

## **Resilience**

### **Our ability to bounce back**

Resilience comes from the Latin word 'resilio' - to bounce back; the ability to deal with difficult situations and to recover, to rebound, to get back on track. It is impossible to go through life without challenges, disappointments and traumas from which we will need to recover and get back to work (and life).

Resilience is not about forgetting about the difficulties that we have faced, or ignoring the challenge of those adversities; these experiences and difficulties will change us, and they will impact on our emotional selves and response to future crises.

What resilience is about, though, is enabling us to think in times of difficulty, to consider our behavioural and emotional responses despite the challenges we face. In other words, resilience helps us to deal with the situation in a constructive and a creative way.

With resilience, we can turn challenges into opportunities, learn from adversity and develop strategies to ensure that the physical and mental collateral is manageable.

Resilience can help us not only survive at work, but it can also help us to flourish and develop. It can help us transform difficult and challenging situations into learning so our skill and understanding grow. When you face adversity it is understandable that you might feel anguished or angry, yet resilient people seem to be able to continue to function - physically and psychologically.

Wherever we work, and whatever role we deliver, we all have the power to become more resilient, to change our thinking and our response to failure. We will have setbacks, we will be challenged, we will be disappointed, but, drawing on our inner strength, we can bounce back.

Wherever you are now in your relationship with resilience, there is potential to develop. You can build your resilience reserves and face your future with excitement and energy. Failure, adversity and change will of course impact on you, but you can bounce back, you can cultivate resilience.

*This, and the exercises to follow are extracted and lightly edited from **Bounce Back: How to fail fast and be resilient at work**, by Dr Susan Kahn. Published in Great Britain and the United States in 2020 by Kogan Page. Permission to reproduce has kindly been granted by the author.*

## Resilience Self-Assessment

When exploring our resilience, there is often a disparity between our own sense of resilience and the way others see us. It could be that we feel far frailer than we are seen to be.. Or perhaps because we are quiet, we might be judged as being less resilient.

The situations in which we find ourselves can also vary greatly, as, too, can our resilience in these circumstances.

Thinking about yourself at work, how would you rate your sense of resilience?

Award yourself a mark out of 10, where 10 is the most resilient.

How would others rate you? Ask a few people (suggestions below), to give you a mark out of 10.

There is no right or wrong response to the questions posed; the intention is to get you to pause and examine yourself a little more closely.

### On a scale of 1 - 10:

- How would you rate yourself?
- How would your partner rate you?
- How would a colleague rate you?
- How would a coach or mentor rate you?
- How would your line manager rate you?
- How would a friend rate you?

Look at the marks and consider what this might mean?

Is there a disparity?

In exploring your self-assessment and the way in which you imagine others see you, it might be worth considering how optimistic or pessimistic you feel you are as a person.

Consider how you have behaved when you have had setbacks. Do you find it easy to let go and then carry on, or do these setbacks tend to stay with you?

## Resilience Self-Awareness

Take some time to ask yourself the following questions. Reflect on each topic and this will help you to understand how to assess your relationship to resilience currently. Remember: your relationship to resilience is not static. It can change over time and in different circumstances.

This exercise may require some time to complete as you reflect on your experiences. You do not have to rush through each question; take your time and begin to understand your foundations and how the relationship of these key elements of your identity impact your resilience.

This exercise will help you begin to uncover where your potential blind spots might be lurking.

- 1) Was your family life secure?
- 2) Did you have to deal with particular trauma or change in early life?
- 3) Have you had to deal with many challenges in your life?
- 4) How did you cope with adversities, large or small?
- 5) Are you a self-confessed pessimist?
- 6) Or are you an optimist?
- 7) How quickly do you move on from setbacks and disappointments?
- 8) How would your colleagues describe the way you deal with setbacks and disappointments?
- 9) What have you learned about yourself when you have dealt with disappointment?
- 10) What support have you drawn on from others?
- 11) How have you helped yourself to get through difficulties?

## Reasons To Be Resilient

Tick the statements that apply to you.

**I want to be more resilient so that....**

- 1) I can feel more confident
- 2) I can be a better manager
- 3) I can support my peers
- 4) I can get over .....
- 5) I will be less anxious
- 6) I will worry less
- 7) I will be able to say no
- 8) I will have a better work/life balance
- 9) I can achieve more
- 10) I can waste less time on self-doubt
- 11) I can enjoy my success
- 12) I can apply for promotion

To further build your self-awareness, rank these in order of importance to you.

**I want to be more resilient so that....**

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)
- 11)
- 12)