
Strengthening Your Resilience in an Age of Uncertainty

Strategies for Enhancing
Your Capacities for
Surviving (and Thriving on) Change



Helping Build and Sustain Great Organizations!

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www.RussellConsultingInc.com

E-Mail: RCI@RussellConsultingInc.com

Tel 608.274.4482

The Forces Driving Change and Their Effects

What are the Forces Driving Change?

What changes are occurring in our society, this country, and the world today that are affecting the way that we personally live and work or the way that our organizations operate? What forces are moving us in new directions?

How are Employees Responding to these Forces Driving Change?

How are employees responding to these forces driving change? What are the **negative** and **positive** responses people are experiencing?

In general, how are people feeling? Are they feeling anxious, sad, concerned, worried, angry, and overwhelmed? Or are they feeling excited, enthused, proactive, and engaged? Do we see both types of responses?

Negative Reactions	Positive Reactions

Resilience and Its Importance

What Does it Mean to be Resilient?

Based upon the examples given and your own experience . . . identify what it means to be resilient. When we say that someone is resilient, what are we saying about this person?

Resilience is Important . . .

To us as individuals because: _____

To our organization(s) because: _____

Resilience is . . .

Notes from the PowerPoint Slides: _____



The Role of Resilience in Dealing with Life's Challenges . . .

Without Resilience . . .

Our anxiety, self-doubt, confusion, frustration can . . .

- Erode our personal effectiveness and job performance
- Create higher levels of mistrust and resistance
- Negatively affect our personal health and well-being
- Decrease our ability to find the “hidden opportunity” that is essential if we are to make the change work for ourselves and the organization
- Stifle our creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capacities
- Make the next change, setback, or difficulty that much harder . . .

With Resilience . . .

Resilience enables us to . . .

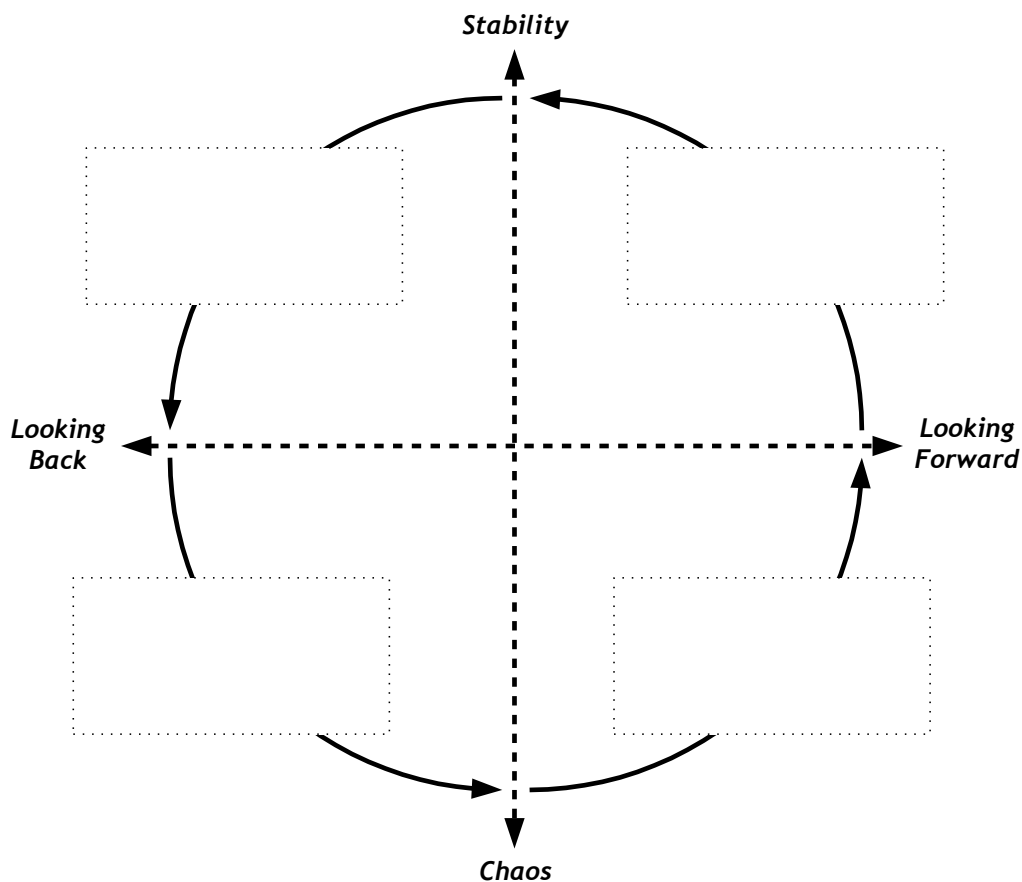
- View change as an opportunity for learning and growth
- Discover the possible opportunities of every change or challenge — no matter how difficult
- Shape or influence the change such that it works *with* and *for* us
- Handle multiple challenges and changes simultaneously
- Help others through a change, loss, setbacks
- View setbacks not as fatal personal flaws or failures — but as temporary states
- Have the capacity to see beyond the stress, anxiety, confusion, and frustration of the moment
- View the larger picture and grander vision of the present and emerging future
- Remain calm and centered (mindful) – which enables us to respond professionally in challenging situations

The Importance of Resilience

When change is thrust upon us, it often pushes us out of a place of comfort, control, and complacency (**Comfort and Control** in the model below). Change introduces *instability* into this safe environment by attempting to pull apart the personal, social, and organizational structures that provide us clarity, direction, and cohesion.

When we are pushed out of this “comfort zone,” we are likely to experience confusion, anxiety, self-doubt, anger, and fear. Many of the old rules, pathways, structures, and methods of the past have been taken away. Resilience gives us the capacity to more effectively deal with the uncertainty of this chaotic place (**Fear, Anger, and Resistance**). Without resilience, the anxiety that emerges can erode our personal effectiveness and job performance, create higher levels of distrust and resistance, and decrease our ability to find the “hidden opportunity” that is essential if we are to make the change work for ourselves and the organization. Resilience enables us to complete the change journey by finding integrative, forward-looking solutions (**Inquiry, Experimentation and Discovery**) and embracing the structures of the new and emerging world (**Learning, Acceptance, and Commitment**).

A Model for Understanding the Emotional Response to Change

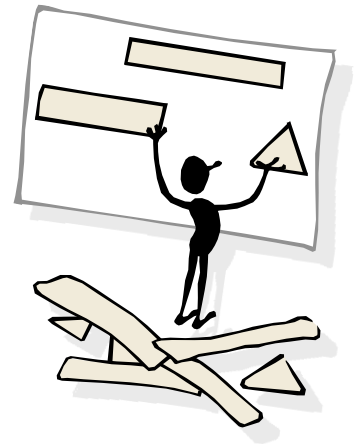


From **Change Basics** (ASTD Press, 2006) by Jeff and Linda Russell

Human Nature and the *Character* of Change . . .

There are certain characteristics of being human that pose a special challenge when change — especially radical or traumatic change — occurs.

1. **People find comfort in being able to maintain control over the events and circumstances of their lives.** The most basic and fundamental level in Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* represents this core characteristic of human nature. Satisfying this basic need gives people a sense of stability, security and safety.
2. With this basic need being met, people develop **self-confidence and psychological** health and integration by building stable and effective relationships with others.
3. Much of our sense of control, comfort, and psychological well-being results from the **degree of certainty** we have about the path of our life. When our experience matches our own expectations about our future, we feel a measure of control and certainty.
4. **Change disrupts our ability to predict with certainty what's in store for us tomorrow.** When change threatens our capacity to envision our own future, when it seems to jeopardize our future safety and security, and when it jeopardizes our relationships with others, we can be plunged into insecurity, self-doubt, confusion, fear, anxiety, and even depression.
5. The more that a given change or set of changes disrupts our sense of self and our ability to envision our future with a degree of certainty, the more **confusion, fear, anxiety, and self-doubt** we are likely to experience.
6. **Resilience gives us the capacity to survive — even thrive in — a radically changing environment.**



What Enabled You to be Resilient in the Past?

Think of a challenge that you had to overcome in your past. This challenge might have been a personal one or something that you faced at work.

What were the characteristics that enabled you to be *resilient* in the face of this situation and the turmoil, stress, and difficulties that you faced?



(a) Reflect upon this specific incident or period in your life that you found especially challenging or difficult for you . . . one that may have caused you to struggle to regain your footing in life. Perhaps it was the death of a loved-one, emotional or physical trauma of some sort, a significant change in your work or job, a major setback to one or more of your life goals, or some other life circumstance that created stress and anxiety for you.

(b) Now identify the specific capacities within you that enabled you to work through the difficulty or trauma, rise above the turmoil and stress, and emerge as a stronger person. What personal qualities and characteristics helped you survive the setbacks and challenge? What factors *outside* of you enable you to make it through this situation?

Personal Characteristics within Me that Helped Me Deal with this Situation:

Characteristics in the Environment Around Me that Helped Me Deal with this Situation:

The Characteristics of Resilient People

The Eight Dimensions of Resilience

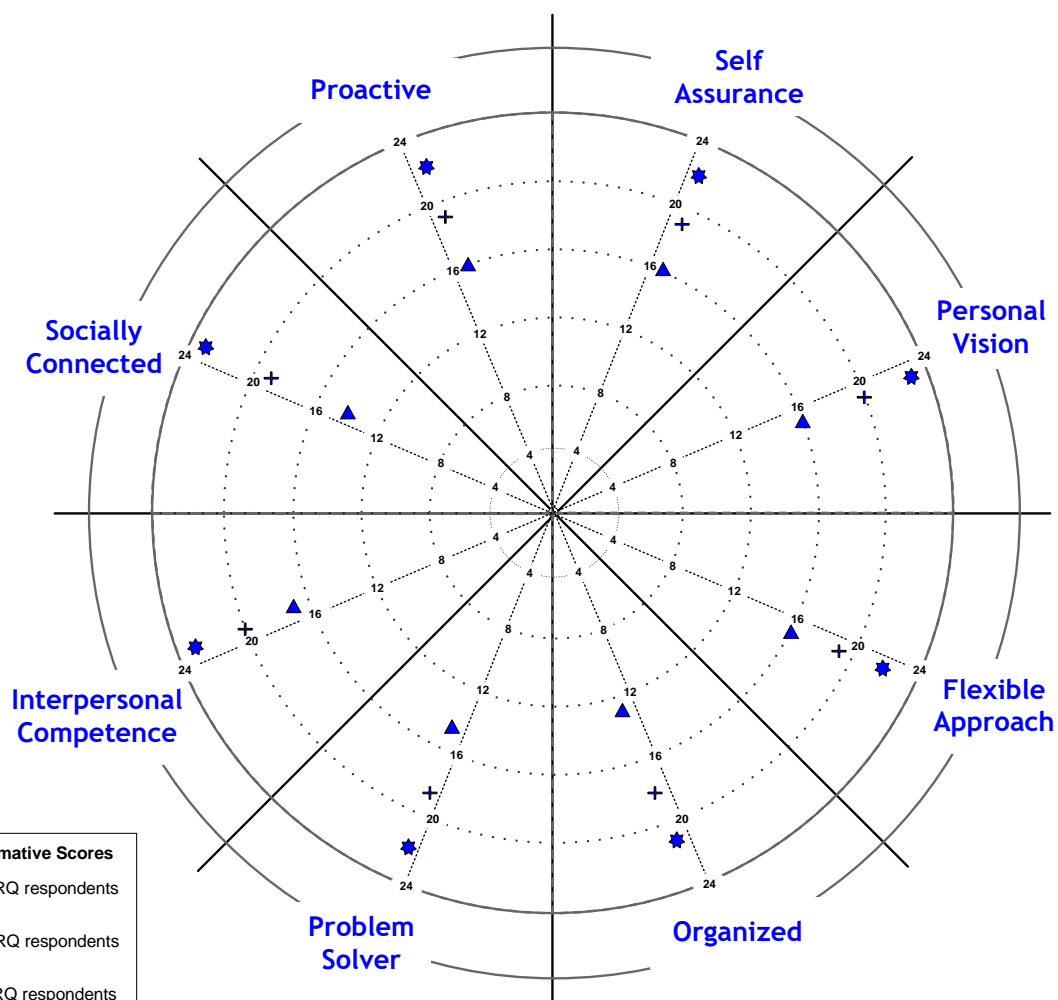
- ❑ **Self-Assurance:** Display a sense of security and self-assurance that acknowledges that life is complex and challenging but filled with opportunity. Develop a positive outlook about yourself, your work unit or team, the organization, and life in general.
- ❑ **Personal Vision:** Develop a clear vision of what you want to achieve or accomplish and where you want to go in your job, career, and life. Identify what you believe, what you value, and what you need to do to translate your personal and professional goals into reality. This dimension can include your faith and spirituality.
- ❑ **Flexibility/Adaptability:** Be sensitive to the forces of change. Demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in the face of uncertainty and stress. Accept the need to shift and redefine (if necessary) your direction, focus, and vision as you learn new information from the environment, peers, customers, family, and other sources.
- ❑ **Organized:** Develop personalized methods, structures, and systems for organizing and managing the confusion, chaos, and ambiguity. Develop stable structures to ride out a turbulent storm. If necessary, focus on one day, one week, one project, etc. at a time.
- ❑ **Problem Solver:** Develop the capacity to effectively think through and resolve personal and professional problems. See problems as challenges and opportunities. Fine-tune your skills of collaboration with others and such fundamental skills as critical, systemic, and creative “out-of-the-box” thinking.
- ❑ **Interpersonal Competence:** Demonstrate responsiveness, empathy, and caring for others. This quality also involves communicating effectively with others, displaying a sense of humor—an ability to laugh at yourself, and valuing diverse perspectives.
- ❑ **Socially Connected:** Build bridges and form partnerships with the people around you. Work with others to discover ways to make sense of the changing environment. Share ideas, solutions, problems, frustrations, opportunities, and accomplishments. Focus on discovering areas of common ground and answers to common problems.
- ❑ **Proactive:** Engage change directly rather than denying, fighting, or working against it. Accept that change is inevitable, growth is optional, and find a way to make it work FOR you. Focus on what YOU can do, not on what others are doing to you. Actively work to improve or positively influence an unwelcome change.

Interpreting Your RQ Radar Chart

Interpreting the meaning of your completed RQ radar chart involves examining:

- The overall size of the “wheel” (a wider wheel suggests greater resilience)
- The relative “balance” or proportionality to the wheel. A wheel out of balance, for example, would be evident if your scores indicated low levels of resilience in one or more dimensions (such as *personal vision* or *interpersonal competence*) as compared to other dimensions.
- While a balanced RQ may be ideal, it may not be required for effective resilience. A high score in one or more dimensions, for example, may be sufficient to carry you through a challenge despite your being low in other dimensions.

To maintain or strengthen your resilience, you should focus on both expanding or growing the size of the wheel as well as targeting for special emphasis any RQ dimension that is, in general, lower than the other dimensions — hence creating an imbalance. If one RQ dimension is significantly higher than the others, consider this an important asset that you can build upon as you strive to grow or strengthen other dimensions.



Interpreting Your Resilience Quotient™

The highest possible overall RQ Score is 192. The lowest possible overall RQ score is 32. For individual RQ dimensions, the maximum possible score is 24; the lowest possible score is 4.

Interpreting Your Overall RQ Score: Locate your overall RQ score in the range of RQ values below. Follow the suggestions offered in the explanations of each resilience level to begin developing and strengthening — or preserving — your personal resilience.

- 171 to 192 **Very Resilient:** You are consistently able to deal effectively with and even thrive on change. You have effective mechanisms in place that give you direction, structure, support and self-confidence. 10% of all those who have completed the RQ scored within this range.
- 153 to 170 **Resilient:** Most of the time you are able to deal with change in a positive manner. You have a number of mechanisms in place that help you deal with the uncertainty of change. You could strengthen your RQ by further developing your skills in your lower scoring RQ dimensions. 40% of all RQ respondents scored within this range.
- 132 to 152 **Somewhat Resilient:** Change has a tendency to knock you off your best performance. You have some difficulty regaining your footing. While you have some stabilizing mechanisms in place, you could work at developing and exercising more of them. Look to your lowest scoring dimensions as a place to start. 40% of all RQ respondents scored within this range.
- 32 to 131 **Lower Resilience:** Change creates major challenges for you. You are frequently unprepared for the uncertainty and lack of stability that change creates. While there are times when you are able to find stability and focus, you need to develop and enrich a broad range of resilience capacities. Look to your lowest scoring dimensions as a place to start and then develop your RQ development plan. 10% of all RQ respondents scored within this range.

Percentile Scores: For all those who have completed the RQ:

10% of respondents scored between 171 to 192	50% of respondents scored between 32 and 153
25% of respondents scored 162 or better	25% of respondents scored at or below 142
50% of respondents scored between 153 and 192	10% of respondents scored between 32 and 131

Normative Data Average Score: The average or mean score for all those who have completed the RQ is **152** with a standard deviation of 15.4. The range of all RQ responses is from 82 to 192, the median (or midpoint) is **153**, and the mode (most frequent score) is **156**.

Helping Others Strengthen their Resilience

What actions can we take **individually** to strengthen others' resilience and what actions can our **leaders** take to strengthen individual and organizational resilience?

<i>Actions We Can Take as <u>Individuals</u> to Strengthen Others' Resilience</i>	<i>Actions <u>Leaders</u> Can Take to Strengthen Individual and Organizational Resilience</i>

Resilience Resources

American Psychological Association (various authors). *The Road to Resilience*. Washington, D.C.: Online booklet, American Psychological Association, 2004.

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Frankl, Viktor (1963). *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Pocketbooks, Simon & Schuster.

Reivich, Karen, and Andrew Shatté (2002). *The Resilience Factor: 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles*, New York: Broadway Books, Random House.

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