

advancing women in business

every  
woman  
NETWORK



WORKBOOK

# RESILIENCE

## BOUNCING BACK

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## ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

**ESTABLISHED IN 1999**, everywoman works to advance all women in business.

We deliver a range of innovative products and resources that enhance the potential and talent of women in business globally. We also uncover success stories and elevate role models to inspire others across a diverse range of business sectors.

Resilience or 'bounce back-ability' has become a buzzword in recent years. Governments, charities and international organisations conduct studies on our collective ability to recover from natural disasters, terrorist attacks, political turmoil and financial crises.

Where our careers are concerned, resilience is what allows us to navigate the workplace, reaching for goals and striving for success, despite the challenges, setbacks and pitfalls we inevitably encounter on every rung of the ladder. For those of us in management positions or aspiring to senior roles, resilience is often cited as the benchmark of a true leader, whereby we not only personally thrive in extreme situations, but are able to support our teams through adversity so that they too emerge stronger.

So what is resilience, and how can you get more of it? This workbook is designed to get you thinking about your own resilience and how it can affect your mental, emotional and physical health. It will also help you recognise resilient behaviours in yourself and others, so you can apply them to your career, helping you to cope with everyday - and not so everyday - challenges.

We have drawn on research by the health and wellbeing organisation the Stockholm Resilience Centre and leading psychotherapists in the field. These culminate in a series of exercises that enable your understanding of your own resilient behaviours, so you can work on strategies to improve them - helping you to thrive, and not just survive - when life gets tough.

At the end of the workbook you will find a personal action plan. This is where you'll define your own strategy for building your own resilience.

"That which does not kill us,  
makes us stronger"

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

## SECTION 1. WHAT IS RESILIENCE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



# What is resilience and why is it important?

**RESILIENCE IS DEFINED AS** ‘the capacity to cope with changes and challenges, and to bounce back in difficult times’. Professor of Psychiatry at Yale Medical School, Steven Southwick, has spent decades studying individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder to try and uncover the secrets of resilience in human beings.

‘When we began our study,’ he writes in the resulting book, *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges*, ‘we assumed that resilience was rare and resilient people were somehow special, perhaps genetically gifted. It turns out, we were wrong. Resilience is common and can be witnessed all around us. Even better, we learned that everyone can learn and train to be more resilient.’

For some, resilience comes naturally; there is even evidence of a ‘resilience gene’, although genetics are only part of the picture. In addition to what nature provides us at birth, our stressful and most negative experiences can be harnessed into coping mechanisms we can store away for use when we most need them. We all suffer bad days at the office or even long periods where we struggle to keep our careers on track, but by drawing on these very experiences, we are capable of learning to become more resilient.

Being resilient enables us to adapt and take challenges in our stride. It helps us to remain calm and unflappable even when life throws us a curveball. You may already recognise resilient qualities in yourself, or in friends, family, or colleagues. It seems, whatever the setback, resilient people manage to ‘land on their feet’, not only recovering quickly from job losses, relationship problems, monetary setbacks or failed projects, but seemingly with more vigour and renewed energy.

You may already think you lack resilience and instead become overwhelmed by such experiences. You may often find yourself dwelling on problems and adopting unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with such challenges – taking work home with you, forging toxic workplace relationships, worrying about office problems you feel powerless to change. Or it may be that while you bounce back from certain types of difficulties or traumas, you feel ‘stuck’ with others, big or small, from redundancy to receiving critical feedback.

The very first thing to remember is that being resilient does not stop you from experiencing stress and it certainly doesn’t erase life’s difficulties. Instead, improved resilience gives you the strength to tackle problems head-on, helps you overcome adversity and move on with your life, giving you the strength to not just survive, but to prosper.



**A person who is resilient is more likely to:**

- Recognise and manage their feelings
- Empathise with others
- Have a sense of independence and self-worth
- Form and maintain positive, mutually respectful relationships
- Be able to solve problems and make informed decisions
- Have a sense of purpose and realistic goals for the future

*Adapted from [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)*

## SECTION 2. UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESILIENT PERSONALITY



# Understanding your resilient personality

THERE ARE MANY TRAITS that make up a resilient personality. For each of the points on the wheel, think of an example of past behaviour that demonstrates your resilience or make a mental note of those that need more work.





## How resilient are you?

Read through the questions below and rate yourself from 1 to 5.

1 = Not like me at all, 5 = Oh yes, that's me!

SUPPORTIVE NETWORK	1	2	3	4	5
I'm a good listener. I have good empathy skills. Colleagues and employees often come to me for advice and support.					
I have people I can talk to. I can express my feelings (for example to my line manager or a colleague) and ask for help when I need it.					
I have positive experiences of asking others for help.					
The people in my network are interested in my welfare.					

HEALTHY MENTAL ATTITUDE	1	2	3	4	5
I adapt quickly to new developments (for example a change in line management or job description). I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.					
I'm playful. I find humour in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.					
I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties in my projects as temporary and expect to overcome them.					
I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.					
I've been made stronger and more capable by difficult experiences.					

REALISTIC AWARENESS OF SELF	1	2	3	4	5
I feel self-confident, appreciate myself and my contributions, and have a healthy sense of who I am.					
I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.					
I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I behave differently in different situations, for example with newcomers, different members of my management team, or certain clients.					
I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I manage my independent spirit with my cooperative way of working with others.					
I'm non-judgmental about others and adapt well to different personalities.					
I read people well and trust my intuition.					
I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with apparent conflicts in my nature. I'm capable of being both optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.					

POSITIVE RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL CHANGES	1	2	3	4	5
I'm good at solving problems. I can use analytical logic, be creative, or use practical common sense.					
I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.					
I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.					
In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.					

I have found benefits in bad experiences, and believe misfortune can open doors and provide invaluable insight.					
I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.					
I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity & uncertainty about situations.					

*Adapted from Al Seibert PhD - 'The Resiliency Advantage'*

## Your results

Now add up your overall score within each shaded section. Note your totals in the shaded corresponding boxes below. Each category represents the hallmarks of a resilient personality.

**SUPPORTIVE  
NETWORK**

**HEALTHY  
MENTAL  
ATTITUDE**

**REALISTIC  
AWARENESS OF  
SELF**

**POSITIVE  
RESPONSE TO  
EXTERNAL  
CHANGES**

- Do you score more highly in one category than others?
- Is there a category where your score is significantly lower than the others?

## SECTION 3. BUILDING YOUR RESILIENCE



# Building your resilience

**NOW LET'S LOOK AT** each of the categories in turn. In each box make a note of some ways you can improve in each section. We have also included some helpful tips, drawing on the qualities of highly resilient people and other resources at the bottom of each category.

## Supportive network

Being able to rely on the support of friends, relatives and colleagues can be the key to life-long resilience. Many of us 'bottle up' problems and worries because we don't want to burden others by asking for support. Being able to talk through your troubles can significantly improve your ability to cope with trauma and crises.

Over the course of our 15+ years in the business of bringing women together, the everywoman team has heard from countless women for whom a strong and supportive network has been a key factor in their success. Even the most high-achieving women in business still rely on the advice of a trusted mentor in challenging times.

Whether you're at the early stages of building a network, or already have an established group of supportive mentors, peers and experts whose advice you can draw on, take time out regularly to analyse any gaps in your network and work out how you can fill them.

As well as building your existing network, look at ways you can foster greater strength and support from those already in your circle. Reach out to trusted colleagues or peers you've lost touch with and invite them for coffee; look within your team or department to members who you could start to build relationships with. Research has shown that those leaders who feel more 'connected' to others have significantly improved resilience than those who deal with problems alone.

Remember that a supportive network is not a one-way street. Giving your time to listen to others' problems and concerns is not only rewarding but can often give you a clearer perspective on your own worries.

You can find more advice on networking in the everywoman workbook 'An Introduction To Building Strong Networks'. Simply log into your account and browse the 'workbooks' section or search 'building strong networks' from the [everywoman.com](http://everywoman.com) homepage.



**What does 'supportive network' mean to you?**

*e.g. I regularly tell my partner or best friend about my day and the projects I'm working on.*

*e.g. If I'm struggling with a task or my workload, I feel comfortable asking my manager for some time for us to talk things through.*

*e.g. I have colleagues I can ask for feedback or advice when I'm feeling unsure.*

**How can you improve your supportive network?**

*e.g. I'll take steps to find a mentor whose advice I can call on in times of need.*

*e.g. I'll reconnect with peers or colleagues I've lost touch with and invite them for a coffee to catch up.*

*e.g. I'll tell my best friend about some challenging workplace behaviour I'm experiencing.*

## Highly resilient people:

### Have strong connections

Research shows that people in toxic working conditions are more stress-resistant and less likely to get sick, when they have a loving family and good friendships.

People who are lonely are more vulnerable to distressing conditions. Talking with colleagues, friends and family diminishes the impact of difficulties and increases feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

### Read others with empathy

Resilient leaders have elevated levels of EQ (emotional intelligence). One aspect of EQ is being able to look at things from others' points of view, even when you don't necessarily agree with them. Taking time to see something through someone else's eyes can be hugely beneficial.

## Healthy Mental Attitude

A healthy mental attitude is more than just being kind to yourself and bolstering your self-esteem; it also requires acceptance of the many facets of your personality. We often find it difficult to be honest with ourselves about our thoughts and emotions - particularly the negative ones.

For example, feelings of jealousy and anger are not attractive emotions, and we can feel bad for having them. Holding on to these negative emotions can leave us susceptible to on-going problems because we haven't acknowledged and confronted them. Also, being unable to isolate the cause of these negative thoughts and behaviours can make it difficult to deal with them in a constructive way.

### What does a healthy mental attitude mean to you?

*e.g. Acknowledging that though I'm not an angry person, I am capable of feeling anger.*

*e.g. Letting go of resentments and disappointments from opportunities that I've missed out on in the past.*

*e.g. Understanding what my weaknesses are but at the same time taking care to celebrate my strengths and achievements.*

### How can you improve your mental attitude?

*e.g. Acknowledging that I feel jealous or resentful of a peer, and taking time to acknowledge the root cause of my feelings.*

*e.g. Stop ascribing blame to myself or others for failed projects, and focus instead on what has been learned.*

*e.g. Reflect on areas of my workload where I haven't performed as well as I'd have liked, but then learn from it and move on.*

### Highly resilient people:

#### Have robust self-esteem and self-confidence

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself. It determines how much you learn after something goes wrong. It allows you to receive praise and compliments. It acts as a buffer against hurtful statements while being receptive to constructive criticism.

Resilient people take risks without waiting for approval or reassurance from others and handle new situations well because of their past successes.

#### Express feelings honestly

You can experience and express anger, love, dislike, appreciation, grief - the entire range of human emotions honestly and openly. You can also choose to suppress your feelings when you believe it is best to do so.

## Realistic Awareness Of Self

Awareness of self is all about trust; trusting in your own capabilities and your view of the world around you. But the most important word here is 'realistic'. You need to be able to ask yourself 'Is this a realistic view of who I am and what I can do?'

It is widely maintained that women are more likely to underplay their abilities. Many studies suggest women will not apply for a new role because they don't believe they have all the skills the job requires. Men, on the other hand, are happier to take a chance and go for it even if they are lacking in certain areas. But it's important to remember that over-selling yourself can be as unhelpful as under-selling.

We all know plenty of over-confident and arrogant people. They have inflated views of themselves, and are seemingly impervious to criticism or the threat of failure; but studies conducted by Sander Thomaes at Utrecht University, Netherlands suggest that:

'...distorted self-views promote emotional vulnerability and...realistic self-views promote emotional resilience.'

Thomaes found that people with unrealistically inflated opinions of themselves were no more resilient than the rest of us. In fact, they were more likely to struggle with negative emotions. Although some psychologists suggest that 'positive illusions' bolster our self-esteem and help us cope with the threats of rejection or criticism, Thomaes believes a realistic self-awareness is a much healthier state of mind.

So there you go - being realistic wins out.

### What does realistic self-awareness mean to you?

*e.g. Being able to trust my intuition.*

*e.g. Taking on board the points - both positive and constructive - from my last performance review.*

*e.g. Taking time to think about how I'd like to be perceived and how I am actually perceived.*



### How can you improve your awareness?

*e.g. Think about times when I've oversold or undersold myself and look at the outcomes of these experiences.*

*e.g. Garner more feedback from managers and direct reports.*

*e.g. Take time to really listen during one-to-one meetings and team discussions.*

### Highly resilient people:

#### Defend themselves well

Resilience means knowing how to avoid and block attacks, fighting back when necessary. It also means seeing through and sidestepping any cons, games, and manipulations that others attempt.

#### Use intuition and creative hunches

Resilient people accept intangible perceptions and intuitions as valid and useful sources of information. They are able to trust their guts and use this as well as facts when making decisions. They ask themselves: What is my body telling me? Did that daydream mean anything? Why don't I believe what I'm being told?

#### Turn difficult situations into advantageous ones

Learning lessons in the school of life is the antidote to feeling victimised. Resilient people can convert a situation considered emotionally toxic by others, into something emotionally nutritious for them. In other words, they thrive in distressing situations because they learn good lessons from bad experiences. They convert misfortune into good luck and gain strength from adversity.

## Responding positively to external changes

Ask yourself the question: Do you believe you have control over your own career? Now consider your behaviour when things go wrong at work or a situation escalates out of your control. Do you take responsibility or do you blame outside sources for failures and problems?

Psychologists believe resilient people have what they call an 'internal locus of control'. This is when a person believes that the actions they take will affect the outcome of an event. Of course, some factors are simply outside of our personal control. While we may be able to put some blame on external causes, it is important to feel as if we have the power to make choices that will affect our situations, our ability to cope, and our futures.

### Born Survivors

Having a positive response to imposed change is essential when dealing with any potential crisis. If you are able to view yourself as a survivor, you will avoid seeing yourself as a victim of circumstance and instead look for ways to resolve the problem. While the situation may be unavoidable, you can still stay focused on a positive outcome.

#### What does responding positively to external changes mean to you?

*e.g. Using humour to get through a tricky or difficult situation.*

*e.g. Focusing on the potential advantages of a change, rather than worrying about how those changes could affect me (for example when my department is being restructured, or budgets are being cut).*

*e.g. Thinking about what can be learned from others whose decisions are influencing my working life.*

### How can you improve your response to external changes?

*e.g. I will remember to look back at the difficult situations I have faced and assess my response to them.*

*e.g. I will take a moment to notice how other people in my team are responding to change, to see what I can learn from them*

*e.g. When change occurs, I will look for the possibilities and opportunities that exist for me within it, relishing the challenge or seeing the fun in doing something new.*

### Highly resilient people:

#### Are playful, and possess a childlike curiosity

They are naturally curious, asking lots of questions to help them understand how things work. They play with new developments. They are open to experimentation, make mistakes, and laugh a lot.

They never stop learning from experiences, rapidly acclimatise to new situations, and look for the lessons to be learned.

#### Adapt quickly

Resilient people are mentally and emotionally flexible. They are comfortable with their own contradictory personality traits (strong yet gentle, sensitive yet tough, logical yet intuitive, serious yet playful and so on). They can also think in negative ways in order to reach positive outcomes (What could go wrong? How can I avoid that?).

#### Expect things to work out well

Deep optimism is intrinsic in resilient people, along with high tolerance for uncertainty.

## SECTION 4. WHAT IS STRESS AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT RESILIENCE?



# What is stress and how does it affect resilience?

**IN THIS SECTION** we're going to examine how stress affects our bodies, the different types of stress, and how resilient people behave in such situations. Then we'll look at the coping mechanisms you can employ to increase your resilience in stressful times.

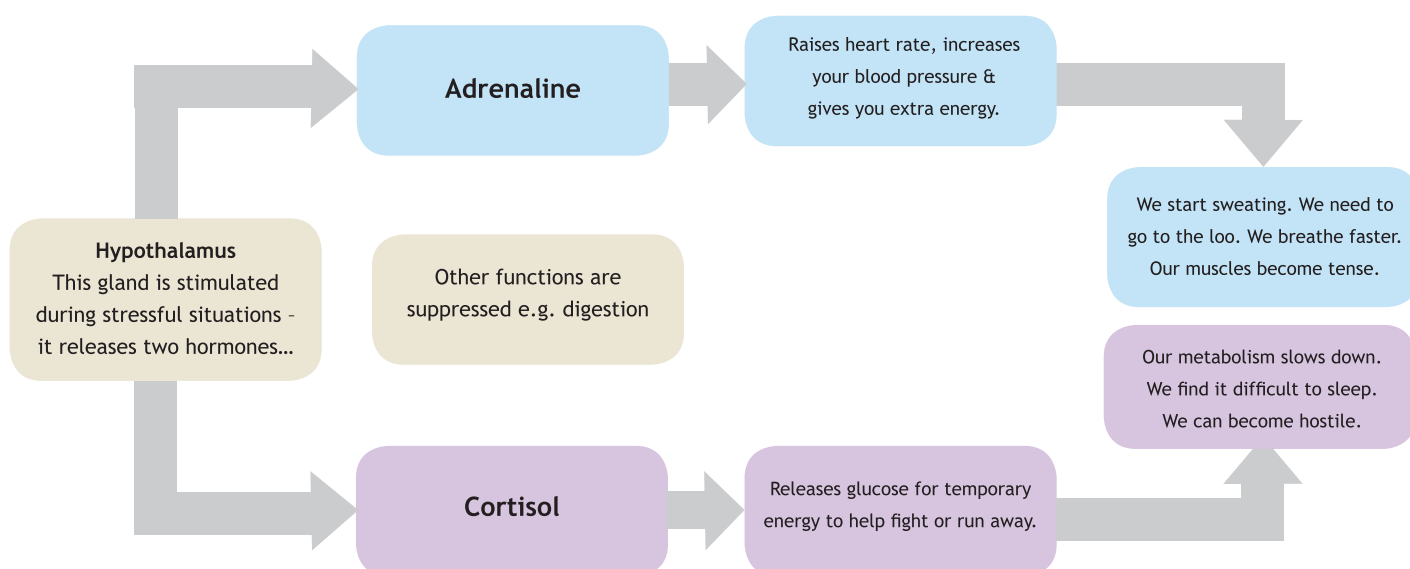
It's important to remember that resilience does not mean you don't feel stress, suffer negative emotions or even depression, or encounter problems in your relationships both with co-workers and at home. Resilience is about how you work through those emotions to come out the other side stronger.

## What is stress?

- It's our body's response to difficult or demanding circumstances.
- It's completely normal.
- 'Good' stress helps us to perform and survive. 'Bad' stress makes us ill.

## The science of stress

Below is a simple diagram that explains the body's response to stress. You can imagine how useful this response would have been when we were battling saber-toothed tigers. Adrenaline and cortisol would have flushed quickly through our systems, allowing us to become 'super-human' for short periods. Nowadays our hectic lifestyles have us metaphorically battling tigers in the workplace, but unfortunately these hormones can have a damaging effect on our body over time.





## Types of stress

THERE ARE FOUR established types of stress - as you read through them you may be able to link them to stressful situations you have already experienced.

### 1. Eustress

- Short-term stress
- Positive
- Extra energy or inspiration
- Motivation
- Focus and energy needed in order to perform
- Drivers of eustress might be getting a promotion and starting a new job, taking on a new team, approaching the launch of a major project you've been leading or involved in
- The corporate world is full of eustress and individuals who thrive on its challenges, always looking for the next opportunity to learn something new. But many executives repeatedly flip between eustress and more negative forms of stress, which over time can have repercussions both psychologically and physiologically.
- The resilient person is aware of when their 'good' stress is tipping into something more destructive. They can take a step back to analyse how they are feeling and what led them to this, and can engage their resilience strategies – drawing on their network for support, keeping a perspective and an optimistic outlook, being mindful of their feelings, even finding humour in the situation. That's not to say that resilient people do not suffer any of the more negative types of stress described below. At the end of this section we'll look at ways to use resilient behaviours to tackle some of these.

You feel happy and productive. Excited about the day & ready to take on the next challenge!

### 2. Distress

- Negative stress
- Anxiety, severe trauma or mental suffering
- Reaction to an upsetting event in workplace or personal life
- Over time you can become clinically depressed
- Two types of distress: acute stress & chronic stress:

You cry easily or feel overwhelmed. You feel there's nothing to look forward to. You may also feel isolated and experience physical aches and pains.

### Acute Stress

- Short-term
- Response to directly perceived threat, either physical or psychological
- The threat can be real or imagined

### Chronic Stress

- Long-term stress that occurs frequently
- Serious health problems e.g. depression, diabetes, heart disease or weight gain or weight loss.
- You can get used to it and may not realise that you are under this type of stress.

### Hyperstress

- Forced to perform above your normal capacity
- Heavy workloads and tight deadlines
- Emotions run high and the smallest event can trigger a highly emotional outbreak

You lose your temper quickly. You worry, become anxious, maybe even paranoid.

### Hypostress

- Opposite to hyperstress
- Happens when a person is constantly bored
- Unchallenging job
- Frequently restless and uninspired
- As you can imagine chronic stress is, in lots of ways, the most concerning because we get used to it, sub-consciously, or even consciously, deciding to ignore the signs

You feel lethargic, perhaps even hopeless. You lose confidence and begin to feel like a victim of circumstance.

# Your personal stress profile

AS WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN, learning from past problems is a key way that we can build up resilience to help us in the present and future.

We have all suffered from both positive and negative types of stress in the workplace, so the first step to building up your resilience around stressful situations is to create your own personal stress profile.

This will build up a picture of how you behave in certain stressful situations (you may even see a pattern emerge in the types of 'triggers' that cause you stress), and give you an insight into how you might better deal with similar situations in future or, equally, learn from times when you dealt with a stressful situation brilliantly.

Sharing your personal stress profile with someone you trust – a colleague, friend or mentor, can be beneficial, as they may often be able to identify problems or recall other resilient steps you took to overcoming stress. On the following page there is a blank table for you to fill in your own personal stress profile.

TYPES OF STRESS I WAS EXPERIENCING	WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER?	WHAT WERE MY SYMPTOMS	WHAT STEPS DID I TAKE?	WHAT CAN I DO DIFFERENTLY?
e.g. Acute stress	e.g. New boss I didn't know very well or get on with.	e.g. Anxiety, insomnia, over-reacting to minor situations, unable to relax after work.	e.g. Talked through the situation with family, friends and co-workers.	e.g. Talk to my support network earlier on; ask for time with line manager so I can get to know their working style and understand them better.
e.g. Hyperstress	e.g. Co-worker left and I was given extra workload.	e.g. Exhaustion, constant worry over ability to hit deadlines.	e.g. Worked long hours until a replacement was found for co-worker.	e.g. Rather than work through the 'foginess', put the task at hand to one side and draw up a plan of how to tackle it, involving a line manager, and requesting help when I need it. Reflecting on what went well each day and looking for the humour in the craziest situations.

Once you've identified the key strategies you've successfully used in the past to overcome stressful situations, look back at the key markers of resilience and note any gaps in behaviours you're missing from your personal strategy. Which elements can you build into your personal stress profile for future use?

Resilient leaders often have tried and tested ways that they tackle workplace stress early on, often before it even arises. Huffington Post founder Arianna Huffington takes regular ‘digital detoxes’ when she starts to feel ‘eustress’ tipping into something more destructive. everywomanClub member Melanie Eusebe keeps a notebook by her bed in which she records all of those late night work niggles that come to mind as she’s trying to drop off. If you haven’t yet identified your key stress-busters, take a look at our workbook ‘60 Minutes to Wellbeing’ for inspiration and ideas.

TYPES OF STRESS I WAS EXPERIENCING	WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER?	WHAT WERE MY SYMPTOMS	WHAT STEPS DID I TAKE?	WHAT CAN I DO DIFFERENTLY?

## SECTION 5. RESILIENT LEADERSHIP





# Resilient leadership

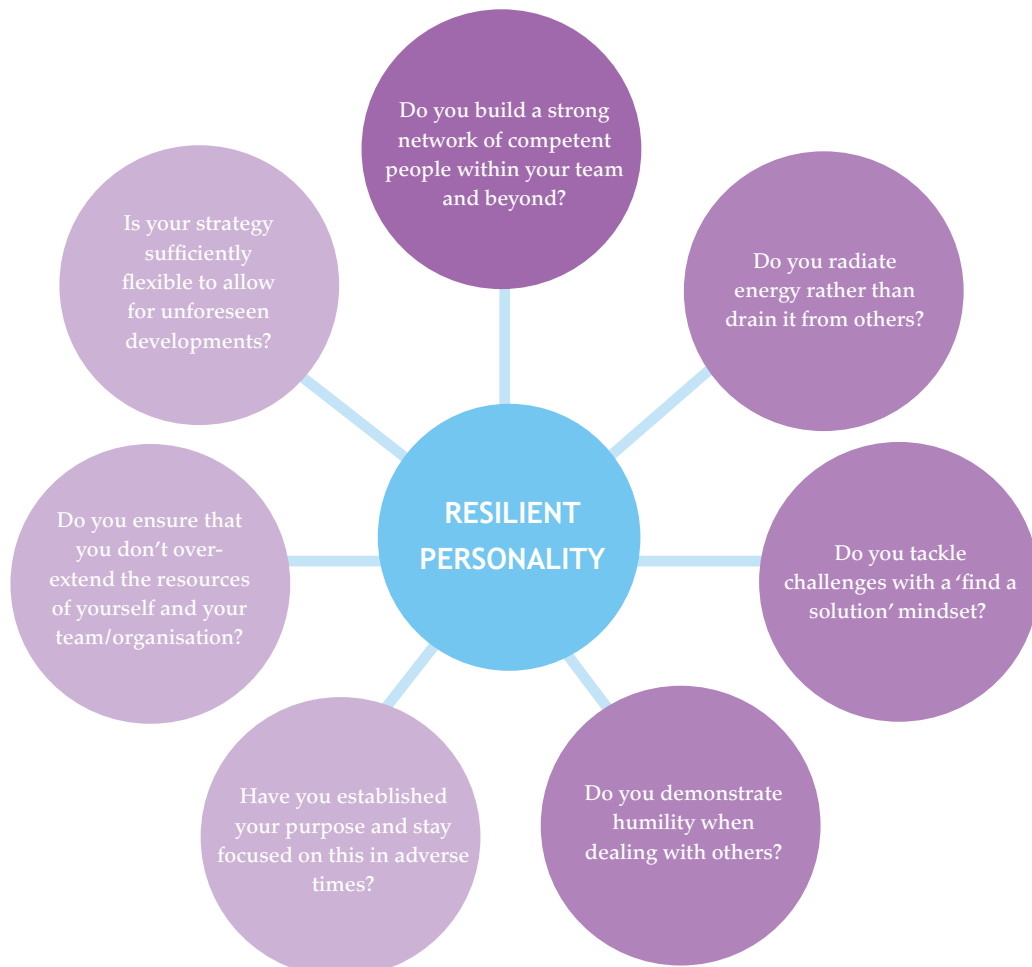
WE'VE ALREADY TOUCHED UPON resilience as a marker of solid leadership.

If you think about some of the leaders in our everyday lives – politicians, CEOs of giant corporations – it's not difficult to identify those who demonstrate resilience, staying the course despite public criticism or enormous setbacks. They often appear to emerge tougher and more formidable than ever before.

Resilience in leadership isn't just about self-preservation, it's about the preservation of your teams. Resilient leaders seldom discover reliance skills when they step into their first senior role. They've more often than not developed those skills over the course of their careers, using the methodologies we've already discussed.

As you grow in your career it's worth regularly checking in to analyse your resilience skills with one eye on the 'future you'. If you have particular goals and ambitions whose realisation will inevitably bring with it new stresses, laying the foundations for a resilient 'future you' will be hugely beneficial later on. If you're already a leader, take time once in a while to assess your resilience strategies and see where you might be missing a few.

Ask yourself the following questions to start you thinking about your resilience in leadership capabilities:



Whether you're an aspiring leader in the early days of management, or an experienced manager of people, it's useful to score the resilience skills we looked at in an earlier chapter with specific focus on how they relate to management.

## Recognising strengths and weaknesses

SUPPORTIVE NETWORK	1	2	3	4	5
I'm a good listener. I encourage my team to seek advice and be open about issues.					
I have positive experiences of others asking me for help. My colleagues feel able to ask for my support and advice.					
I am interested in the welfare of my team.					

HEALTHY MENTAL ATTITUDE	1	2	3	4	5
I adapt quickly to new developments at work and am able to steer my team through change effectively.					
I'm usually optimistic during change or upheaval and extend that optimism to my team.					
I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. Feelings of anger or disappointment don't last long and I don't allow things to fester within my team.					

REALISTIC AWARENESS OF SELF	1	2	3	4	5
I lead my team with confidence and have a healthy sense of my leadership style.					
I learn valuable lessons from my experience and from the experiences of others.					
I'm non-judgmental about my colleagues and direct reports and adapt to their different personalities.					

POSITIVE RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL CHANGES	1	2	3	4	5
I'm good at solving problems. I can use analytical logic, be creative, or use practical common sense.					
In a crisis or chaotic situation, I remain calm and support my team by helping them to focus on taking useful actions.					
I encourage my team to ask questions. I like to encourage them to try new ways of doing things.					

*Adapted from Al Seibert PhD - 'The Resiliency Advantage'*

## Your results

To give you an indication of your ability to create a resilient environment for your team at work, add up your overall score within each shaded section. Jot your totals in the shaded corresponding boxes below. Each category represents the hallmarks of a resilient personality.

**SUPPORTIVE  
NETWORK**

**HEALTHY  
MENTAL  
ATTITUDE**

**REALISTIC  
AWARENESS OF  
SELF**

**POSITIVE  
RESPONSE TO  
EXTERNAL  
CHANGES**

- Do you score more highly in one category than others?
- Is there a category where your score is significantly lower than the others?

## Five steps to team resilience

**IF YOU ARE IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE** you may wish to implement the five steps to workplace resilience highlighted below. If you are unable to make strategic changes, due to your level within the company, you can still follow these steps by leading by example.



## SECTION 6. YOU RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN



## Your resilience action plan

**BUILDING RESILIENCE** is a career-long process, and often comes when we learn from our workplace and life experiences.

So, throughout the workbook we've introduced you to some of the tools you need to become stronger and more resilient. It's now your opportunity to make a promise to yourself to use the tools.

Consider the improvements you would like to make and write down four actions based on the four characteristics of resilient behaviour (supportive network, healthy mental attitude, realistic awareness of self, positive response to external changes). These actions may include ways to reduce stress or new ways to work with your team, whatever you believe needs your time and focus. This will help you focus on your resilience development.

It is important to revisit this exercise, especially when you are experiencing difficulties. It will remind you to apply positive coping strategies enabling you to break bad habits and come out on top!

ACTIVITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	COMPLETE BY
I will make sure I don't bottle up my stress by talking to colleagues about my workload	A stronger network based on two-way, supportive relationships	On-going; assess every 3 months
I will do my best to ask more questions and find out more about uncertain situations	Broader knowledge about workplace operations and less 'fazed' by change	In next 121 with boss/departmental meeting

every  
woman

This workbook has been produced and edited by everywoman, with content commissioned from associate expert Sally Kettle. It is part of the everywoman portfolio of resources that have been specially created to support and develop women as they advance their careers and businesses.

## everywoman Expert



Sally Kettle is an experienced adventurer, team leader and motivational speaker. As an ocean rower and yachtswoman she has faced many life-threatening situations. She is very frank about her own mental health demons, which in many ways contributed to her first (world record-breaking) Atlantic Ocean row. As a qualified personal trainer, Sally has also worked with international athletes during the London 2012 Olympic Games.

## Further reading

- 60 Minutes to Wellbeing - Your Personal Action Plan [everywoman.com/user/workbook](http://everywoman.com/user/workbook)
- Liggy Webb, Resilience - How to cope when everything around you keeps changing (Capstone, 2013)
- How to Make Stress Your Friend: [http://www.ted.com/talks/kelly\\_mcgonigal\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_stress\\_your\\_friend](http://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend)

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## Footnotes and Glossary

[http://responseability.org/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/4783/Promoting-Resilience-and-Wellbeing.pdf](http://responseability.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/4783/Promoting-Resilience-and-Wellbeing.pdf)

Dr Al Siebert - The Resiliency Center – [www.resiliencycenter.com](http://www.resiliencycenter.com)

Thomaes, S., Reijntjes, A., Orobio de Castro, B., & Bushman, B. (2009). Reality Bites-or Does It? Realistic Self-Views Buffer Negative Mood Following Social Threat Psychological Science DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02395.x