



RESILIENT!

LEADERSHIP & THE INTEGRAL LIFE

June 2007

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.

Bounce Back

By Dr Sven Hansen

Occasionally, we all face knock-backs, sustained frustration and unwanted failures. We may suffer uncertainty, a sense of isolation, loss of motivation, perhaps a degree of distress, and even low mood. We call this experience the Death Spiral. The first skill of Resilience is recognising and recovering from difficult times. We call this Bounce-Back.

Bounce Back: A proven recovery method

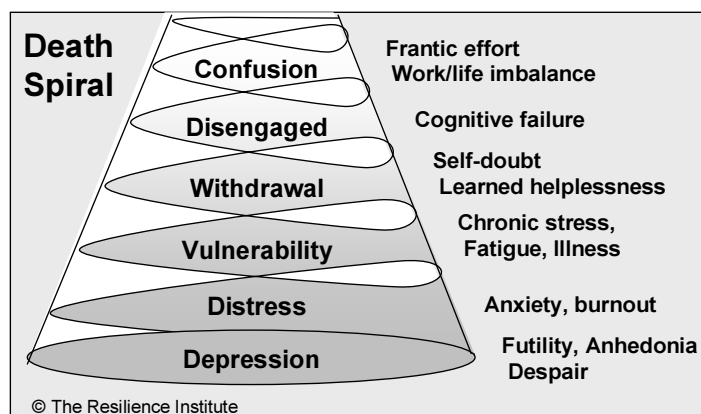
We can use Bounce Back to build our own Resilience under adversity. We can apply this method as a parent, a friend or as a manager to guide and assist others to recover from setbacks and rediscover joy. The purpose of this newsletter is first to tackle our reluctance to acknowledge the Death Spiral. Secondly, it is reinforce and improve our capacity to accelerate recovery – to master Bounce Back.

Case Study

John is a married, 45 and an experienced manager. He is promoted to a technology leadership role following a difficult acquisition. Now reporting to new owners, he is tasked with multiple integration projects along with doubled demand for IT services. With a new team in a foreign culture his responsibilities have multiplied and he is working 16 hour days (significant adversity). A number of projects are simply unworkable and he faces a number of technology failures. He is struggling to hold attention (confused) and loses control of a couple of projects (disengaged). Unfamiliar with this kind of pressure he starts to doubt his abilities. A number of his team resigns. In a foreign culture without his trusted support community he feels isolated (withdrawal).

John starts to drink more than normal, gives up his swimming and finds himself tossing and turning through the night (self

neglect/vulnerable). He becomes irritable and cynical about the new owners, frequently venting on his overstressed team. John starts to feel stressed and exhausted (distress). When his daughter is diagnosed with ADHD and his wife blames his neglect.....



Dramatic events such as this are increasingly common under the relentless pressure of shareholders demands, understaffing and stretch goals. We all know Johns but recognise many more who suffer activity overload, fatigue and loss of trust. We can leave the pressure cooker. However these are usually the most stimulating and well paid jobs. High performing organisations already seek to build the high-trust, supportive and resilient cultures that protect and nurture people under this kind of pressure.

Equally, when people are bored and frustrated in job where they are unable to develop themselves, tackle challenging tasks



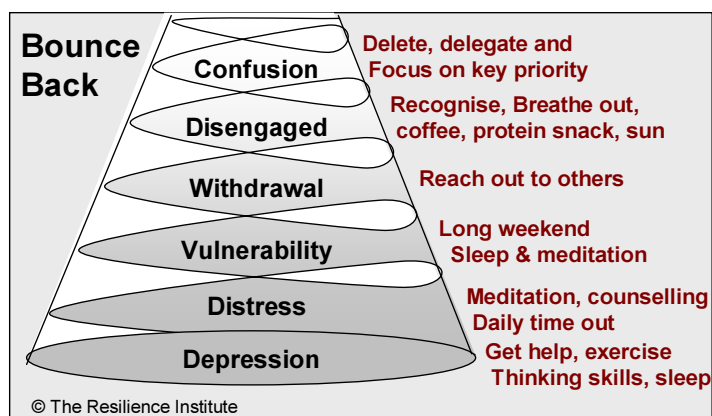
and find engaged communities, confused, disengaged and withdrawn behaviour becomes more likely. Bounce Back is an essential life skill.

Bounce Back.

The Death Spiral is unmitigated misery. However, mastering Bounce Back is a rewarding experience of self discovery and self efficacy (confidence). With the right perspective it can even become an enjoyable challenge to catch and reverse the downward spiral. We will cover some practical solutions using the case study as an example:

1. If you are concerned that you may be in distress (anxiety, pessimism and irritability) or depression (sad, exhausted and hopeless), it is essential to seek qualified help. Even with towering resilience, you are causing yourself, your teams and your family damage. At the bottom of the spiral you rarely see this clearly. John should seek out a psychologist, doctor or qualified coach. He also needs better support from his leaders. He should ask for help and if not forthcoming, he must take time off.
2. When in Distress and Depression, seek out an integrated solution. Medication is rarely adequate alone. Regular counselling or coaching, holiday, exercise, sleep and time with family are required. Group activities such as church, yoga, meditation or support groups can be very effective. This is certainly true for John.
3. When we find ourselves Vulnerable we need recovery time and immune resilience. Taking action – even relaxing – when vulnerable is very difficult. Mostly you need support such as a fitness coach, commitment to a team sport, or an active family holiday. Exercise, relaxation, sleep and a diet with increased veggies, fruit and fish are proven remedies. In John's case we would be prescriptive and relentless in getting him started on all four. Once you re-establish this routine recovery is frequently rapid. Indeed if you face ongoing adversity this daily discipline is a non-negotiable.

4. In Withdrawal we pull back from our important relationships. We simply do not have the confidence and energy to engage in relationship building. This is exacerbated for men who in the face of potential or real failure struggle to share their vulnerability. In John's case his leaders and peers must acknowledge and commit resources to his support. He needs to talk to friends, commit time to family or work with a coach. For the CEO in demanding leadership roles it is unacceptable to "have a bad hair day" in front of the troops, market or even family. Hence the demand for senior leadership forums. Those that endure such as the Young Presidents Organisation, Rotary and CEO forum provide tremendous value to their members. There must be a business opportunity for "Abused Technology Leaders" that could assist John.



5. When we find ourselves Disengaged the remedy is simple but counter-intuitive. The simple fact is that we are over-working and under-resting our brains. Gadget invested information overload and unfettered ambition simply stretch our cognitive resources too thin. Attention is the scarcest resource. We need to know our attention span and respect the brain's need for frequent, regular rejuvenation. A rough guide is to take a micro-break every 10 to 30 minutes. Practical solutions we recommend include: a long, slow exhalation; a quick stretch (extend and



twist the spine); take a drink; or simply close eyes and relax for 5 breaths.

6. Confusion is the sloppy use of the brain. We must create conditions where we can focus fully on what really matters in the actual moment. This is not natural in our multi-tasking world. The mind works best when focused fully on the issue at hand. Multi-tasking or ruminating (drifting into the past or future) destroys your ability to work with focused attention. Practically this means we must carefully select the issue at hand and then be vigilant in staying attentive. With practice studies have shown that we can both increase the intensity and duration of concentration while reducing the cost and frequency of recovery. (See Train your Mind, Hansen, 2006).
7. Prevention is always the best solution. Attend to your daily practices of resilience – exercise, nutrition, sleep, relaxation, network building and skill development. Build this into a routine. Know what your absolute non-negotiable practices are.
8. Each of us will experience Death Spirals and Bounce Back in slightly different ways. Learn to understand your signals and most effective remedies. Be open to different ways others may experience it.

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...

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Upcoming Resilience Programs

Practical Resilience Program – Public Program

There is more to life than living in negative stress, fatigue and illness that is often associated with the “dash for cash” and “dash for career”. Resilience is a key competence to help you to live and work with **higher engagement, health and happiness** and ultimately reach out to your full potential.

In two half-day workshops, learn how to train your brain and build your happiness and resilience...

- ✓ Health & Resilience assessment
- ✓ Introduction to Resilience
- ✓ Mastering Relaxation and Fatigue
- ✓ The Practice of Flow
- ✓ Health and Physical Vitality
- ✓ Emotional Intelligence
- ✓ Brain Training & attention control
- ✓ Spirit in Action

Previous attendee said...

- ✓ *The Resilience session presented by Stuart was sensational. My Wife and I are going to go over the material again as we can see real benefits to our family life.*
- ✓ *What a great inspirational speaker!*
- ✓ *The program has made me take an honest look in the mirror.*
- ✓ *I have noticed a change in my personal attitude to handling stress. I'm a much happier person and life is great again!!*
- ✓ *I feel a renewed enthusiasm for getting the balance in my life right for me, my work and my family*
- ✓ *The resilience program provided tools to address both physical and psychological wellbeing*
- ✓ *I liked the way Stuart delivered the program with honesty, authenticity and sharing his own personal stories.*
- ✓ *The resilience program was great. I found it very relevant. Now I have some techniques to help me move in more positive/optimistic directions.*

Upcoming Dates...

Melbourne - 17 Jul & 2 Aug 2007

For More Information...

- Visit our website www.resilienceinstitute.com.au and download a registration form
- Contact Stuart Taylor in Melbourne on +613 9822 6176
- Email info@resilienceinstitute.com.au