

Heart of Resilience

Use this nine-component model.

by Stephen Sideroff

OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE AND

self-renewal are often opposite sides of the same coin! Accomplished people work at an all-consuming pace, regardless of the toll it takes on their personal lives.

They try to sustain an extraordinary level of proficiency, even when the pressures of life cause tension and distractions that impact performance. At the heart of the matter is management of stress. While stress helps to motivate and enhance focus, it also results in sleeplessness, tension, and burn-out.

Although you may recognize stress, you may be powerless to manage it, whether because of its biological importance and facility in creating focus or its use in masking underlying emotional issues.

People who lack self-acceptance are often the most driven to push themselves far beyond functionality. Trying to appear calm and proficient while dealing with inner turmoil creates a disconnect between your outer and inner self, thus causing more stress and diminishing access to your true source of strength and resilience.

Three Areas, Nine Components

Based on research and interactions with leaders, I developed a nine-component model of resilience, which creates a comprehensive picture of personal functioning that leads to optimal performance with manageable stress. Within the nine components are three areas:

Relationships

1. Relationship with self.

How do you treat yourself? Are you overly critical? Do you notice what you did wrong, while minimizing what you did right? If any of these are true, the goal is to develop an inner voice that treats you with respect and acceptance.

2. Next is your relationship with others.

Being able to maintain good, intimate relationships with others provides good support and increases the time and situations in which you don't have to be "on guard." These factors husband your energies for when they are needed in stressful situations.

3. Relationship with "something greater."

Your relationship with "something greater" can be spiritual or simply having purpose in your life, but each enhances a sense of connection, which tends to make daily stresses less hurtful on your psyche.

Organismic Balance and Mastery

Organismic balance and mastery is comprised of physical, emotional, and cognitive. Everything in life is a balance. To build the tallest buildings, you must anchor them with the deepest foundations. To thrust out into the world and tackle big jobs, there must be an equally important force deep inside.

4. Physical. When you expend energy, you must take time to recuperate. Deep relaxation and connecting to an inner source allows for greater performance with less bodily damage. For example, in my work with athletes, I teach a calm focus. Emotional reactivity, where small events trigger big reactions, throws off balance, creating the conditions for mistakes.

This reactivity is typically a result of unfinished feelings and emotions that have not been fully dealt with. Time does not heal all wounds. Unexplored, emotional issues need to be addressed directly. When someone wrongs you, you don't need their apology or regrets to achieve resolution. You can accomplish this completely on your own.

5. Emotional. To master unfinished business, identify emotions that you haven't noticed or expressed and find some way of expressing them. Accept that the past can't be changed, and let it go. Also, notice feelings as they come up, and address them before they become big issues.

6. Cognitive. You must seek to maintain a positive perspective and let go of thoughts and events. After all, physically or emotionally, the notion of self-fulfilling prophecies is a true expression.

MOONVIEW

Page 2

Focusing on catastrophic expectations results in tension, a draining of energy and a reduction of cognitive flexibility, which is at the heart of creativity and problem-solving.

Process

Process includes presence, flexibility and power, or ability to get things done.

7. Presence is everything you bring to the moment, including your awareness. This is why you can feel a desire to move toward some people while the energy of others seems to repel. If you lack presence, you can develop it. When you are about to enter an important situation, take a moment, breathe, and bring yourself into the moment. Actively let go of outside concerns, discard anything that doesn't have to do with the experience in front of you, and let your presence shine.

8. Flexibility. One consequence of a high-powered approach is the gradual reduction in personal flexibility. As the stresses mount, your focus narrows, which reduces problem-solving ability and creativity. When you are tied too much to an outcome, you are less likely to be satisfied and more likely to miss other opportunities for success. Flexibility can be developed by trying to do some habitual behaviors differently.

9. Power. I define *power* as the ability to get things done. This involves persistence, courage, assertiveness, and confidence. It is being able to set goals and hold an intention to reach completion.

Power is not something that you either have or don't have. It's something that you work on moment by moment. I often hear people say, "I lost confidence" in the face of failure or a mistake.

Power builds upon and requires the support of the previous eight components, because power is the result of how we address and respond to each moment.

If you are emotionally reactive or have difficulty letting go of negativity, it will interfere with the full presence necessary to optimize each moment. In life you are running a marathon, not a sprint.

To maintain full "power," you need to recover fully from each effort and stress. To achieve, you also must go inside, recover, and keep the foundation solid. This requires practicing a method of physical recovery and creating a nurturing home environment and relationships. It starts with a positive relationship with your self. **PE**

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