

A Must-have Skill : Resiliency

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Joan Burge looks at what it means to be a resilient Assistant.

Why you should care

As you start a new year, there is one must-have skill you should add to your professional development plan to thrive in today's workplace. Administrative professionals of all walks of life, levels of experience and titles need this valuable asset every day – the ability to be resilient. While this may sound simple and you feel you have done a good job of being resilient, it actually is quite complex. And the higher up the career ladder you go, the deeper levels of resiliency are needed because the game gets tougher for the executives you support.

If you can develop being resilient you will be able to:

- Bounce back faster after a setback
- Take daily workplace changes in your stride
- Use resources effectively especially when faced with a problem
- Move in tandem with your executive
- Learn the lessons you need to learn
- Exhibit nimbleness as you adapt to change
- Generate innovative solutions to problems
- Find ways to effectively share your ideas with others

What does resilience mean?

The word resilience or resiliency has many meanings and applications. Here are a few from www.PsychologyFoundation.org.

- When we fail, we have the strength to learn the lessons we need to learn, and we can move on to bigger and better things.
- Having a good attitude about growth following failure.
- To bounce back from adversity, disappointment, failure and learn from them.
- To operate on all cylinders (as much as possible, not just in a crisis.)
- Willingness and ability to change.

I'd like you to stop for a few moments and think about your typical work day. Now think about a typical week. Probably your "typical" day or week is filled with change – change of priorities; change of schedules; changing of goals and objectives; changing meetings and



travel plans. Being resilient is more than just making necessary changes – it's harnessing the power of change.

Why do people resist change?

Speaking on change is one of my most requested topics. I love to talk about change, even though I have been dealt many changes I have not liked. In my presentation, I talk about the kinds of changes, sizes of change, why people resist change, and provide more than 10 tips for thriving on change. For the purposes of this article, I want to share some information that relates to change and being resilient.

Did you ever think about why you resist change – or maybe you just resist certain changes? If you are going to be more resilient in the workplace, you need to do a deep dive and figure out why you are more resistant to certain changes than others so you can work on developing that particular area.

• Some people are just not "change skilled"

In general, people who have experienced much change growing up adapt more easily to change as adults. Coping with change is a skill you can develop, just as you learn other skills.

• Loss of control

When going through a change that was created by outside forces, you may feel a loss of control which hinders your ability to adapt or accept the change.

• Dislike for unforeseeable events

Some people don't like surprises! They don't like dealing with events or situations that aren't mapped out, predictable or included in their plan.

Three related aspects of change

Three things affect our reaction to change: our fears, our comfort zones and our belief system. When you are going through a change determine which of these aspects is affecting your ability to make a change or accept a

change. Sometimes it will be all three. Once you determine what aspect or aspects are hindering your ability to be resilient or move forward, you can work on a plan for success.

1 Fear

The Unknown

Where am I going?

- What will the outcome be?
- I won't know anyone.
- Many people fear change because they are not guaranteed an outcome.

Failing

What will I do if I fail?

- My idea may not work, then what?
- Some people consider failure an embarrassment or a bad thing, but if you don't experience the hurt or disappointment of failure, you don't get to experience the great joy of success! Be willing to fail and new doors will open for you.

Succeeding

What if I am successful?

- I may lose certain friends or co-workers.
- My family may view me differently.
- I may be given more challenges.
- Yes, you can even fear success. When we are successful at something new, sometimes our relationships change.

Losing

What will I lose?

- You may not want to lose what you already have in order to gain something else.
- Can you afford not to lose once in a while? You have to be willing to lose... friendships, situations, ideas, material possessions, in order to win greater friendships, better ideas, and more meaningful possessions.

It is extremely important to recognize your fear and face it. Fear can prevent you from progressing in your career and from growing as an individual. It can become a monster that grows. When dealing with fear, think "what is

the worst possible outcome?" Then decide how you will handle that, should it happen. Haven't you ever been afraid to try something but you did it anyway? Afterward, you realized it wasn't as bad as you thought it would be.

2 Comfort zones

We all have comfort zones – certain places, things and people that make us feel safe and warm. Change puts you in situations or mental places that aren't necessarily comfortable. It forces you to stretch. Depending on the type and degree of change, you may feel very uncomfortable and really stretched! Eventually, that new, uncomfortable place becomes your new comfort zone. As you go through change, if you can tell yourself that you are just stretching, you will be more optimistic about the change.

Elements of resiliency

I have been focusing on the topic of resiliency for several months as the theme of our Office Dynamics 22nd Annual Conference for Administrative Excellence is entitled The Resilient Assistant. I was excited and surprised to see all the good information provided on the topic of resiliency. You may want to explore this further yourself.

There are more than 15 elements or skill sets that fall under being resilient and each one is multi-dimensional. Here is a recap from a piece I read by Casey Mulqueen, PhD. explaining the elements of resiliency. As you read this list, evaluate your ability in each one. Where do you need to improve? What are you already good at? Which ones do you need to embrace?

Element	Description
Personal responsibility	The belief that successes or failures are determined by our own talents and motivations as opposed to external forces.
Realistic optimism	Tendency to see the world in a positive way but remain grounded in reality.
Personal beliefs	The sense that life has deep meaning and purpose.
Self-assurance	Confidence in oneself to successfully perform at work; confidence in ones skills.
Problem solving	The ability to plan and resolve problems.
Courageous communication	The tendency to communicate with others in a candid and courageous way in the face of difficulty.
Social support	The perception that you are part of a supportive social network.
Emotional intelligence	Your ability to identify, assess and control emotions of yourself, of others and of groups.
Agility	Your willingness and ability to change
Resourceful	Ability to act effectively or imaginatively, especially in difficult situations.

3 Belief systems

How you cope with change will depend on your belief system. If you believe the change is for the worse, that you won't make it through the change, that nothing good will come of it, then you will be right. But if you look for the opportunity in change, believing you can successfully get through it, you will!

Honing resiliency will also help you in your personal life. In working with thousands of people for 25 years in my training and consulting business, I have learned that no one is immune to challenges and setbacks. I wish you much success and happiness in 2015.

about the author



Joan Burge is the founder and CEO of Office Dynamics International, a global leader offering a broad range of training and professional development solutions for all levels of executive and administrative professionals for 25 years. Joan is an accomplished author, professional speaker, consultant and corporate trainer. Her administrative books include the Amazon Best Seller, *Who Took My Pen...Again?* ; *Become An Inner Circle Assistant* and *Underneath It All*. She is the creator of the Annual Conference for Administrative Excellence now in its 22nd year. For more information, visit www.OfficeDynamics.com and www.OfficeDynamicsConference.com.

Joan will be running a webinar on 17th February with Peggy Vasquez entitled 'You're Not Just An Admin! And other inspiring thoughts ...'. For full details see <http://webinarjam.net/webinar/go/14099/4ee4044c16>

