged leadership in difficult times. The pressure on you to perform, meet budgets, make difficult decisions and take responsibility for performance will wear you down. This is reality. But at the same time you must make extra efforts to provide a positive impact.

Presence is the ability to hold your posture, stay energised, remain calm, radiate positive emotion, communicate clearly and consistently, and act with purpose. This is very challenging when you may not feel congruent. Taking care of your health, your family and your people is the base.

In addition take time to prepare yourself for every day. Be deliberate in your grooming and dress. Be punctual and focused. Make sure every meeting is deliberate and specific. Involve others in decision-making and listen carefully.

Leadership Practice 6

Walk, stand, sit and move like a leader. Read about leaders who succeeded in difficult times. Do not be shy about seeking feedback and coaching if needed.

Tools

1. Watch movies of "heroic leadership"

7. Leadership Style

Challenging times require the correct style for each situation and the impact of the different styles can be exaggerated. In general, the Affiliative style is an anchor. In this style, one spends extra time with people, clarify different perspectives and seek win-win outcomes.

Visionary leadership is tough and must be executed carefully. While it is important not to be unrealistic, you must work at generating hope. Build on small wins, keep generating small achievable initiatives and keep people focused on long term viability.



Commanding leadership is frequently required. While dangerous in good times, in serious adversity there are times when clear, tough decisions must be made quickly and definitively. Self awareness and empathy are critical and will help people accept the tough calls that must be made. Once decisions are made, act quickly.

Pacesetting should be used with great caution. Wait until the business picks up again. Coaching and democratic styles are definitely useful but may need to be trimmed. Where decisions will impact people take enough time to consult and involve stakeholders where you can.

Leadership Practice 7

Plan each part of your day and reflect on the most appropriate style. Use team members who are good at the required style. Coaching and leadership team briefing are essential.

Tools

1. Read *The New Leaders* (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee)
2. Engage a leadership coach
3. Look out for hidden leaders (like Churchill) who may not present themselves in easier times

8. Strategic Flexibility

The ultimate purpose of Resilient Leadership is to help you and your team maintain strategic agility. By maintaining a focus on calm, energised, positive and optimistic behaviours you and your people will be able to respond effectively to the challenges you face. We refer to this as Resonance – the cultivation

of hope and enthusiasm.

When our emotions are positive (about 5 to 1 negative), our mind is flexible and creative. Below are some examples of strategic flexibility. Note your emotional responses to each:

- Set high standards for your leadership
- Seek feedback and course correct
- Learn from mistakes, admit and move on.
- Think boldly and test every option
- There are multiple options for improvement
- Test these options relentlessly
- If sales are down get the team on the road
- Stay close to customers and stakeholders
- Roll up your sleeves and help the troops
- Consider taking a salary cut
- Surprise people!
- Test new partnerships
- Prepare for future opportunities
- Celebrate and reward success
- Champion failure that provides learning

Leadership Practice 8

Your job is to guide your organisation through adversity. Seek Resonance to build strategic flexibility into your thinking, projects and processes. Build it up. Stay Resilient!

Tools

1. Read *Blue Ocean Strategy* (Chan, Mauborgn, 2005) & *Resonance* (Boyatzis & McKee, 2006)
2. Use suggestion boxes
3. Provide incentives for initiatives
4. Support those who make mistakes



Staff Profile – Jenny McKay, Consultant Melbourne



Jenny McKay joined The Resilience Institute over 12 months ago and has been coaching individuals within organisations for over ten years.

Jenny works with clients in government (federal and state), transport, logistics, financial and professional services, manufacturing and the building industry. She is a Registered Psychologist, a full member of the Australian Psychological Society and a member of the International Coaching Federation. An accredited practitioner of the LSI, a coach/accredited practitioner of Genos's Emotional Intelligence Assessment Measure, and a certified Hogan Assessment Practitioner, she has a firm commitment to resilience and evidence-based change

methodologies which have a direct positive impact on both the organisations and individuals with which she works.

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.

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