

Resiliency in the Workplace

Of the many factors that go into successful change, whether personal or business-related, the most important may be resiliency.

Resilience is the measure of one's ability to welcome challenges, overcome adversity and get back on track to achieving our goals. Consider the following information to learn more about the importance of resiliency amid changing times.

What is resilience?

Resilience is more than coping; it is about confronting crises and difficult situations without becoming overwhelmed. Resilient people are better able to handle life's stressors and to adapt to changing situations. Being resilient can help protect you from depression, stress and anxiety, too.

Some of the characteristics of resilient people include:

- Having strong relationships
- Self-motivated
- A positive view of oneself and one's strengths and abilities
- Strong communication and problem-solving skills
- Self-awareness
- Good emotional control

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Building a career can be stressful. No one has even achieved career satisfaction without facing some setbacks. That is why resilience is such a useful workplace tool. Resilience means controlling your ego, not panicking in the face of a setback, and having the patience and ability to stay focused on long-term goals. Being resilient can help you weather storms, remain steady and make rational decisions instead of being driven by emotion. How can you cope with the regular changes inherent in business today? There will always be periods of large growth, times of relative stability and times where the economy slows or recedes. To thrive, businesses must respond to this fluctuation appropriately.

While workplace upheaval can be stressful, there are things you can do to cope with this challenging environment:

- **Find a healthy balance.** Your work is important. However, it is unhealthy for you mentally, physically and socially if you are constantly consumed in your job. Take a break from the stress and uncertainty by surrounding yourself with loved ones and finding positive outlets to spend your free time.
- **Be positive.** There is only so much you can control. How you feel about your situation is one of those things. Look for the silver lining and practice positive self-affirmations. It can change your mood and outlook on life.
- **Look for the gray area.** Even though it may seem so, not everything is strictly black and white or gain and loss. Search for the middle ground, as it can be a far less stressful place.

How to Manage Anger and Stress

A new boss. A drop in headcount. A change in procedure. When facing change, it is fairly common for those in the workplace today to feel anger and stress. It is important, however, to remember that allowing such emotions to control you leads to mental, physical and social consequences.

If anger is getting the best of you, there are a number of steps you can take to manage it in a healthier way:

- **Relax and calm down.** Take deep breaths. Count to ten and let the tension escape from your body. Try relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga and progressive muscle relaxation.
- **Remove yourself from the environment.** If a person or situation is causing you to feel extremely angry, or if you feel that you cannot talk about your emotions or express your anger positively, excuse yourself and walk away.
- **Identify the source.** What exactly is making you angry?

- **Think before taking action.** Carefully consider the consequences of your response. Will you regret saying what is on your mind? Is there a better way to express your anger than the first idea that comes to mind? Do not overreact. Avoid making assumptions or guesses; know the facts before you speak out about someone or something.
- **Assert yourself appropriately.** If you feel strongly about something, do not hold back from saying what is on your mind. Let the other person know what you want. Be clear and direct in your message.
- **Divert your attention.** If there is nothing you can do to change the situation, (e.g., you are stuck in a terrible traffic jam that is making you frustrated), think of something else. Focus on a pleasant thought, an upcoming vacation or a happy memory.
- **Find humor in the situation.** When appropriate, learn to laugh at life and conflicts with others. Break the tension and defuse the situation with a smile, a joke or a humorous (but not sarcastic) comment.
- **Be patient.** Try to be tolerant and empathetic of others. Attempt to understand their situations and behaviors.
- **Find a substitute outlet for anger.** Instead of acting on an aggressive urge, find a creative outlet for your energy. Start an exercise program. Take up a physically challenging new sport like kickboxing. Try a new hobby or artistic endeavor such as painting.
- **Get advice from others.** If you simply do not know how to deal with an angry feeling or situation, ask friends or family for suggestions on how they got through similar situations.

There are also a number of ways you can alleviate stress in your day-to-day life. Here are ten to consider:

- **Get enough sleep.** If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
- Schedule a realistic day. If you cannot avoid back-to-back appointments, try to at least give yourself a few moments to relax.
- **Do not rely on your memory.** Write down appointment times, assignment due dates, etc. As an old Chinese proverb states, "The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory."
- **Be prepared to wait.** A paperback, crossword puzzle or cell phone game can make a wait in a post-office line almost pleasant.
- **Procrastination is stressful.** Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
- **Relax your standards.** If you cannot mow the lawn this weekend or if you must change the sheets on Sunday instead of Saturday, it is not a big deal.
- **Learn to say 'no.'** Saying no to extra projects, social events and activities you do not have the time or energy for takes practice.
- **Eliminate destructive self-talk.** "I cannot ..." or "I am too inexperienced to ..." are negative thoughts that can increase stress levels.
- **Take time for yourself.** Understand that everyone needs quiet time every day to relax and be alone.
- **Turn off your phone.** Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep or read without interruption? Gather the courage to temporarily disconnect.

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