

every
woman
WORKBOOK

RESILIENCE
AND
AGILITY
IN A
CHANGING
WORLD

www.everywoman.com

Contents

About this workbook	3
SECTION I	
Resilience today	5
How a volatile world tests resilience	6
SECTION II	
What tests your resilience?	11
Resilience suckers – what they are and how to spot them	14
SECTION III	
Your resilience toolkit	22
The low-resilience alarm bell	23
10 strategies for dealing with impacted resilience	24
SECTION IV	
Resilience in your team	38
Your personal action plan	40
Your 4 questions	41
everywoman experts	42
Further reading	43
Endnotes	43

About this workbook

At everywoman, we deliver a range of innovative products and resources that unlock the potential and talent of women in business globally. For those women starting out or looking to progress their professions, or build and develop their own enterprise, the everywomanNetwork provides a wealth of personal development resources, advice and inspiration to address the challenges faced at key stages in business. We produce workbooks on topics that matter most to our members and we're constantly listening to your views to give you the tools you need to propel you through your life's work, at a time and place that suits you.

Welcome to our new workbook, *Resilience and agility in a changing world*.

Resilience: we all have it but we sometimes underestimate its importance. In times of change and uncertainty, it helps us retain stability. However, our resilience is often tested – especially at times when our world is volatile and unpredictable – and when this happens there are steps we can take to sustain it.

Many of us are much tougher than we might think. Setbacks along the way, at a personal or professional level, have taught us that to have something go (sometimes disastrously) wrong is often the very thing that sends us off in a new direction, with a better outcome.

“According to Darwin’s *On The Origin of Species*, it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself,” wrote Professor Leon Megginson.¹ And this is why resilience is so important: it enables us to adapt. This workbook highlights how the uncertainty and ambiguity of a new or emerging situation can be embraced and used to your advantage, helping you become more solution-focused along the way.

By working through the processes described, this workbook will help you understand resilience and how it affects your decisions, focus and relationships. By the end you will have learnt how to build your personal resilience ‘toolbox’ and be able to recognise the resources needed to sustain it and the factors that can deplete it – your ‘resilience suckers’. It will arm you with skills that will help you focus on the purpose in hand and stay anchored to it even in the most challenging times.

By undertaking this workbook you will gain a greater understanding of the importance of resilience to our personal and professional lives. We’d love to know how you get on – email us at karenmax@everywoman.com or tweet us [@everywomanuk](https://twitter.com/everywomanuk).

Maxine & Karen

and the everywoman team

Clearly, drive, IQ and hard work are incredibly important. But, ultimately, what matters most is resilience – the ability to quickly rebound from failure and to see that failure as a stepping stone to success.”

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON, ENTREPRENEUR "

Resilience today

The world has changed dramatically over the past 15 years as tech speeds up and businesses work smarter and faster than ever before.

The excitement this generates around innovative ideas and products is great – but it’s an environment which can also breed stress.



NO MATTER HOW YOU DEFINE SUCCESS, YOU WILL NEED TO BE RESILIENT, EMPOWERED, AUTHENTIC, AND LIMBER TO GET THERE.”

JOANIE CONNELL, PH.D., TALENT MANAGEMENT EXPERT ^{III}

Shaking off old ways of working, finding new audiences for products and services and jump-starting a passion project all require a level of confidence to deal with the inevitable risks involved. Be inflexible and lack resilience at your peril!

Bestselling innovation author Gary Hamel and co-author Liisa Välikangas define resilience as: “A capacity to undergo deep change without or prior to a crisis”^{iv} – easier said than done in an environment where disrupted business practice rules. When markets are shrinking

and mergers and acquisitions are taking place, staying positive and being able to bounce back from adversity can be transformative.

Working constantly at a level where the stakes are high, time is short and resources are stretched makes it all the more important to have a set of ‘resilience tools’ in your back pocket. As is being able to spot signs that you’re overstretched or not reacting as well as you might like to a situation.

By cultivating great networks and arming yourself with the best tools you can, you’ll see a step change in the way you function.

HOW A VOLATILE WORLD TESTS RESILIENCE

In a volatile world, rapid shifts in environment or sudden leftfield challenges can arise without warning and require your immediate attention. Unexpected challenges and world events can leave you feeling overwhelmed, and one of the knock-on effects of that is the belief that you are unable to lead effectively.

Having a strong network of contacts to provide you with supporting information is essential during these times. So is having a plan B - what you will do if the most likely things go wrong - as well as a Plan Z - what you will do if *everything* goes wrong.

Understanding how to stay calm and fearless and how to regulate our emotions at times like these will provide a framework for resilience and confidence. Begin the learning process by:

Simplifying decision-making

When our resilience is being impacted, complex decisions might be more difficult to make because we have lost focus, self-belief and confidence. Therefore, it's important to simplify the situation by reducing the number of options to be considered and/or involving others in specific areas of decision-making.

Identify your response to ambiguity

Ambiguity can create a higher level of risk which, in challenging or difficult times, can leave us feeling very anxious.

Those who are more tolerant of ambiguity tend to be willing to rest, or step away from the issue and let a decision come to them, rather than wrestling with too much information.

Detect patterns in the work environment

Our resilience is strengthened when we get better at detecting patterns in how we interact with our environment. Starting to take notice of your patterns of behaviour and experiences can really help with decision-making and also, importantly, will help you notice when decisions aren't being made when they need to be.



THE WORKINGS OF INTUITION TRANSCEND THOSE OF THE INTELLECT AND, AS IS WELL KNOWN, INNOVATION IS OFTEN A TRIUMPH OF INTUITION OVER LOGIC."

ALBERT EINSTEIN, PHYSICIST

RESILIENCE QUALITIES

Self-belief

Trusting your own abilities, actions and capacity to deal with whatever comes your way in whatever circumstances, increasing your choices and possibilities.

Elasticity

Adapting to changing circumstances and not staying attached to what is familiar and comforting.

Meaning

Having a sense of purpose and meaning to get through difficult times helps you identify what you're working towards and why. Meaning may come from goals, values, beliefs or principles.

Solution finding

Working with what there is and being creative to find solutions even when resources are scarce or options narrow.

Support

Seeking emotional support through challenging times so that you know you're not alone can be reassuring. Offering support to others is also important as it validates your worth.

Proactivity

Taking action to improve the situation, particularly when uncertainty and ambiguity exist, rather than hoping things will get better or someone else will step in and improve things for you.

Emotional control

Emotions can become heightened in challenging times, with negative emotions dominating. Managing emotions, retaining a sense of perspective and objectively looking at problems for what they are instead of becoming overwhelmed by them and/or oversizing them.

Realistic positivity

Facing the reality of the situation and assessing our strengths, capabilities and capacity against this context. Being able to say, "how can I make the best of what is happening right now?", rather than hoping that things will just get back on track, or going into situations with blind optimism.

THE RESILIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE ^{VI}

The following questionnaire will help you understand how you behave in everyday situations which require resilience in one form or another. It will show when you are at your most and least resilient.

By looking at your profile, you will probably see that some qualities are more developed than others. Alternatively, you may see that you have a balanced profile in that all are present to a similar degree.

If you find yourself with little differentiation, then ask yourself which of them do you rely on most to get yourself through challenges. Give those qualities an extra weighting.

How does your profile reflect how you present yourself to the world? Does it capture how you would describe yourself

or how others signal that they see you? The aim at this stage is to understand your starting place.

The questionnaire is designed around eight contributors to resilience, or its loss, based on recurring themes in resilience research.

Responding to the statements:

- As you answer the questions, think of how you generally see yourself operating in the world
- Go with your initial response rather than over-thinking
- There are no right or wrong answers

Use the following rating scale

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree or disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

	I HAVE THE ABILITY TO	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
1	Deal with the demands of my life					
2	Be flexible in order to adapt to whatever I am presented with					
3	Know what is important in my life					
4	Change direction when the preferred route is not working					
5	Ask for help when I need it					
6	Find what I can take control of when things aren't certain					
7	Control my emotions when feeling pressured					

CONTINUED

SOURCE: CAROLE PEMBERTON

	I HAVE THE ABILITY TO	SD 1	2	3	4	SA 5
8	Face reality, even when it is difficult					
9	Manage my way through difficulty					
10	Focus on actions that move me towards longer-term goals					
11	Let go of what is not working					
12	Recognise when others need support					
13	Make decisions when others are holding back					
14	Use strategies for managing my stress					
15	Find solutions to the challenges I face					
16	Recognise when I need to develop new behaviours and skills					
17	Hold on to a sense of perspective when things are difficult					
18	Be proactive in addressing challenges					
19	Remain optimistic even when things are tough					
20	Acknowledge the difficulties of change and accept what has to be let go					
21	Be creative in finding ways of doing things even when resources are limited					
22	Talk openly about frustrations with trusted colleagues, friends or family					
23	Deal with problems head on rather than hoping that they will go away					
24	Recognise when current pressures are affecting my responses					

Scoring the questionnaire

Plot your scores (1 – 5) for each statement on the table below (these are not in numerical order so be careful when matching your scores with the statements)

	QUESTION	SCORE	QUESTION	SCORE	QUESTION	SCORE	YOUR TOTAL
Self-belief	1		9		15		
Elasticity	2		16		20		
Meaning	3		10		17		
Solution finding	4		11		21		
Support	5		12		22		
Proactive	6		13		18		
Emotional Control	7		14		24		
Realistic Positivity	8		19		23		



TAKE AWAY

By starting to look closely at how you behave in everyday situations which require resilience you can identify when you are at your most or least resilient. This will help you develop your 'resilience toolbox' which you can draw on when faced with difficulties – awareness is the first step to change.

What tests your resilience?

Resilience is about being able to work through difficulty by being adaptable and creative and not denying it. It is something that we all have to some degree and is necessary for maintaining stable psychological health. It is when we lose resilience that we become rigid in our thoughts, narrow in our emotions and unable to see that we have choices.

“

*PEOPLE ARE LIKE
TEABAGS – YOU
DON'T KNOW HOW
STRONG THEY ARE
UNTIL YOU PUT THEM
IN HOT WATER.”*

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, ACTIVIST ^{viii}

We all have times when our resilience is tested and we lose it temporarily. But we grow our resilience by putting it to the test in difficult times. Strengthening resilience is important for both our personal and professional lives as it helps us stay strong under pressure and recover from setbacks. It keeps us tenacious, irrespective of the noise around us.

Being resilient matters because it...

- Can keep you focused when the outside world threatens to unsettle you
- Is great for your emotional wellbeing and inner calm and helps you deal with pressure
- Helps you keep perspective and prevents you from taking things out of context
- Helps you deal with a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world and roll with life's ups and downs
- Helps you deal better with the ambiguity and uncertainty caused by change and transition



EXERCISE

WHAT TESTS YOUR RESILIENCE?

Use these questions to reflect upon when your resilience has been most tested at work. Make a note of your answers . . .

Think of work situations in which you maintained resilience

What resilience qualities were you able to access? (Use the resilience questionnaire in Section I)

What other qualities and skills helped you remain resilient?

What made it possible for you to access these qualities and skills (both within and outside of you)?

What value did you and others (eg client, team, internal stakeholders) get from using these qualities and skills?

Think of work situations in which you lost resilience

What resilience qualities were you unable to access? (Use the resilience questionnaire in section 1)

What other qualities and skills did you lose access to?

What stopped you from being able to access those qualities and skills (both within and outside of you)?

What were the consequences for how you dealt with the situation? (Think about yourself, your team, client, internal stakeholders)

RESILIENCE SUCKERS – WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW TO SPOT THEM

In 2014 British consultants Gillian Shapiro and Sarah Bond conducted research on 835 employees from public, private and non-profit companies to find out what most tested their resilience.^{viii} It wasn't world events or tragedies such as terrorist attacks, as we might expect;

instead, it was their co-workers. A huge 75 per cent said that the biggest drain on their resilience reserves was, "managing difficult people or office politics at work". That was followed closely by stress brought on by overwork and by having to withstand personal criticism.



EXERCISE

WHAT ARE YOUR RESILIENCE SUCKERS?

Have a look at the seven elements below and put them in order as to which depletes your resilience the most

- A** When I am challenged on work that matters
- B** When I'm juggling day-to-day working life and family non-work responsibilities
- C** When the nature of my work takes me outside of my comfort zone
- D** When there have been upheavals in my personal life
- E** When I feel I'm being criticised personally
- F** When the volume or pace of work stretches me to my limits
- G** When I'm managing difficult relationships/politics in the workplace

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HOW TO HANDLE RESILIENCE SUCKERS

Each resilience sucker can deplete your energy and strength but there are ways of handling them:

RESILIENCE SUCKER

Challenges to work that matters to you

TIP

Disassociate. Understand that someone challenging your work is challenging the thinking and/or ideas or work, NOT you as a person. See that this has a wider purpose and understand the value of landing something well and adding the greatest value possible. Find people around you who can interrogate your work so that you build an inner strength to being challenged.

RESILIENCE SUCKER

Juggling day-to-day work and family

TIP

Imagine you have a life wheel and carve out what success means to you in different areas of your life, such as health, family, relationships, career, finance, adventure. Work out how fulfilled you are in each area and identify the tensions between elements.

RESILIENCE SUCKER

Nature of work taking you outside your comfort zone

TIP

Spend every day doing something that takes you outside of your comfort zone - this will give you a greater capacity for adapting to change. Break down the issues you face when out of your comfort zone and gauge what you can do alone rather than with others to remove the issues. Acknowledge what you fear first and take action in small steps. Create momentum by focusing on an element and rewarding yourself rather than looking at the whole undertaking in one go, which can be overwhelming.

RESILIENCE SUCKER
Upheavals in life

TIP

Take a moment to reflect on how you dealt with past upheavals, what gave you strength back then (so that you can use that again) and what you have to be grateful for because of it.

RESILIENCE SUCKER
Feeling criticised personally

TIP

Ask for feedback on specific work you've done and how it landed. Ask what you could have done differently and the result that this would have created. See feedback as a gift and a choice.

RESILIENCE SUCKER
Work stretching you to your limits

TIP

Know your limitations and boundaries – be clear about what you will agree to, or at least make conditions around your 'yes'. For example: "I will take on additional responsibility that requires x if I have additional resource for y."
Recognise the importance of rest and taking care of your wellbeing.

RESILIENCE SUCKER
Politics at work and difficult relationships

TIP

Identify your firm's key decision-makers, gatekeepers (seconds in command) and opinion formers. Identify the important business drivers and what key stakeholders are being measured on. Find ways to build genuinely long-term relationships with stakeholders, see ways of contributing to their success and visions. Know the dynamics between individuals and never take sides, always stay neutral. Use personal power and your expertise to navigate a system. Don't rely on positional power. Bring any conflict to the surface with the view to resolving it and reaching a great outcome that requires change in both you and the other person.



EXERCISE

HOW TOLERANT OF AMBIGUITY ARE YOU?

Difficult and challenging situations call for a cool head. Not always possible when work (or our home lives) are at their most intense. Identifying our initial responses can help you get to the bottom of scenarios which, at times, may feel impossible to solve. Work through each section below to gauge how you adapt to the unknown. Give yourself plenty of time - something we often don't allow ourselves - the more time spent on this now, the more effective the results.

Instructions

Mark on a scale of 1 to 5 how much you agree with each of the statements

- 1 = not at all characteristic of me 2 = a little characteristic of me 3 = somewhat characteristic of me
4 = very characteristic of me 5 = entirely characteristic of me

	STATEMENT	SCORE
1	I don't tolerate ambiguous situations well	
2	I would rather avoid solving a problem that must be viewed from several different perspectives	
3	I try to avoid situations that are ambiguous	
4	I prefer familiar situations to new ones	
5	Problems that cannot be considered from just one point of view are a little threatening	
6	I avoid situations that are too complicated for me to easily understand	
7	I am tolerant of ambiguous situations	
8	I enjoy tackling problems that are complex enough to be ambiguous	
9	I try to avoid problems that don't seem to have only one 'best' solution	
10	I generally prefer novelty over familiarity	
11	I dislike ambiguous situations	
12	I find it hard to make a choice when the outcome is uncertain	
13	I prefer a situation in which there is some ambiguity	

FROM: MCCLAIN, DL (2009) PSYCHOLOGY REPORTS, 105, 975-988

Scoring the questionnaire

Transfer your ratings for each question to the 'Your rating' column. Then perform the calculation for each as instructed, whether that's deducting your rating from 6 or simply using your rating. Put this figure in the 'Your score' column.

The higher the score, the more tolerant you are of ambiguity.

	YOUR RATING	CALCULATION	SCORE
1		6 - rating	
2		6 - rating	
3		6 - rating	
4		6 - rating	
5		6 - rating	
6		6 - rating	
7		rating	
8		rating	
9		6 - rating	
10		rating	
11		6 - rating	
12		6 - rating	
13		rating	
		TOTAL	



EXERCISE

INTOLERANCE OF UNCERTAINTY SCALE - SHORT FORM

This questionnaire is designed to assess your orientation to uncertainty in the future.

Instructions

For each statement below, mark on a scale of 1 to 5 how much you agree with each of the statements

- 1 = not at all characteristic of me 2 = a little characteristic of me 3 = somewhat characteristic of me
4 = very characteristic of me 5 = entirely characteristic of me

	STATEMENT	SCORE
1	Unforeseen events upset me greatly	
2	It frustrates me not having all the information I need	
3	Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life	
4	One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises	
5	A small unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning	
6	When it's time to act, uncertainty paralyzes me	
7	When I am uncertain I can't function very well	
8	I always want to know what the future has in store for me	
9	I can't stand being taken by surprise	
10	The smallest doubt can stop me from acting	
11	I should be able to organise everything in advance	
12	I must get away from uncertain situations	

FROM: CARLETON, NORTON & ASMUNDSON (2007) JOURNAL ANXIETY DISORDERS, 21, 105-117

Scoring the questionnaire

To score this questionnaire, transfer your ratings and then total up your score.

The higher your score the more intolerant you are of uncertainty.

	SCORE
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
TOTAL	

Reflect on your results

Allow more time and a quiet space in which to process the results of the questionnaire. Maybe do the exercise over a few days – you might feel differently over the course of the week. Keep notes: you may need to remind yourself of these findings until you feel fully committed to them.

1

- Which strengths do you have and consistently draw on no matter the situation you find yourself in?
- What picture is emerging from the combination of strengths you have?
- What is the impact of these strengths in tough, challenging and difficult times?

2

- Are there any particular contexts where your resilience has been impacted when you haven't applied your strengths?
- What has stopped you from using these?
- What can you do to ensure that you're consistently applying your strengths?

3

- What are your weaker areas?
- What picture is emerging here?
- What's the impact of not being as good in these areas?
- What can you do to develop these areas and what difference would this make?



REFLECTION NOTES



TAKE AWAY

If you can begin to identify your resilience suckers – those situations that deplete your resilience and energy the most – you can start to introduce some changes to the way you handle them. With a few new approaches, such as learning how to step outside your comfort zone, you can become more adaptable to change and ambiguity.

Your resilience toolkit

The magical framework which we can implement to improve our resilience comes with practice.

The key 3 strategies are:

- Mindset ● Behaviours ● Structures

Work with these three and you'll find resilience comes more easily. We take you through 10 more strategies later on in the workbook.

Mindset

What are you saying to yourself? Choose positive and constructive vocabulary.

Behaviours

Change actions or habits you've developed over time which don't work for you. Adopt new ones which do.

Structures

Keep a journal to capture successes or lessons learnt, obtain feedback, work on strategy. Focus on these three areas and change will come.



ONCE YOUR MINDSET CHANGES, EVERYTHING ON THE OUTSIDE WILL CHANGE ALONG WITH IT."

STEVE MARABOLI, AUTHOR, BEHAVIOURAL SCIENTIST ^{IX}

THE LOW-RESILIENCE ALARM BELL

Recognise the signs of a knock to resilience levels and you're on the first step to making a real change in how you deal with challenges effectively. Ask yourself the questions below. If many of them sound uncomfortably familiar, the checklist that follows will help you identify areas in need of improvement in more depth.



EXERCISE

Faced with a challenge on a personal or professional level, where many factors exist and there are lots of different outcomes, do you:

1 Lose perspective and focus?

2 Lose clarity of thought?

3 Suffer from anxiety and worry?

4 Feel overwhelmed?

5 Fear the unknown and the uncertainty this situation brings?

6 Feel stuck or unable to make a decision?

7 Feel insecure?

8 Feel trapped?

9 Feel you can't cope with the different demands and complexities?

10 STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH IMPACTED RESILIENCE

Sometimes life knocks us harder than we expect. When that happens, it's useful to have strategies to hand to help develop your resilience. We take you through these in more detail over the next few pages.

1

Self-belief

2

Change your language

3

Create a sense of meaning through personal values

4

Working in flow

5

Navigating the direction of travel

6

Responding not reacting

7

The 3 R strategy

8

Perspective

9

Relationship/ support map

10

Solutioning - circle of influence

STRATEGY

1

Self-belief

Beliefs are powerful because they operate at the deep-rooted sub-conscious level and they govern our emotions, actions and decisions. We don't wake up deciding what to believe, but we see what we believe. Beliefs can either open doors because they are empowering or they close them because they are limiting. Working from a set of empowering beliefs is incredibly liberating when our resilience is impacted as we can gain an inner strength that fuels us to move forward with endless possibilities.



EXERCISE

Go through the list below answering each question thoughtfully

1 What are you choosing to hold true about yourself that is limiting?

2 What are the consequences of holding on to these limiting beliefs?

3 What would you do if you didn't hold on to these beliefs?

4 What would you need to hold true about yourself that is more empowering?

5 What actions could you take to lock in these new beliefs?

STRATEGY

2

Change your language

Language provides insight into your mindset – whether you’re thinking in a way that is conducive to your success and moving forward or not. We also know that changing language can have a big impact on how you feel and see yourself and the situation and the action which results. When you’re experiencing challenges try thinking and writing about what you’re trying to achieve using positive language.



EXERCISE

Changing the language around your actions and thoughts starts with recognising negative messaging. Think of something you feel challenged by or a difficult experience from the past. In the left column, complete the first three phrases. In the right column, complete the second three. Once you’ve filled in your thoughts and feelings against each phrase hand this sheet to a trusted friend or work colleague and ask them to say the phrases out loud. Note the difference and the effect the statements have on both you and the listener.

I THINK...

I BELIEVE...

I NEED...

I WANT...

I MIGHT...

I WILL...

Create a sense of meaning through personal values

Personal values give us meaning. They are the qualities of a life fully lived from the inside out. When we honour our values, we feel an internal 'rightness' – a harmony. When we are not living our values there is dissonance and our life feels off-kilter.

Values also root and anchor us when things are changing around us. When we consciously work with them, live them out and use them to guide our decision-making in challenging, difficult or pressured times, we feel more focused and purposeful.



EXERCISE

Exploring your personal values - identify the values you live your life by, take a look at the list below to use as a prompt and write a sentence or two against each one.

1 What is important to you?

2 What fulfils you?

3 What do you love?

4 What do you dream of?

5 Who do you admire and what is it about them that you admire?

6 What is your favourite story and what makes it your favourite?

7 I'm going to give you £10m, how would you spend it?

8 What frustrates you about others' actions?



EXERCISE

From your list of values what categories can you spot? What does each mean to you?

VALUE CATEGORIES	MEANING

Prioritise your values and select four or five that you absolutely could not live without – the ones you don't feel you could give up.

	MY MUST-HAVE VALUES
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Working in flow

When we're in flow we are doing things we are good at and enjoy, as well as things that take us out of our comfort zone. We all sometimes have to do things we are not very good at and end up feeling stressed and burnt out, but if we can recognise this we can make sure we have adequate support around us. When we are doing things that aren't challenging but we are good at we become bored and complacent. It's vital to be aware of our strengths and the factors which energise us as well as those which we find tough and challenging.



EXERCISE

Underneath each of the main headings below, identify the key areas you feel are your 'drivers' and write a list (or lists) against each sub-heading.

Strengths

- What are you great at?
- What do others come to you for?
- What combination of strengths makes you unique?

Passions

- What do you care about?
- What do you love to do?
- What do you believe in and why?

Drive

- How do you measure your personal success?
- What energises you?
- What activities have meaning for you?

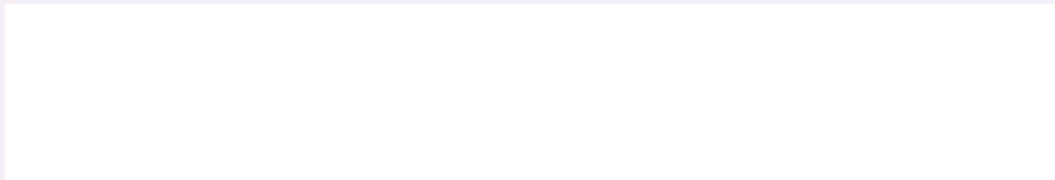


Aspirations

- What are you interested in or curious about?
- What new experiences do you want to have?
- What ambitions do you have?



What would it take for you to be in flow?

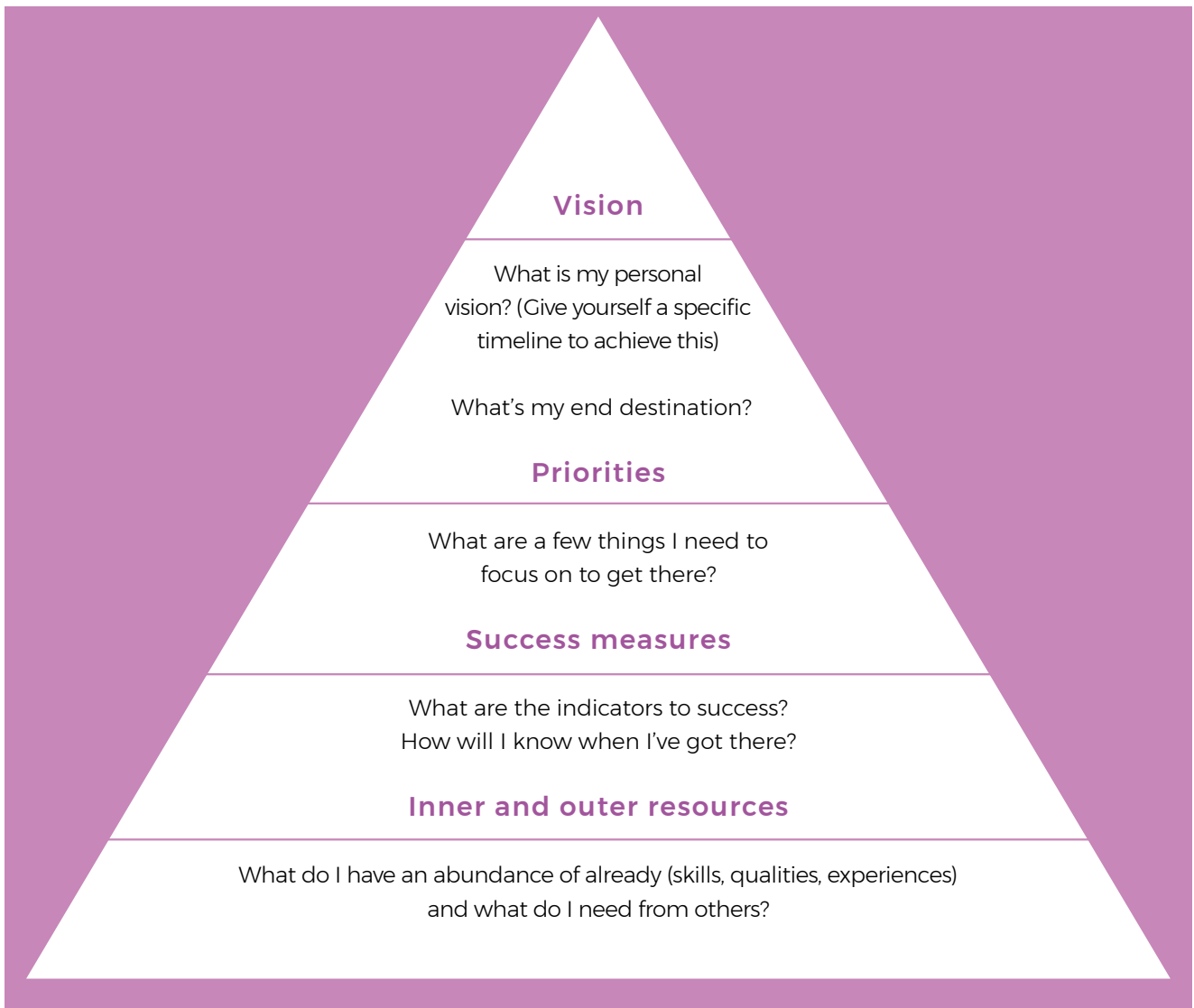


How could you use this more consciously when your resilience is being impacted?



Navigating the direction of travel

Having a focus gives us meaning, so it's good to check which direction you're travelling in. Start with your end destination: for example, where do you want to be in 12 months? Then answer all the questions in the pyramid below to help you get there.



REFLECTION NOTES



Responding not reacting

Many scientists believe that the limbic system is the part of the brain where emotions are generated^x and it tends to get

stimulated by events and situations before our rational mind engages. In fact, emotions, triggered at a subconscious level, kick in a full six seconds before the rational side of the brain^{xi}.

Can you think of any times when this has happened in your own life? What might some of your triggers be to these unhelpful emotions? Is it, for example, that you feel like you're not being listened to? Or that you feel treated unfairly or

cornered over an issue? In challenging situations our emotions can become heightened, we may lose our sense of perspective and we react rather than respond.

Acceptance means acknowledging that things are (or are not) happening. A way of maintaining emotional control is to first accept the experience for what it is and to also acknowledge your feelings, as our unhelpful feelings are often shortcuts to the needs we have.

In the moment, if we can accept what's happening and how we feel about it, we can respond to it (act thoughtfully) rather than reacting (taking impulsive action).



EXERCISE

Reflect on something that recently upset you or created conflict where you had unhelpful feelings. For example, maybe you ran a project that didn't go very well. You can't change that, but you can get to a place of accepting the experience and acknowledging what worked and what didn't. Go back over what happened - when, where and with whom - and capture in words, pictures or metaphors how you felt about the situation. When we focus on our needs we naturally move into a space where we can come up with a solution and move forward.

When you look back at your feelings what does it tell you about what you needed and from whom?

How could you have got those needs met in a more constructive way?



EXERCISE

USING THE BODY – PHYSICAL BAROMETERS

There is a strong connection between our emotions and how we feel them physically. They can feel differently in each of us. The next exercise will get you to examine your body's reactions, which is a powerful strategy for controlling and managing unhelpful emotions. Think about a situation where you had some unhelpful feelings and the reaction it had on your body, so much so that even thinking about it now conjures up a sense of how you felt physically in that moment. Take notes as you go on the next page.

1 Take a minute to relax your shoulders, close your eyes and steady your breath.

2 As you really relax your body feel your breath and focus on the part of the body it settles on – this will probably be your chest or belly.

3 Take yourself to a current stressful or difficult situation that conjures up strong emotions. Stay connected with these feelings and notice where in your body you're feeling them – it could be the top of your head, face, jaw, neck, shoulders, tummy, hips, legs or feet. Wherever you feel it, heighten this feeling; intensify it by imagining that you're feeling the set of emotions throughout all of your body.

4 Now, notice your breathing – the pace, sound, rhythm. Go to the spot where you feel most tension and weight. What do you notice? Really observe it – the colour, pace, rhythm, shape.



EXERCISE

5

Be curious about the physical feeling without attempting to change it - really tune into it.

6

Finally, come out of the practical exercise. What was the experience like? How are you thinking and feeling about your situation now?



REFLECTION NOTES



The 3 R strategy

It can be difficult to decompress after a difficult situation. We all know that feeling of our day being 'ruined' if an experience we've had has caused pain or challenges. There is a way to stop that 'the day is ruined' feeling and, instead, take control and regain our power.



**Reflect on a time when your resilience was lost momentarily.
Apply the 3 Rs.**

Reflect - win/learn

Which aspects of the situation went well? What opportunity came out of the experience? What could I have done differently when things didn't go so well? What did I learn from the experience and how can I use this going forward?

Rejuvenate

What will I look at, listen to, touch or do that will help me feel 100 per cent better? Will I listen to a piece of music? Look at a favourite photo? Go for a walk? Think about something sentimental or precious to me?

Reset

How do I want to consciously show up to my next meeting/situation? How do I want others to experience me?

Perspective

Perspective is really powerful – sometimes we get absorbed when our resilience is impacted and we lose sight of the bigger picture. Stopping and pausing in those moments is critical to sustaining resilience.



EXERCISE

Ask yourself:

Will this thing matter in two, six or 12 years-plus?

What have I got to be grateful for?

What do I take pride in?

What advice would my old wise self give me right now?

What advice would my role model give me right now?

What don't I want to look back on, saying I needed to have, or have not, done?

What strengths do I have and what value do they bring?

What am I proud of to date and what does this say about what I have and what others gain?



Relationship/support map

Relationships are fundamental to sustaining resilience. Who are you reaching out to in times of need? What is it that they offer you – advice, perspective, a shoulder to cry on, feedback, space to reflect, encouragement? What could you be giving those people, what do they need? When we give to others, our self-worth is validated.



Solutioning – circle of influence

When our resilience is being impacted, we often feel that we can't influence much and we focus on our circle of concern, which just gets larger and larger. Finding solutions makes us feel so much better in tough, challenging and difficult situations and also expands our choices, empowering us to move forward. Sometimes having an array of strategies and adopting them simultaneously is what's needed to sustain resilience.



CAPTURE YOUR CONCERNS

When you're in a challenging situation, try to do the following and notice the difference:

Ask yourself three things:

1 What can I directly change myself?

2 What can I do something about by collaborating with, or influencing, others?

3 What can't I do anything about?



TAKE AWAY

We've armed you with 10 strategies to help you deal with difficult times and impacted resilience. By recognising what knocks you and identifying key areas in need of improvement, you're taking the first steps towards changing how you deal with challenges and strengthening your resilience.

Resilience in your team

Now you have a greater understanding of how to build your own resilience and identify your personal ‘resilience suckers’, it’s important to pass this knowledge on to your team. Encouraging and building resilience in your teams will help everyone fulfil their potential faster. Here’s why:

<p>1</p> <p>Resilient teams work better together, have a clearer focus in challenging times and feel more in control when there are many unknowns.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Resilience also helps teams support each other during uncertain, ambiguous or volatile times.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Productivity is higher because paralysis and indecision are less likely to exist.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Resilient teams are more likely to spot opportunity within ambiguity and take considered risks.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>If you are the team leader, having a resilient team means you can be more externally facing if needed, as you can trust that everything else is being taken care of.</p>
<p>Teams with low resilience can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lose confidence, lose focus and eventually stop performing<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Become deflated● Become dysfunctional because they are insecure and seeking to protect themselves				



EXERCISE

GAUGING THE RESILIENCE OF YOUR TEAM

Use the exercise on p31 to check your team's purpose and value

Ask them to complete the resilience questionnaire from Section I and identify team strengths and areas in need of development.

Together, create a team map of mindsets, behaviours and structures and talk through the exercise as a team.

Talk together as a team or in 1-2-1s, exploring moments when resilience was impacted - when it was sustained as well as lost. Identify any learnings and discuss how these could be used in the future.



TAKE AWAY

A resilient team is a productive team, weathering the challenges of changing work environments with skill and ease. Resilient teams communicate better and don't duck problems. So, once you've learnt to recognise your own resilience suckers and built up your own resilience, then be sure to share your knowledge.

Your personal action plan



1 Looking at the resilience qualities; how many do you currently have? Think about how you can improve the ones you want to build on.

2 Make a list of the main things that test your resilience and think about how you can change and improve these.

3 What are the main resilience suckers in your day-to-day life and how can you improve on them?

4 Which of the 10 strategies for dealing with impacted resilience work for you? Make a note of one or more and how you can use them.

5 How resilient is your team? Take a look at how you can encourage or build on your team's resilience.

Your 4 questions

Answer the questions below for the workbook to be CPD certified.



Corporate Member

The CPD Certification Service

To apply for your CPD hours, points or units from this resource, click this link and answer the questions.

1 Which of these would help support your resilience in challenging times?

- a Working through the problem on your own
- b Seeking advice
- c Identifying your response to ambiguity
- d Detecting patterns in how we interact with our environment

2 Which of the following is one kind of resilience sucker?

- a Challenges to work that matters to you
- b Dealing with new issues
- c Adapting to new environments
- d Criticising your team

3 Which one of these strategies is good for sustaining resilience?

- a Responding not reacting
- b Staying in your comfort zone
- c Changing your language
- d Believing the day is ruined and there's nothing you can do about it

4 Which of the following is one of the benefits of building resilience in your team?

- a It will help team members get along
- b Higher productivity
- c It will help teams feel more like a team
- d Team morale

everywoman Experts

everywoman creates resources on topics that matter most to our Network members. We draw on member surveys and the latest thinking from the academic and business worlds, as well our own experiences as we navigate our careers. Each workbook offers practical advice, enabling tangible actions for your daily working lives.



MAXINE BENSON, MBE
& KAREN GILL, MBE

Co-founders of everywoman, Karen and Max have spoken to thousands of women about the challenges they face at work. Through their own experiences of starting a business, they uncovered a real need for a network where female entrepreneurs and businesswomen could interact and share experiences. The everywomanNetwork, which launched in 2013, serves as a truly global tool to enable members the world over to realise their ambitions through online membership.

EVERYWOMAN WORKBOOK TEAM

Des Christofi, resilience expert

Lysanne Currie, editor

Kate Farrow, head of partnerships

Denise McQuaid, commercial and strategy director

Any topics you'd like to see covered on the everywomanNetwork?

We'd love to hear from you: contact@everywoman.com

Further reading

Resilience: Hard-won Wisdom for Living a Better Life, Eric Greitens (Houghton Mifflin)

The Resilience Factor: 7 keys to finding your inner strength and overcoming, Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté (Broadway Books)

Forbes articles:

“Community Voice, Competitive Advantage”, Christine Allen

“Entrepreneurial Lessons on Resilience”, Elizabeth MacBride

Further information and resources

everywoman workbook: *Resilience: Bouncing Back*

TED talks: *Listening to Shame*, Brené Brown

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame

Endnotes

- i *Lessons from Europe for American Business*. Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Megginson, L. C., 1963
- ii www.fastcompany.com/3007098/how-maintain-motivation-when-your-goals-are-epic
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