

Where Does Your Resilience Come From?

This exercise is adapted from Scott Taylor, The Arthur M. Blank Endowed Chair for Values-Based Leadership at The Blank School at Babson College.



When life takes uncertain and unpredictable turns, it's important to meet the moment with grit and flexibility. We call this resilience, and it's what keeps us moving forward even when faced with adversity. My friend and colleague, Edward Powley (associate professor, Naval Post Graduate School) defines leader resilience as:

- » *The capacity to bounce back when faced with setbacks*
- » *The return to equilibrium after disruption*
- » *Positive adjustment in the face of adversity*

How Do Leaders Become Resilient?

I believe leader resilience is something you find rather than something that you have. Thus, being resilient in one context or with one group of people may not equate to being resilient in another context or with a different group of people. I have also found that what helps leaders find resilience and what will help others find resilience differs. We do not find it in the same ways.

Finding Your Own Resilience

You can increase your capacity to find and develop your leader resilience, in turn helping you more effectively help others to do the same. Let's start with how you find resilience. Part of your answer to that question depends on how you have found resilience in the past. One clue can be found by looking at especially resilient moments from your past. You can use these moments to identify some of your key strategies and strengths in finding resilience.

How would you complete the following statements?

I am brave when ...

I can run long and hard when ...

I always do outstanding work when ...

I bounce back or recover more quickly in difficult times when ...

As you review what you wrote, what patterns do you notice? The themes that emerge serve as clues to how you have found resilience in your prior experiences.