

Socrates, the classical Greek philosopher once wrote: *The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.*

For many of us, and in a multitude of businesses, change is a constant. And whether a business is pivoting for relevance, roles are expanding for progress, or departments are realigning for efficiencies, something **new** is at the heart of the change initiatives. The opportunity, for us, is to capitalize on the new while acknowledging one's angst, uncertainty, and/or the possibilities within a changing environment.

Mindful that change initiatives can cause a variety of feelings and subsequent actions, I thought I would offer the following thoughts as it applies to resilience. But, let's first define it:

Resilience is the capacity to cope with stress and adversity. It comes from believing in yourself and, at the same time, in something bigger than yourself.

- Resilience is not a trait that people are born with; it involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. *Inc.* 2015

Said another way, as much as we experience change we can also leverage or develop resilience—our ability to cope with adversity, stress, and the required pivots to succeed emotionally and professionally. Five suggestions:

- 1) Acknowledge any feelings associated with change; indeed, write down those feelings so as to better own them.
  - Are you at a place where you can identify a benefit that may counteract the feeling? If so, great. If not, that's OK too.
- 2) Be mindful of your thinking. Your thoughts influence feelings AND, then, your feelings create behaviors.
  - Are your current behaviors acceptable to you? If not, what thoughts do you need to change in order to minimize behaviors that are not acceptable?
    - For instance, becoming withdrawn, or socially isolated, will likely foster any experience of angst or uncertainty you may be feeling?
- 3) Seek clarity on "why" the change initiative is being proposed or implemented. Ask your leader and read any collateral materials; but, seek to understand the rationale and benefits as best as you can. Knowledge influences thoughts. Which, in turn, influences your feelings; and, of course your behaviors.
- 4) Adapt a new mind-set: "I will choose to become a part of the change, and to support it." Developing a mind-set that *leans into* change enables your own influence with change. This kind of self-leadership also models resiliency for others who may be struggling.

- 5) Identify one activity, responsibility, or action that will enable you to engage the current change initiative so as to better understand it and learn from it. For instance, even asking the question, “How is everyone feeling about the current change initiative?” can prompt empathy as well as a pathway to resilience for your colleagues.

When you really think about it, we are always going through or initiating some form of change. This may be within a company culture, but it also includes a life-changing health diagnosis, the unfortunate reality of a divorce, becoming empty-nesters, the loss of a good friendship, or the joy of starting a family or a much sought-after new role, etc.

Acknowledging change is important but understanding and embracing resilience is *vital*. May I invite you to own your feelings and, then, to engage your innate dignity to create a new reality that contributes to your own well-being—and, professional leadership.

Two resources for your consideration and development:

Article: [5 TED Talks on Change](#)

Website: [www.resiliencealliance.com](http://www.resiliencealliance.com)

Bill Dickinson  
Talent & Executive Development  
Cox Automotive