

2023

YEAR OF RESILIENCE



12 TIPS

TO CREATE RESILIENCE AT WORK AND HOME

fierce.

Tip 1



Awareness of your stress response is the key to managing it.

Let's start with the stressors. Can you define your stress?

Believe it or not, this is a fairly new term in human language, and since its invention, the definition has constantly been debated. Physician and endocrinologist Hans Selye coined the term in 1936. Selye noticed biological and hormonal changes in lab animals when exposed to acute stimuli such as blaring lights, loud noise, extreme temperatures, and perpetual frustration. If these conditions became persistent, the animals developed chronic diseases.



The term caught fire but became an amorphous descriptor of any bad experience, especially if connected with negative emotions. The proverbial “fight or flight” response became a stand-in metaphor for stress. When encountering a negative situation, a survival mechanism kicks in as we react. But this reaction doesn’t account for the detrimental effects we all experience from “stress”.

The World Health Organization defines stress as “any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain. Stress is your body’s response to anything that requires attention or action.”

A Better Understanding of Stress

Rather than focusing on negative reactions as the cause of stress, a better understanding is any event or interaction that causes an internal physical reaction. Your heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure increase. Your muscles tense, and you even sweat more. These reactions cause a rush of chemicals through our body that improves awareness and alertness and can create a wide range of emotional responses.

Viewing stress as a physical and emotional reaction to life events broadens the definition beyond the negative. Many life events can be exciting and surprising and create the same response.

The stress response is unavoidable and a natural part of our life. If this response is functioning properly, it works like a wave. An event happens where we need to respond. We become alert and energized and manage the obstacle. Once complete we enter back into a restful mental state to recover from the effects of the event.

The purpose of stress is a signal that something is happening that needs our attention and action. It's the check engine light of our mental health. The discomfort associated with the experience of stress should motivate us to take action to resolve this discomfort.

Not all stress is bad but stress. The key is to know what your stressors are versus everyone else.



Personalized Stress & Self-Awareness

How do you begin identifying and managing those stressors?

Generic stress management is not the answer to building resilience and blunting the effects of stress. You must be surgical in the way you approach stress.

The key is to realize that stress is personal.

Not everyone responds the same way to stress. Some events that may create a rise in stress levels in some won't touch another person. You can begin this process by spending some time in self-awareness and watching how you respond to the events of your day. Look at your reactions to the news, meetings, types of work, and interactions with people in your life.

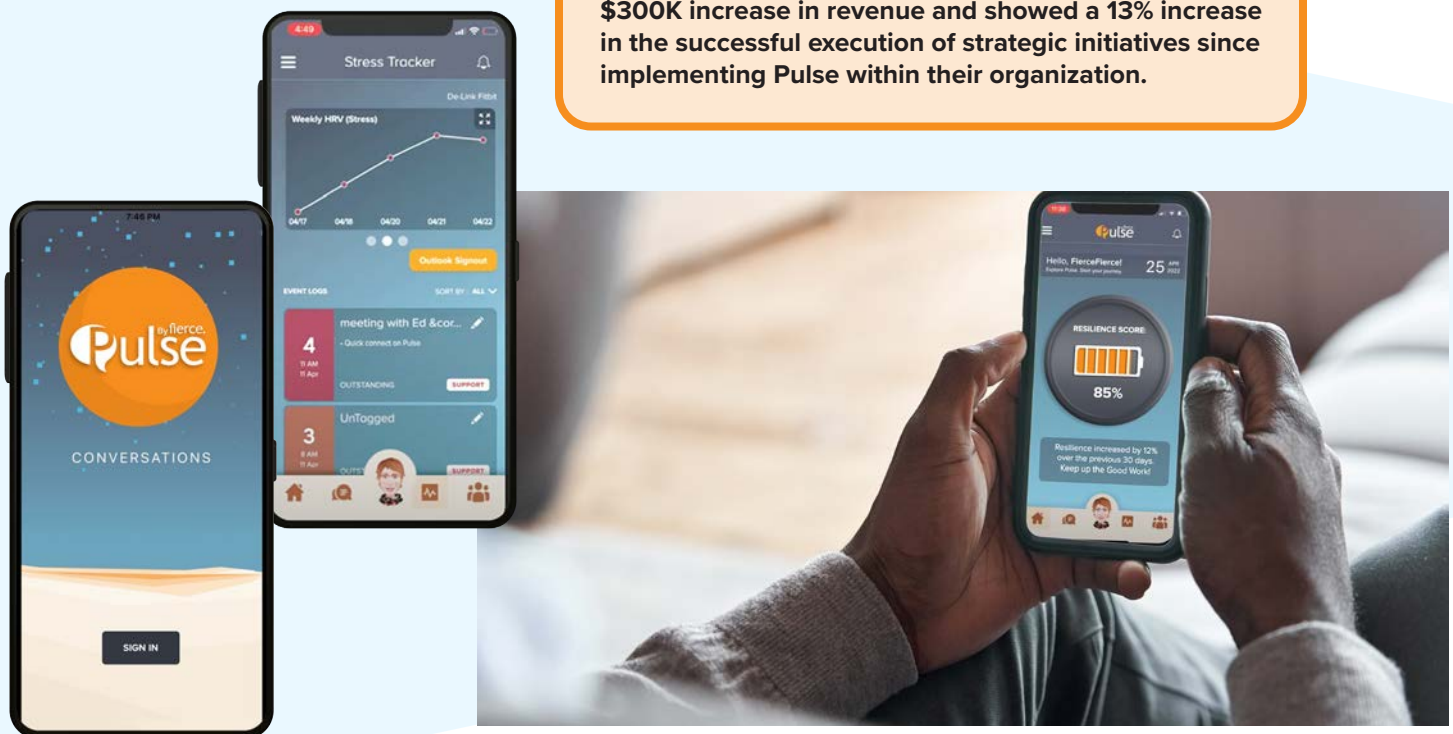
Ask yourself these questions to get clarity into your stressors:

- ✓ What stressors are distinct to you as an individual because of your unique perception?
- ✓ What events or people stress you out?
- ✓ What tasks cause spikes of emotions?
- ✓ How do you recover from heightened events and emotions?
- ✓ What type of stress management works for you, and the stress you are feeling?

Developing stress self-awareness takes time to reflect on your work life and how events impact your internal state. Journaling has proven to be an effective tool and discovering the stressors that impact performance. While effective this process can take time before results become apparent. Self-awareness is hard. Studies have shown that while 95% of people think they are self-aware, only 10-15% truly are. But there is good news.

Recent research has found several biomarkers that indicate levels of stress response. With the prevalence of wearable technology such as the Fitbit or Apple Watch, this data can be mined to quickly build self-awareness. Fierce researchers and developers used this technology to build the Pulse App that identifies those biomarkers of stress. Through a sophisticated AI, those stress markers can be connected to the user's calendar, identifying stress levels, and tailoring actionable steps to mitigate stress and instill new skills.

Early testing demonstrated stress levels decreased on average by 10% and resilience increased by 11% in as little as 2 weeks. One organization was able to show a \$300K increase in revenue and showed a 13% increase in the successful execution of strategic initiatives since implementing Pulse within their organization.



Bottom Line

Focusing on self-awareness skills is a necessary step to beginning to build resilience and mitigate the effects in your life. As self-awareness increases, you will notice other positive side effects such as greater empathy and openness to others. You will be able to manage your energy outputs more effectively. You will utilize your strengths especially as they relate to stressful events.

Take time daily to cultivate self-awareness. To accelerate your progress, the technology inside the Pulse App can help you and your teams develop this skill faster than you thought possible. Coupled with Pulse, Fierce offers the new Fierce Resilience Program built on a better understanding of stress, self-awareness training, and targeted tools to manage your personal stressors.

Stress as Energy - How to use stress as energy to increase your work capacity

Tip 2



Have you ever felt the rush of wind and spray of powder speeding downhill on snow skis? The first time you strapped on skis and stood at the top of a hill your stress responses went crazy. Despite the cold, you could feel yourself sweat. Anxiety skyrocketed throughout your body and you had to do some serious self-talk to begin your descent. Even down the hill feelings of panic and fear struck as you worried about falling. But you survived, and if you kept practicing, those stress responses didn't disappear. They were transformed.

Watch interviews with proficient skiers and they all describe those same feelings of exhilaration and excitement that terrified you the first time down the slopes.

What happened?

Your experience transformed those stressors into energy. Stress became performance fuel.

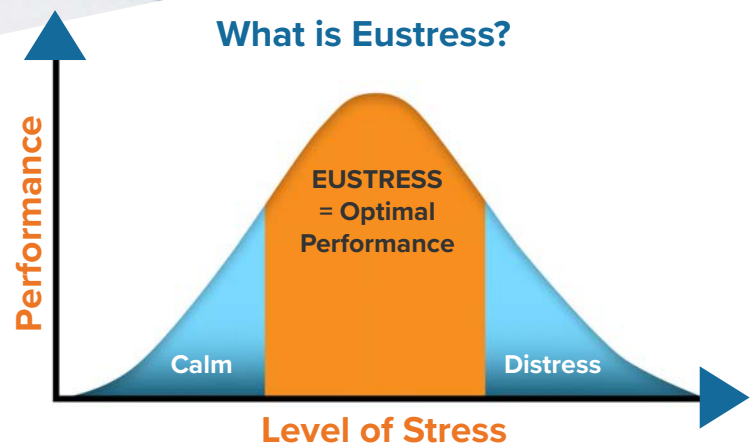
Embracing Eustress

When Selye first defined stress as a phenomenon in the early 20th century, it was originally used for a situation of distress that generated a biological and emotional response. Over time, he noticed that those same responses occurred even in positive situations. To distinguish between negative and positive stressors, he used the term eustress.

The stress response is a normal natural survival mechanism that brings alertness and attentiveness to a dangerous or challenging situation. The problem with the stress response is when it becomes chronic and we stay in a heightened state of awareness eventually leading to physical disease and mental health issues such as anxiety, burnout, or depression.

Decision-making and problem-solving are heightened in the immediate interaction with a stressful situation. Yet, in a chronic state, those needed skills begin to diminish and worsen.

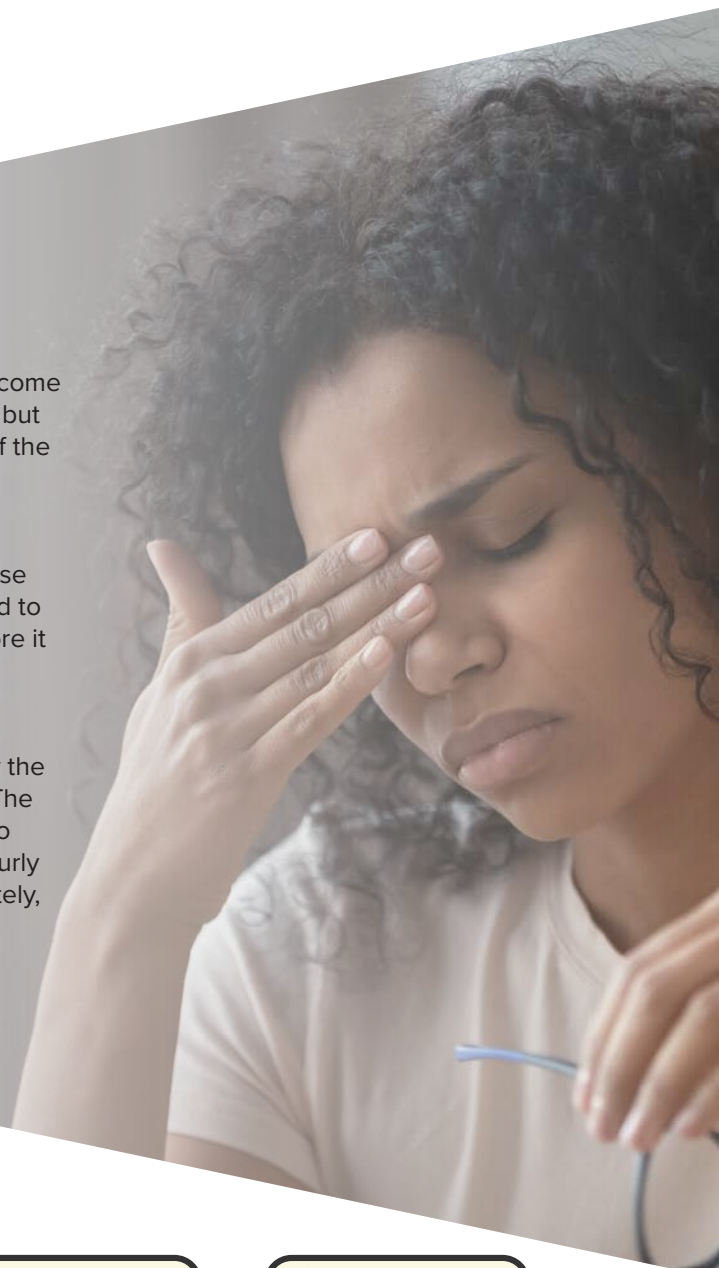
What is Eustress?



The problem isn't stress, but chronic stress. Avoiding stress altogether would prevent skill acquisition and the ability to become resilient over time. Increased stress can increase productivity, but the stress curve is steep and once you go over the pinnacle of the stress curve, negative effects accumulate.

Stress is rooted in emotional responses and internal energy. Identifying feelings of stress gives you the ability to funnel those emotions into productive energy. To use it effectively you need to be sensitive to the early warning signs of stress overload before it becomes damaging.

We have all done this before. Think back to your school days when you procrastinated on a project or exam prep. Suddenly the deadline appears and you find yourself frantically cramming. The panic of being unprepared helps you master the information to successfully pass. But if you lived in that world of daily and hourly deadlines with no recovery periods, you would fail. Unfortunately, that is the world we have often constructed in our work lives.



Benefits of Stress

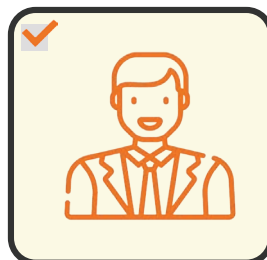
Positive use of stress can give us something to look forward to. It can help us grow and develop into stronger individuals. Here are several ways that eustress can benefit us:



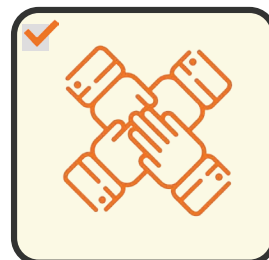
It provides you with a burst of energy



It can motivate you to reach your goals



It sharpens your attention and focuses



It can help you develop a deep connection with others

- ✓ It can help you accomplish tasks more efficiently
- ✓ It can alert you to danger
- ✓ It can help you build resilience

Psychologist Lev Vygotsky observed that individuals learned best when they were challenged just outside their current comfort zone. He called this the “zone of proximal development”. This is the gap between what you have mastered and what you can achieve with new development.



Using Stress to Your Advantage

Researcher Kelly McGonigal identified the stress paradox -- “happy lives contain stress, and stress-free lives don’t guarantee happiness.”

If stress has potential positive benefits by giving us bursts of energy, and enhanced focus, how can we use it to increase our performance and work capacity?

1. Notice and acknowledge it. Once you notice feelings of stress, don’t fight them. Ask yourself what it is trying to tell you or what you are going to get from it. This places you outside of the stress event as an observer where you can have greater control over your response.
2. Don’t give in to worry. For many of us, our immediate response to feelings of stress is to assume something bad is happening. We begin to worry because it gives a sense of control. Unfortunately, worry drains away your energy.
3. Look for opportunities. Reframe the feelings of stress. The stress response is your body’s way of saying “pay attention to this.” Ask yourself why you feel stressed and if there is an opportunity for you.
4. Use your imagination. Recall a stressful situation you overcame in the past. Your memory can stir feelings of confidence that builds resilience.
5. Create time to recover. To continually use stress as energy for greater productivity, you can’t live in the state. You will crash. You must build time to recover after pushing through the stressor.

These are all mindset shifts you can practice that will increase self-awareness. You will begin to use stress to your advantage and build resilience skills.

Regardless of the occupation, we all are put into high-stress environments from time to time.

Those events can also build resilience and increase performance when tackled with care. “Training in high-stress situations increases what psychologists call “situational awareness.” Defined as the ability to absorb information accurately, assess it calmly, and respond appropriately, situational awareness is essentially the ability to keep cool when all hell breaks loose,” wrote Steven Kotler in *The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance*.

Stress is usually triggered by anxiety and uncertainty. Reframing the event allows you to remove one of these components. Anxiety is internal but pausing and asking yourself questions lessens the anxiety. Uncertainty is external. You may not be able to control it, but you can analyze what you already know and understand which gives you partial control.

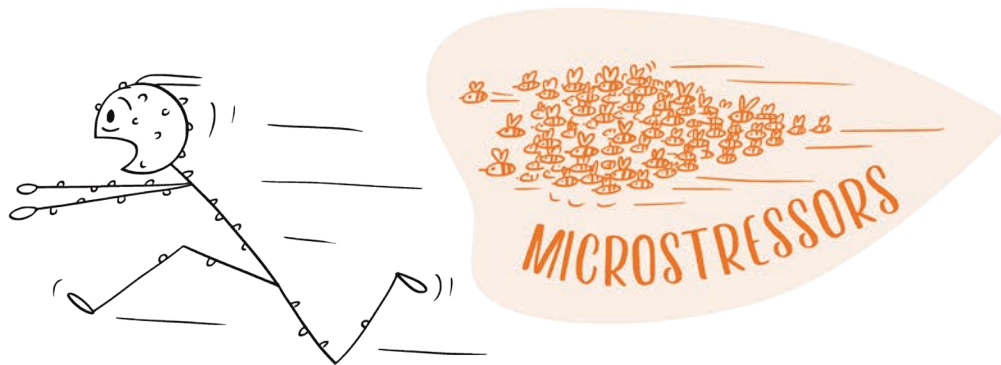
Integrating these tips into your work life will help you to begin reframing stress and using it to your advantage. Self-awareness is the secret. If you are looking for resources to quickly build self-awareness skills, check out the latest Fierce tools with the Pulse App and the new Fierce Resilience Program.

Tip 3



Managing Microstressors

Micro-stressors are like bees. One is annoying but a swarm could be deadly. It's rarely the crisis events that derail you. It's the small unseen stressors that accumulate until you are overwhelmed. The resilient tip this week is to identify and manage those micro-stressors and prevent long-term stress events.



What are microstressors and how can you manage them?

When most of us think of stress, we think of massive traumatic events such as financial calamity, job loss, devastating health news, and sudden severe accidents. Psychologists categorize these as traumatic stressors. This is a helpful category. By using this vocabulary we can separate out the big events from the small daily stressors.

The good news is that most people handle big events with resilience. Because we are accustomed to seeing these events on the news or in the lives of friends and family, we've already done mental preparation for when disaster hits. Also, this is when our communities and networks step up and assist us in these tragic moments.

Think about the most recent natural disaster you've seen on the news. Last year where I lived, a massive tornado swept the state around Christmas. Wind destroyed homes and towns for over 200 miles. Large swaths of devastation ripped through neighborhoods. Many people lost their homes and several lives were lost. Within hours people from all over the country descended upon these communities cleaning and rebuilding. Food, water, and gifts showered these towns so much that they asked them to stop.

Even today, a year later, networks have helped most people rebuild their lives. While the survivors of this tragedy will always have scars on their hearts, they picked up the pieces and rebuilt and even thrived.





Humans are amazingly resilient in the face of catastrophe but we are crushed under the pressure of little things.

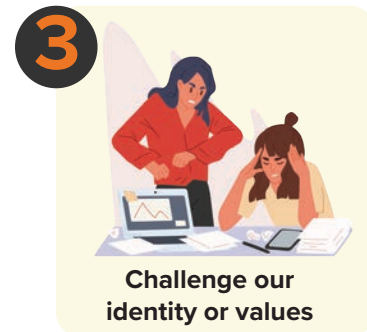
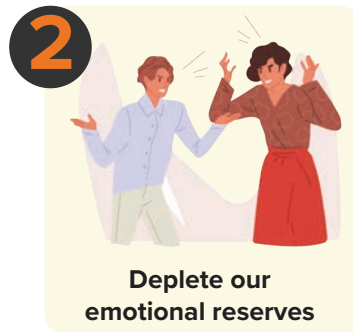
Because the little stressors are so easy to ignore we underestimate their impact. Yet they build up inside our hearts and minds and eventually overwhelm us. This is what leads to burnout and anxiety in the workplace. It's what causes many to quit or underperform.

The buildup of microstressors not only damages our mental health but impacts our physical body and leads to a wide range of physical symptoms like high blood pressure, chest pain, insomnia, decreased immune function, gastrointestinal issues, etc.

If you want to tackle stress in your life you must start with the small stuff. Managing the small stuff prevents the large-scale stress collapses.

Identifying Microstressors

According to research published in the Harvard Business Review, there are 12 main drivers of micro-stressors that can be broken down into 3 main categories.



Microstressors that drain our personal capacity would include tensions in the ways we work with other people. You've felt this when you are asked to do more work than you expected or have limitations placed on your ability to do your job.

Those that deplete our emotional reserves cause negative thoughts and feeling to bubble up inside. A great example would be stressful or confrontational conversations or interactions with negative people.

When we feel internal friction because someone damages our confidence, forces us to violate personal values, or disrupts our network, these cause stress by challenging our identity.

Most of us have accepted these as a part of normal life, and rarely find ways to manage their impact internally or externally. However, your ability to be resilient is dependent on addressing these daily stressors.

So how do you begin managing those microstressors?

Cultivate self-awareness. First realize your stressors are as unique as you. It's easy to see in others but hard to see in ourselves. Do you know the stress buttons you can push on friends to stir up their emotions? Of course you do. In fact you probably push them occasionally, sometimes intentionally (for fun).

What are your buttons people push that get under your skin and even send you into high anxiety? Take some time to do a quick inventory of the events and actions that irritate you. Use the three categories of micro-stressors to help spur the process. Reflect at the end of the day for a week or two and notice what increased your agitation. Shortly, you will have a list you can begin managing. Until awareness happens you can't manage it.

Unfortunately even for the most self aware among us we still have blindspots. In fact, those blindspots are the ones that really damage our inner peace and lead to higher levels of stress. How do you uncover those blindspots so you can develop a strategy to manage them?

Develop external resources. This is why therapy or honest friends can be so helpful. They can help you find the areas you can't see.

Over the past several years research has been done to find biomarkers that indicate a stress event in your life. Not only do stressors impact your mental peace and internal state but impact your physical health. Various hormones elevate, blood pressure rises, heart rate increases during times of stress. One key indicator that continues to appear in research is heart rate variability or HRV. The beauty of HRV is that it has become easier to measure due to wearable tech like Apple Watches and Fitbits.

Noticing spikes and anomalies in all these biomarkers indicate a microstressor has happened in your life. Now you can have a microscope on your inner world. Matching up those events to your daily calendar can help you discover those blindspot stressors

If you need a tool for finding blindspots and microstressors, Fierce built one for you. The Pulse App is built on the latest stress biomarker research. It syncs with wearable tech and connects to your calendar to find these hidden stress events. We compiled the experience of 20+ years of helping the Fortune 500 manage conflict, create personal connections, and navigate workplace relationships into a library of stressors you experience. An AI coach matches the information in that library and directs you to skills fully customized to what stresses you so you can manage it.

In summary, if you want to build true resilience, pay attention to your microstressors and use them as a personal development tool for greater workplace success.

Tip 4



Don't fear stress - Stress is normal.

When we fear the emotions and feelings of stress, we accelerate their negative effects. Reframe your stress response as a signal for action. Changing your perception of stress allows you to regain power over life. The tip this week is to get comfortable with the uncomfortable moments of stress.

Do you ever feel stressed about stress? We read so much about the damaging effects of long-term stress it's beginning to feel like the monster under the bed, always lurking in the dark ready to grab your leg and drag you down.

The worst thing you can do is fear stress. You can't avoid it. In fact, you need it.

It alerts you something is wrong. It's the warning signal that you need to take action. It would be impossible to avoid all stress. Even if you lived on a tropical island with no worries, your mind would still find ways to trouble you to take action. As humans, we can't remain still. We are meant to grow. We are goal-attaining beings.

Like the guidance system on a plane or missile, the warnings are meant to keep on track to the planned destination.

Stress functions the same way for you in life. You have goals, both spoken and unspoken and when an obstacle arises that seems to prevent that goal, your stress system kicks in.

Why We Fear Stress

Feelings of stress are a protective measure meant for survival. Imagine life before modern times. You enter a forest to hunt and gather. You hear a twig break and turn your head toward the sound. Nearby you see a large bear looking at you. Immediately, your stress hormones kick, adrenaline spikes, and your heart rate increases to deliver more oxygen to your blood and brain. You are ready to flee, fight, or develop a strategy to survive.

This instinct has allowed humanity to survive and thrive for a long time. Unfortunately, most of us don't live in a world of mortal danger, but that same system lives deep within us. We still feel the stress response but because the situations are not objectively dangerous our mind remembers those feelings as false alarms. We then become anxious or avoid those feelings.

While most of us rarely face those moments of extreme danger, we still must deal with stressful feelings when they arise.



Thinking Differently About Stress

A study published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology demonstrated that students who viewed stress as a coping tool performed better on exams than students who were told to ignore stressful feelings. Another study published in the Feb 2020 journal Emotion from the American Psychological Association suggests that teaching people the benefits of stress response can improve performance and the ability to respond to stressful events.

Here's the trick. Stress is more damaging if you perceive you don't have the resources to handle it. That's exactly what happens internally when you fear stress, avoid it, or try to squelch those stressful feelings. However, if you see stress as a tool or signal, you build the resources to view events as a challenge or path to personal growth.



Tips for Reframing Stress



1 Recognize Stress is Normal

Stress can be positive. For example, getting excited over a positive event generates the same stress hormones as negative events. Also, when stressful feelings arise can be a signal that you need to take action. Yes, you may not be chased by a bear through the woods, but whatever is in front of you needs to be addressed. As long as you confront those feelings of stress and don't allow your nervous system to live in a constant state of stress, you will use stress as your body intended.

2 Increase Your Self-Awareness

Be aware of your own stress triggers, and the feelings you have when stressed. Understand your physical responses to stress. As you become more aware of how you respond and what causes stress for you, you can use stress to overcome obstacles and increase your own performance and skill set.





3 Embrace your power to control

You may not be able to control the circumstances of life, but you can control your response. Don't allow yourself to devolve into a victim mentality. This only increases the levels of stress and anxiety in your life. Having a sense of control and belief that you can handle the obstacles life throws at you will reduce the physical symptoms of stress.

4 See stress as a challenge

Rather than fearing stressful feelings, they signal that you have a potential challenge ahead. This is a challenge you can overcome and develop greater personal skills and abilities. When you see situations as a threat you are focusing on your shortcomings rather than your abilities. The stress response can be part of the learning experience.



5 Be a Problem Solver

When sensing feelings of stress, immediately ask yourself about the options you have to deal with the stress that is before you. Over time you will train your brain to begin this problem-solving exercise automatically at the signs of stress. By making a mental list of all the resources and skills you have, you begin to create options for yourself, and the negative feelings of stress begin to lessen.



Begin to think about stress as a tool and you will discover opportunities in how you approach work and the relationships you need to cultivate to perform your best. Inside of the Fierce Resilience course, we use this approach to first build self-awareness of your unique stressors, and then provide the tools you can use individually and as a team to build resilience.

How to Build a Network of Resilience

Tip 5



Building resilience and defending against stress isn't an individual skill. Simple conversation strategies like listening, collaboration, giving feedback, and coaching can help you build trust and safety with those you surround yourself with. The tip this week is to develop strong relationships that build resilience.

In ancient times, survival was paramount. Clans and families developed networks to provide resistance against a wide range of threats. Eventually, these networks developed into physical structures such as walls around communities that allowed the members inside to thrive under protection. In today's world, threats are not as easily seen and rarely have a direct impact on our immediate survival. In fact, many times we struggle to even recognize the stressors that are putting pressure on our ability to thrive in work and life.

Think of your network like the bricks in your fortress against damaging stress. With healthy relationships, you borrow resilience from others and greatly expand your ability to withstand the stress of everyday work and life.

Stories of Network Resilience

There's an interesting story from the world of medical research that illustrates the power of networks against the stressors of life. In the early '60s, medical researchers in an attempt to fend off cardiovascular disease began studying communities that exhibited positive health outcomes in order to extrapolate that data for principles society at large could apply. They found one community in an old steel town in Pennsylvania that baffled them. The vast majority of people did everything wrong about diet and lifestyle. They ate terrible diets comprised of fatty and fried foods, smoked, and didn't participate in the recommended exercise. Yet, they outperformed most communities in their area in measure of health and happiness.

When researchers dug into the factors in their community, the only element they could point to that contributed to health and happiness and warded off all the dangers of modern life was community. This had originally been an immigrant community, but unlike other areas of the country, they were committed to the well-being of each other through traditions and strong personal networks. The deep networks and community strength almost created a magical barrier of resilience around them.

You probably have similar stories you've experienced in your own career. I can remember one particular incident early in my career that proves the power of resilient networks. I worked in sales in a very competitive industry. My products had benefits but there were a lot of negatives, and clients weren't shy about pointing those out. Some days, I came home feeling like I had gone 10 rounds with a championship boxer.

Yet, I thrived and continually hit my performance goals. The key to my survival was 3 other co-workers that shared the larger territory with me. We talked daily, supported each other, traveled with each other, and even partied with each other (we were all 20-somethings). That network kept all the negatives from destroying our mental health and performance.



How Your Network Impacts Your Resilience

Why do networks work in building resilience?

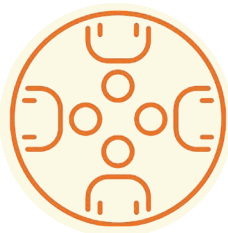
- They can help us share the workload and pressures of performance
- They broaden our vision by helping us to make sense of circumstances
- They embolden our confidence to push back and self-advocate
- They give us insight when we are stuck and help us see a path forward
- They provide support so we can release negative emotions
- They offer comic relief and help us to laugh at ourselves and the situation
- They remind us of the purpose or meaning of our work
- They give us perspective when setbacks and obstacles enter our path

You can add many more benefits to this list. Unfortunately, this is something we often forget and try to take on the world as isolated individuals. Reminding ourselves of those that have helped us along the way gives us the courage and impetus to continue building those relationships.

Remember it is not a sign of weakness to seek support and help from others. They can become the defenders that help you develop deeper strength and build new skills.

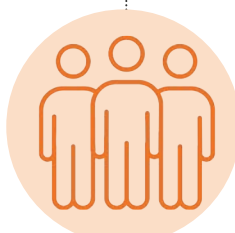
Tips for Developing a Resilient Network

Networks don't appear overnight and require a bit of work on our part, but the effort is worth it. Building resilience through a strong network of relationships involves several key steps:



1 Create Trusted Circles

Identify the people in your life who you trust and feel comfortable confiding in. This may include friends, colleagues, managers, and mentors.



2 Deepen Positive Connections

Make an effort to spend time with these people and build deeper connections with them. This can include activities such as going out for coffee, exercising together, or simply sharing stories and talking about your experiences.



3 Develop Communication Skills

Communicate openly and honestly with your network. Share your thoughts, feelings, and concerns with them and actively listen when they share their own.



4 Find a Lifeline

Seek out support when you need it. Identify those top resilience needs where you need help. Find others with those skill sets and begin to learn from them. Whether you're going through a difficult time or simply need someone to talk to, reach out to your network for help.



5 Practice Gratitude

Show appreciation for your network and let them know how much they mean to you.



6 Celebrate Diversity

Lastly, work on building a diverse network of people who have different strengths and perspectives, this can help you to cope better in different situations

Remember, building resilience is a process and it takes time and practice, but by building a strong network of relationships, you can create a support system to help you navigate the challenges of life.

Simple communication strategies such as active listening, collaboration, giving and receiving feedback, and coaching can help to establish trust and foster a sense of safety with others. Having a supportive network of people can also help to increase resilience and mitigate the effects of stress. It is important to remember that building relationships takes time and effort, but the benefits are well worth it.



Tip 6



Be Comfortable with Confrontation

The thought of confrontation escalates stress in most people. Learning the skills of productive confrontation gives you a framework for lowering difficult conversations. Challenging issues become less stressful when you learn to navigate them proactively. The tip this week is to confront relationship challenges.



Why Does Confrontation Create Stress?

There is a small group of people who navigate Confrontation with ease and some even relish it and create it. But for most of us it is as fear-inducing as public speaking.

Why does confrontation make us tremble so much? Most confrontations contain an element of benefit to us. Something isn't right with a team member's performance and it is causing extra work or a drop in our own metrics. Correcting or challenging the behavior would benefit both of us. Perhaps someone is doing something that is dramatically diminishing our ability to get work done. Addressing the issue has the potential for putting us back on track.

Even though we could benefit greatly by addressing issues, we often procrastinate or bury our heads in the sand hoping the problem will disappear.

Unfortunately, the reality of the potential confrontation hangs over us and silently drains energy from our psyche. The longer we postpone addressing the issue the deeper the problem usually grows and our stress levels continue to rise

Postponing confrontation has the effect of chronic stress. We imagine negative outcomes rather than a positive resolution and with each hour and day we delay, the stress chips away at our resilience, mental health and performance.

We postpone and fear confrontation because:

We fear rejection or criticism.

Deep down we wonder if the confrontation will reveal our inadequacies or mistake. Perhaps the problem we see in others is due to our shortcomings or leadership deficiencies.



The fear of damaging relationships

We spend more time with team members and colleagues than we do with close friends or family. Those relationships matter and have often developed over years. Because most of us enjoy being liked, we worry that being honest about issues might damage the relationships we worked so hard to build and value.

The fear of losing control or creating conflict

What if we sense a problem, but by confronting the issue we make it bigger than it was or we create conflict out of thin air? As we take steps to correct, everything spins out of control. These escalating thoughts paralyze us and keep us from discovering what is real or imagined.



The fear of the unknown outcome

Because we can't predict the future, most of us imagine all kinds of potential circumstances when we sense a potential confrontation is on the horizon. Most of us assume the negative and that stops us in our tracks and no process to resolution is made.

Fear is a major stressor for all of us triggering internal fight or flight responses. By giving in to fear we drive up our stress levels. The only way out is through being comfortable with confrontation. Even if the confrontation is a moment of stress, it's an immediate stress, unlike the chronic stress of waiting to address a necessary issue.

How to become comfortable with confrontation?

1 Think clarity not confrontation

Reframe the way you think about confrontation. Your intent is not conflict but understanding. Many times what we perceive as negative is easily resolved but helping yourself and the other person become clear on what is happening.



2 Prepare and practice what to say

Roleplaying always helps with performance. When you give a speech or presentation, practicing beforehand creates confidence with the material and gives a sense of comfort in knowing you are prepared. If you've ever done any sales, you are well aware that practicing your sales presentation and roleplaying objection handling makes the behavior almost automatic when you are in a real-life situation.

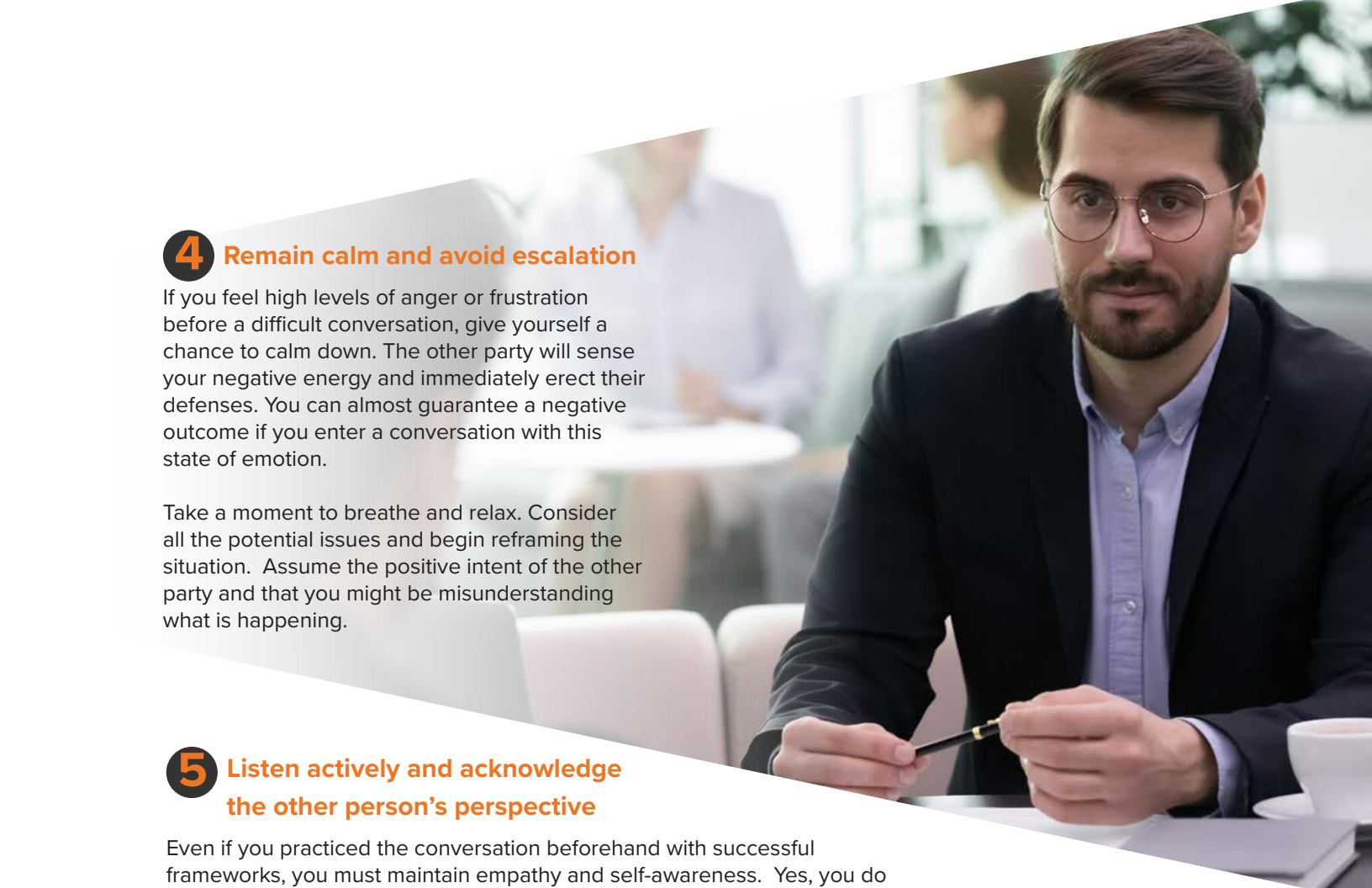
Frameworks and templates can be just as beneficial in becoming adept at difficult conversations. Especially when you borrow from time-tested conversation best practices you increase your ability. Conversation frameworks are at the heart of the Fierce methodology and have transformed the ability of managers and leaders to become adept at difficult conversations.

3 Focus on the issue, not the person

Depersonalizing confrontation immediately diffuses potential negative reactions. Again you seek to understand the issue at hand. You are not trying to point out deficiencies in the person. By focusing on the issues you protect their identity. For many of us, our identity is deeply wrapped up in our performance and behavior. When we feel those items being attacked it is hard not to take them personally.

Begin every difficult conversation with the issue and not the action.





4 Remain calm and avoid escalation

If you feel high levels of anger or frustration before a difficult conversation, give yourself a chance to calm down. The other party will sense your negative energy and immediately erect their defenses. You can almost guarantee a negative outcome if you enter a conversation with this state of emotion.

Take a moment to breathe and relax. Consider all the potential issues and begin reframing the situation. Assume the positive intent of the other party and that you might be misunderstanding what is happening.

5 Listen actively and acknowledge the other person's perspective

Even if you practiced the conversation beforehand with successful frameworks, you must maintain empathy and self-awareness. Yes, you do have an agenda and points that need to be communicated, but allow the other person to talk and explain the situation from their perspective.

Use open-ended questions to draw out as much information as possible. Once you believe you have a good understanding, restate your understanding and get agreement from the other person. This may take more than one pass to obtain full awareness. Wait until you come to a common agreement on the situation before you move forward onto what needs to be changed.

Because you have honored the other person's perspective, you have earned (in their eyes) the right to

Summary

When you become comfortable with conversations, you immediately diffuse one of the major stressors of the modern workplace. Delaying or avoiding will only diminish your resilience and energy and make you less effective when confrontation becomes unavoidable.

Becoming adept at confrontation will improve your overall communication skills. You will create deeper relationships with your colleagues through open and honest discussions.

Tip 7



Accept and Navigate Conflict

Avoiding conflict creates a build-up of stress. Learning how to manage conflict leads to a peaceful work life and the ability to deflect the effects of stress. The tip this week is to embrace interpersonal conflicts as a path to building resilience.

But because it is so uncomfortable and most of us don't have the tools to navigate the discomfort and challenge of conflict we often avoid it or hide from it.

Conflict is normal.

See if you recognize yourself (or a co-worker) in these scenarios:

Rachel is a marketing manager at a large company. She has a colleague named Tom who often disagreed with her ideas and opinions. Instead of facing the conflict head-on, Rachel chose to avoid Tom and not engage in any discussions with him. This resulted in missed opportunities for collaboration and potential solutions to their disagreements.

Sarah is a customer service representative who worked with a team of four. One of her team members, David, was known for being difficult to work with and causing conflicts within the team. Instead of confronting David, Sarah chose to hide from him and avoid any interactions. This resulted in increased stress and decreased morale for Sarah and the rest of the team.

In both scenarios, avoiding or hiding from interpersonal conflict only made the situation worse and resulted in missed opportunities for growth and collaboration.



WORKPLACE CONFLICT



Stats Around Workplace Conflict

Learning to accept and manage conflict places you and your organization at a competitive advantage in your industry and in your ability to retain and attract talent. Most organizations don't handle conflict well. According to a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, 48% of HR professionals reported that workplace conflict has increased in the last five years.

Learning to manage conflict effectively will improve company profitability. The International Association of Conflict Management found that employees spend 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict, which equates to approximately \$359 billion in paid hours per year in the U.S.

A study by the International Journal of Conflict Management found that organizations with high levels of conflict reported lower levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement compared to organizations with low levels of conflict. It should be no surprise that the employees who are unable to manage conflict are likely to experience high levels of stress and burnout and usually depart the organization.



Avoiding Conflict Stunts Resilience

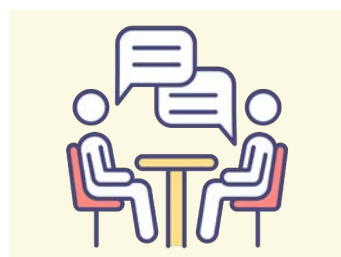
It's true that embracing conflict and learning how to manage it effectively can help you build resilience. When you avoid confrontation, you miss out on an opportunity to practice important skills such as active listening, empathy, and assertiveness. By engaging in conflict in a healthy and productive way, you can improve your ability to handle difficult situations and manage stress more effectively.

When you avoid conflict, you miss out on the opportunity to learn how to handle challenging situations and negotiate effectively. These skills are essential for personal and professional growth. When conflict is not resolved, it can lead to increased stress and tension in the workplace, which can negatively impact your well-being.

Interpersonal conflict is the most common obstacle we face in the workplace. Developing the skills to manage conflict immediately improves your resilience and keeps conflict from skyrocketing your stress and anxiety.

Steps to Begin Effectively Managing Conflict

Managing interpersonal conflict in the workplace can be challenging, but it is essential for creating a positive and productive work environment. Here are some steps you can take to effectively manage interpersonal conflict at work:

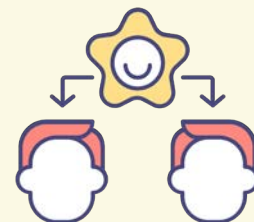


1 Encourage open communication

Encourage all parties involved in the conflict to express their feelings and concerns openly and respectfully. It's important to approach each conflict with an open mind and be willing to listen to the other person's perspective. The Harvard Business Review found that organizations with high levels of psychological safety, where employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions and concerns, are less likely to experience workplace conflict.

2 Stay calm and neutral

Avoid getting emotionally involved in the conflict and try to remain neutral and objective. When managing conflict, it's also important to be mindful of your own emotions and reactions. Practice deep breathing, take breaks when necessary, and try to approach the situation with a calm and level head. This will help you to stay focused on finding a resolution and prevent the situation from escalating.

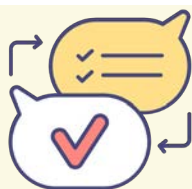


3 Identify the root cause of the conflict

Understanding the underlying causes of the conflict can help you find a resolution that addresses everyone's needs and concerns. By understanding the other person's point of view, you can work together to find a mutually agreeable solution.

4 Brainstorm potential solutions:

Work with the parties involved to generate a list of potential solutions and find one that everyone can agree on.



5 Set and follow through on agreed-upon actions

Once a solution has been reached, make sure that all parties understand their responsibilities and follow through with their agreed-upon actions.

6 Foster a positive work environment

Encourage a positive work environment by promoting open communication, providing conflict resolution training, and fostering a culture of respect and trust. A study by the International Journal of Conflict Management found that organizations with a positive organizational culture, where employees feel valued and respected, are less likely to experience high levels of workplace conflict.



Summary

Embracing interpersonal conflicts as a path to building resilience can be a valuable experience. By learning how to manage conflict in a healthy and productive way, you can improve your stress management skills and become more resilient in the face of challenges.

Because conversation is at the heart of conflict, Fierce embedded conflict resolution strategies in many of the programs we provide such as Fierce Team, Fierce Feedback, and Fierce Confront.

Having frameworks for conflict management and resolution strategies is a proven method for companies to reduce interpersonal conflict. By becoming adept at managing conflict, you will not only become more resilient, but increase the ability to solve problems, create innovation, and build a positive thriving work environment.

Tip 8



Be Aware of your Thoughts

HOW MANY THOUGHTS
DOES A PERSON HAVE?*

6.5
PER MINUTE

6,200
PER DAY

*Queens University
study

Our internal conversation about people and events determines many of our own stress triggers. Learning to reframe forces deep self-awareness and will help you short-circuit the flight or flight stress response. The tip this week is to be mindful of your inner dialogue.

Do you know how many thoughts you have per day? According to a new study from psychologists at Queen's University using MRI brain scans, they were able to detect thought transitions and count how many thoughts we have per day. On average, participants had 6.5 thoughts per minute or 6200 thoughts per day.

Other psychological studies suggest that out of all our thoughts, 80% are negative. That's almost 5000 negative thoughts per day. No wonder we are under so much stress.

So how do you battle the daily bombardment of those negative thoughts that trigger internal stress and destructive behavior? Learning to become more self-aware through mindfulness and reframing a portion of those thoughts will build resilience. You begin to take control and develop qualities that give you power over the obstacles and stress triggers in your life.

HOW MANY OF THESE ARE
NEGATIVE THOUGHTS?

80% or almost **5,000**
PER DAY



Tips for Managing Your Thoughts

1 Separate yourself from your thoughts

Because we are so bombarded by thoughts throughout the day, even when we notice them we easily allow them to be part of our identity. Negative impressions and even words coming from our others and our outside world are easier to defend against because they are external. As we gain more experience in life we become adept at batting away negative influences. It's the internal ones that trip up us.

Remember you are not your thoughts. We all have negative thoughts floating through our heads. Without effort, we take them on as our identity, and they become a broken record in our head. Reinforcing our fears and doubts. Telling us obstacles are impossible to conquer. Catastrophizing events and creating images of disastrous outcomes.

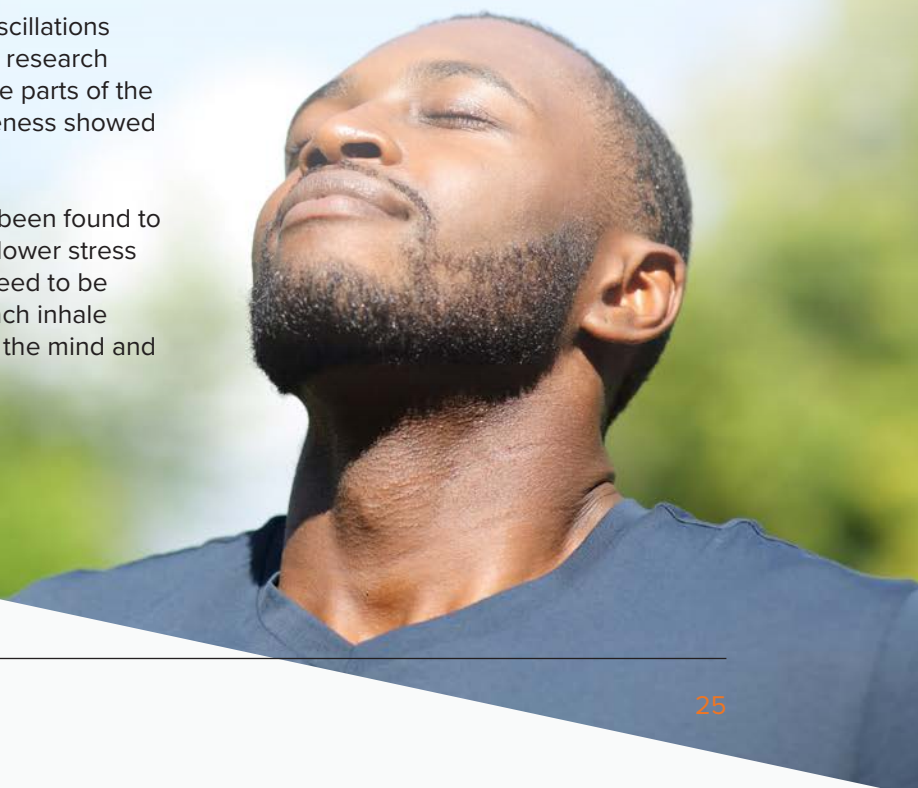
Imagine thoughts as flocks of birds flying overhead. There's nothing you can do to stop them from flying over, but you can keep them from building a nest on your head. Another helpful image is to think of thoughts as passengers but you are the driver. Whatever image helps, use to separate those negative thought worms from constructing your identity. You are in control and have the power to ignore or direct your flow of thoughts.

2 Intentional Breathing

Recent studies show a connection between breathing and brain health. Being intentional about your breath has the ability to slow your mind and become aware of all those pesky little thoughts. One study in 2016 found breathing rhythms actually can control our emotional states.

Counting your breath influences “neuronal oscillations throughout the brain”. When participants in a research study controlled and counted their breath, the parts of the brain related to emotion, memory, and awareness showed a more organized pattern.

Also, slowly breathing through the nose has been found to reduce heart rate, widen blood vessels, and lower stress responses. This breathing process doesn't need to be complicated. Simply counting to 5 or 6 for each inhale and exhale for as little as 2 minutes will calm the mind and body.



3 Learn to relax your body

Relaxing the body also has an impact on the mind and our thoughts. Our emotional states change and even become relaxed when the body calms down. Thoughts begin to slow as well. Like the rapid chatter we experience in our mind, many of us live in revved up caffeinated bodies.

Taking time to intentionally relax will help control and calm stressful thoughts. Relaxation can be difficult for many of us. While we may experience some of that relaxation during sleep or while vegging out while bingeing Netflix, it is helpful to have moments where we consciously focus on releasing physical tension.

Visualization can help. Sit in a relaxed position either sitting or lying. Imagine your body is a filled up balloon and you begin releasing the pressure of the balloon through your fingers and toes. Imagining your body as so heavy you sink into your chair also helps.



The most common way to fully relax is to do a full body scan starting with your head until you reach your toes. Sense each of your body and release the tension. Occasionally, you will have trouble relaxing parts of your body. If this is the case, do the opposite. Tense the muscle you need to relax as hard as you can, then let go. It will instantly relax.

Because the body and mind are intimately connected, learning to relax will help all those intrusive thoughts.

I can do this! My work matters!

4 Create personal slogans

You've probably heard and used mantras or affirmations to rewire your brain circuitry and gain a measure of control over your thoughts. Yet for many people those terms are loaded with "new-age" or "religious" practices so they steer clear of a valuable tool.

Rather than positive affirmations, think of them as personal slogans. These are short pithy statements that you can repeat to yourself throughout your day. They have a double-edged benefit. On one hand the repetition of the words will help you crowd out the negative streams of thought. On the other hand, you begin reprogramming your brain in a positive direction.

If you ever played sports, you've undoubtedly had a coach that spouted constant statements to help players get their heads straight and motivate them to play better. Or you had a teacher or parent, you had repetitive statements to keep your attitude in line. Grab a hold of those that made you smile and perform better and use them throughout the day.

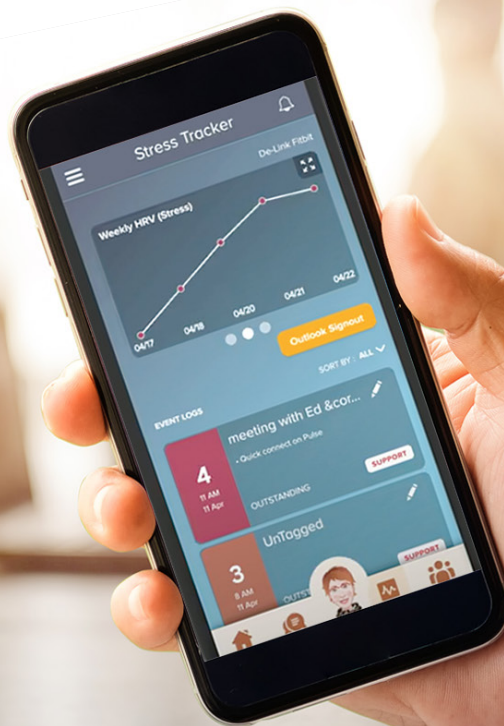
5 Reframe your thoughts

Reframing is the ability to reinterpret your thoughts. While ignoring negative thoughts can help. Sometimes you need to practice something more aggressive. Reframing thoughts is like judo for the mind. You redirect that negative energy into something much more positive.

Here are some examples:

Suppose your mind keeps telling you that you are bad because of a failure. Reframe the thought as a stepping stone to success. Being thankful for failure because of what you learned and how you will do better next time. Maybe you are in a bad mood, and can't seem to get out of it. Tell yourself you are just passionate about the situation driving your attitude.

Looking for the proverbial silver lining always helps. We usually always find a positive slant on a negative thought or situation. When negative thoughts are especially pesky, using humor or putting a ridiculous absurd slant on the thoughts will stop it in its tracks.



Summary

Our thoughts have a massive impact on both our stress and resilience. Learning to manage and control that internal dialogue will build resilience in your life. Pick one or two of these actions and incorporate them in your daily life and you will find yourself much more resilient against daily stressors.

If you are looking for a more objective measure of your internal dialogue, **Fierce built the new Pulse App** to monitor those biometrics in your body that indicate stressful thoughts are attacking you. **Pulse** gives you a measurable way to develop self-awareness to control stressful thoughts. [Click here for more information about Pulse and the results Pulse participants have had.](#)

Tip 9



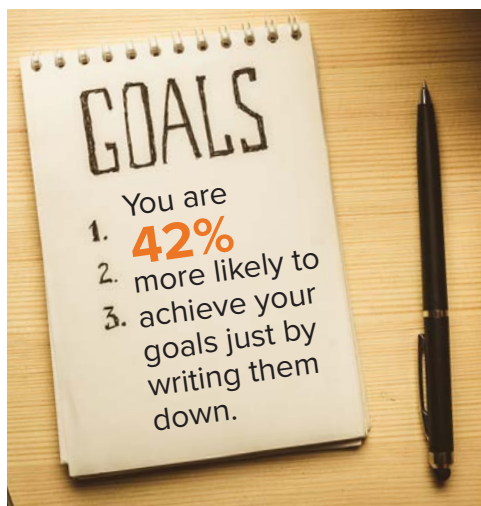
Create Resilient Goals

“A Goal without A Plan is Just a Wish”

The origins of this modern proverb are unknown, but it gets to the heart of why goals generate stress in our lives. We know something needs to happen. We have a vague sense of what that will look like, but nothing is crystalized into clear steps.

Vague and unclear goals create feelings of overwhelm. Creating manageable goals with clear actions avoids the stress of achieving the impossible.

The tip this week is to build resilience by creating the right kind of goals.



The Truth about Goals

Goal-setting is important. Merely setting a goal in writing, even if it is vague, increases your ability to achieve them. A study from the Dominican University found that people who wrote down their goals were 42% more likely to achieve.

Even though goals can create stress, setting challenging goals does lead to higher levels of performance than setting easy or vague goals (Journal of Applied Psychology). The key is knowing how to articulate and manage the goal setting process for achievement.

Having accountability also increases the likelihood of achieving goals. One study found that people who had a specific accountability appointment with a friend were 95% more likely to achieve their goals than those who didn't have such an appointment (American Society of Training and Development).

Goals are important not only in the workplace where we all have financial targets to achieve and projects to be completed, but goals toward personal development and skill building help develop greater resilience against change and obstacles.



The tried and true method for creating strong goals is to follow the SMART model of goal setting. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This method of goal setting helps individuals and teams to create clear, actionable objectives that are designed to lead to success.



Specific

The first step and most important step in setting SMART goals is to be specific. Goals should be well-defined, clear, and concise. This helps to avoid ambiguity and ensures that everyone involved knows exactly what is expected of them. Remember, it is ambiguity that creates stress around goals. Clear conversations with your team are necessary.

A specific goal should answer the following questions:

- What needs to be accomplished?
- Who will be responsible for achieving the goal?
- When will the goal be accomplished?

For Example: Increase Sales by 10% in Q2

The goal is to increase sales by 10% in the second quarter of the year.
The sales team will be responsible for achieving this goal.
The goal will be accomplished by the end of the second quarter.

One reason this step in goal setting is so critical is that it forces conversation within groups. The collaboration within the group toward the goal helps refine the goal and brings a diversity of ideas on the details of the goal.

There is power in specificity. People who have a specific goal in mind are more likely to achieve it than those who have a general goal. For example, people who set a goal of "losing 10 pounds in 3 months" are more likely to achieve it than those who set a goal of "losing weight."





Measurable

The second step in setting SMART goals is to ensure that they are measurable. This means that progress towards the goal can be tracked and measured over time. Measurable goals are essential for determining whether or not you are making progress towards achieving your objective.

For Example: Reduce Customer Wait Time by 25%

The goal is to reduce customer wait time by 25%.
The time that customers spend waiting in line will be measured using a tracking system.
Progress towards the goal will be reviewed on a weekly basis.



Achievable

The third step in setting SMART goals is to ensure that they are achievable. Goals should be challenging, but also realistic. If goals are too easy, there will be no sense of accomplishment, but if they are too difficult, they will be demotivating.

For Example: Launch a New Product Line in 6 Months

The goal is to launch a new product line in six months.
The product development team will be responsible for achieving this goal.
The goal is achievable based on the team's current capacity and resources.

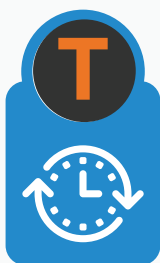


Relevant

The fourth step in setting SMART goals is to ensure that they are relevant. Goals should be aligned with the overall strategy and objectives of the organization. They should also be relevant to the individual or team responsible for achieving them.

For Example: Improve Employee Retention by 20%

The goal is to improve employee retention by 20%.
Employee turnover rates will be measured and reviewed.
This goal is relevant to the human resources team, as they are responsible for employee retention.



Time-bound

The fifth and final step in setting SMART goals is to ensure that they are time-bound. This means that a specific deadline is set for achieving the goal. Time-bound goals help to create a sense of urgency and motivate individuals and teams to take action.

Example: Complete Website Redesign in 3 Months

The goal is to complete a website redesign in three months.
The website design team will be responsible for achieving this goal.
The goal will be accomplished by the end of the third month.

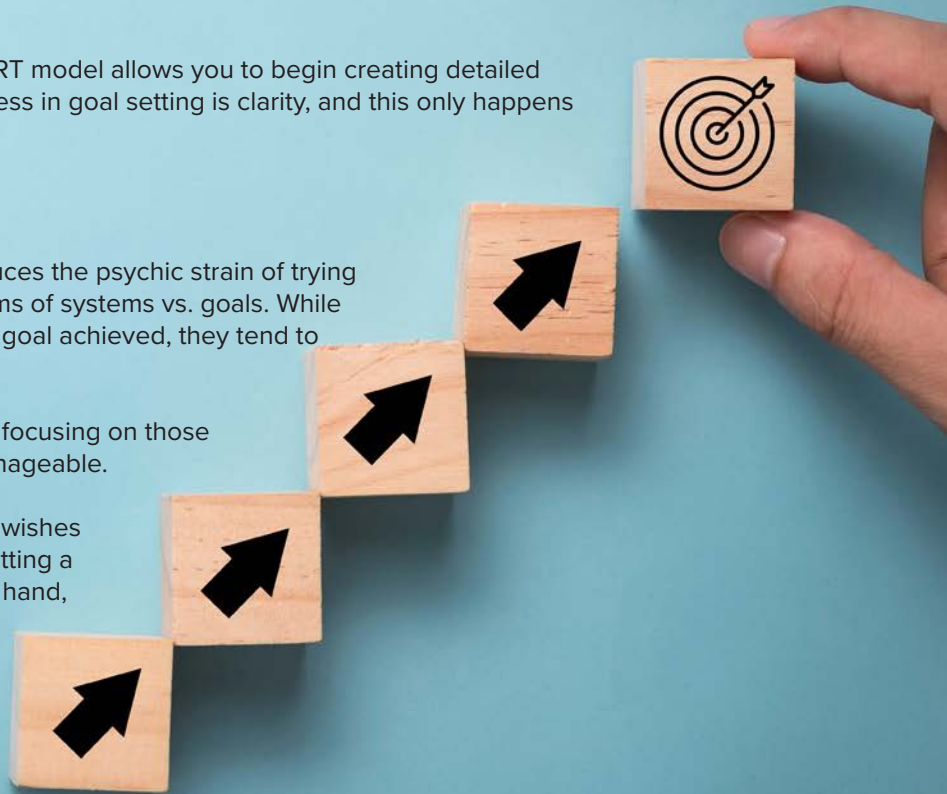
Having goals in place that follow the SMART model allows you to begin creating detailed actions plans. The real key to reducing stress in goal setting is clarity, and this only happens with deep conversations within teams.

Systems vs. Goals

Another approach to goal setting that reduces the psychic strain of trying to achieve the impossible is to think in terms of systems vs. goals. While it can be motivational to have a vision of a goal achieved, they tend to loom over our head and just out of reach.

Creating systems for achieving a goal and focusing on those simple repeatable steps is much more manageable.

A goal is a specific outcome that a person wishes to achieve, such as losing 10 pounds or getting a promotion at work. A system, on the other hand, is a set of habits or routines that a person adopts in order to achieve a desired outcome. For example, instead of setting a goal to lose 10 pounds, a person might create a system of healthy eating and regular exercise.



Real-Life Examples

Let's take a look at some real-life examples of how systems and goals can be used to achieve success:



Sales team

The goal of a sales team is to meet or exceed their sales targets. However, the system they use to achieve this goal is equally important. A well-designed sales process that involves lead generation, lead qualification, product demos, and follow-up is a good system that can help the team achieve their sales targets.

Manufacturing company

The goal of a manufacturing company is to produce high-quality products at a low cost. The system they use to achieve this goal includes process optimization, waste reduction, and quality control measures.





Marketing department

The goal of a marketing department is to increase brand awareness and generate leads. The system they use to achieve this goal includes social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, and SEO.

Project management

The goal of a project manager is to deliver a project on time, within budget, and with high quality. The system they use to achieve this goal includes project planning, task allocation, risk management, and communication protocols.



Customer service

The goal of a customer service team is to provide excellent customer support. The system they use to achieve this goal includes call center operations, ticket management, and feedback mechanisms to improve service quality.

Focusing on the system rather than the massive goal reduces the emotional pressure of achievement. You focus on small steps that lead to consistent progress, flexibility, and sustainable habits.

Summary

In conclusion, setting goals is crucial for achieving success, but it's important to set the right kind of goals.



Vague goals create overwhelm and stress, while specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals lead to success. SMART goals enable teams to create clear, actionable objectives, and provide clarity and detail actions. Moreover, the key to reducing stress in goal-setting is clarity, which can only happen through deep conversations within teams. Lastly, creating systems for achieving goals instead of focusing on the outcome is a more manageable approach. By following these strategies, you can achieve your goals and build resilience against change and obstacles. Remember, “a goal without a plan is just a wish.”

For over 20 years, Fierce has worked with organizations to build the conversation skills necessary for developing clear goals and the systems to achieve them. [Click here to learn more about how Fierce has helped organizations achieve their goals and transform their performance culture](#)



Practice Gratitude

Research around gratitude is one of the secrets of a resilient life. Understanding gratitude and how to implement it in your life and work teams will strengthen your ability to

The tip this week is to begin implementing a proven gratitude practice resilience.

In the face of adversity, it is easy to feel down and discouraged. However, cultivating gratitude and resilience can help us to maintain a positive outlook and overcome challenges. Gratitude is the practice of acknowledging and appreciating the good things we have in life, while resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficult situations. In this blog post, we will explore the connection between gratitude and resilience, and how these two qualities can help us to thrive in the face of adversity.

The Benefits of Gratitude on Resilience

Gratitude has been shown to have several benefits for our mental health and overall well-being. When we focus on the good things in our lives, we are less likely to feel anxious, depressed, or stressed. Gratitude helps us build stronger relationships with others, as we are more likely to express appreciation and kindness towards those around us. Research has even demonstrated physical benefits such as improving sleep quality and boosting the immune system.

Gratitude plays a key role in building resilience, as it helps us to maintain a positive outlook even in the face of adversity. By focusing on the good things in our lives, we can develop a sense of perspective that allows us to see challenges as opportunities for growth and learning. When we practice gratitude regularly, we are better equipped to handle difficult situations and maintain our emotional well-being in the face of adversity.

The reason that gratitude impacts mental health is that it literally rewires our brains and induces structural changes that impact emotion and our ability to find opportunities.





Benefits in the Workplace

Gratitude and resilience are important qualities not just in our personal lives, but also in the workplace. When we express gratitude towards our colleagues and bosses, we build stronger relationships and foster a more positive work environment.

Imagine a sales team that is struggling to meet its targets. Instead of becoming discouraged, giving up, or descending into toxic competition, the team leader encourages them to focus on the positive aspects of their work, like building relationships with clients and helping customers find solutions to their problems. By cultivating a sense of gratitude for the good things in their work, the leader instills motivation for healthy attitudes and improved performance.

Another major benefit in the workplace is the “witnessing effect.” This term comes from Sara Algoe, a psychology and neuroscience researcher. Expressing public feelings of gratitude toward another person causes others who “witness” this expression to view the benefactor in a positive light and as a resource for help and action. As a leader, expressing gratitude to an individual in a team setting changes how that person is viewed by other team members. This is a powerful motivational and team-building strategy.

Strategies for Cultivating Gratitude and Resilience

There are many strategies we can use to cultivate gratitude and resilience in our lives. Robert Emmons, a psychology researcher at UC Davis, breaks gratitude into two key parts.

1 Affirming the good things we’ve received

2 Acknowledging the beneficial role other people play in our lives



When you seek to practice gratitude, it is about focusing on the small things that rewire the brain. As Jon Kabat-Zinn says, “The little things? The little moments? They aren’t little.”

These 8 strategies will help you begin to instill gratitude in your life.

1 Gratitude Journal

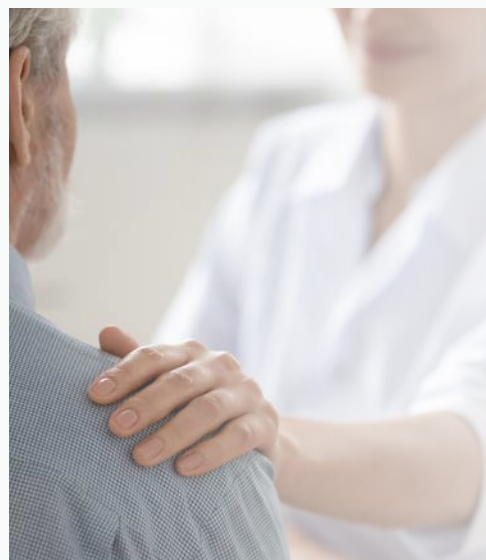
In every study on gratitude, the gratitude journal always makes a list of actions with the power to quickly change our mental health. This doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming. Daily writing down 1-3 things you are grateful for is the minimum effective dose. This focuses us on the positive aspects of our lives and builds a sense of appreciation for the good things we have.

By recalling moments of gratitude, you retrain your mind to look for good events in your daily life. This is exactly why grateful people tend to see more opportunities.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a black pen, writing the words "I am grateful for" in cursive on a white piece of paper. The paper is slightly tilted, and the background is blurred.

2 Mindfulness

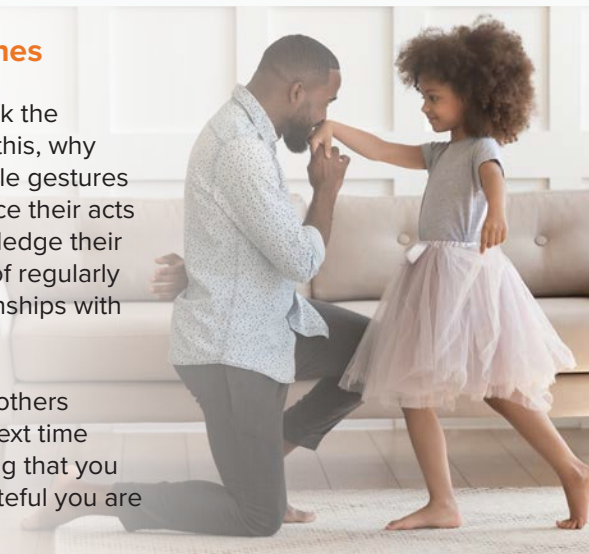
Mindfulness is the act of being present and aware of your surroundings. By taking the time to tune into the present moment, you increase your ability to notice the positive things around you and feel grateful for them. For example, if you are a naturally grateful person, you may already be more mindful of the kind gestures of others. The more you practice mindfulness, the more likely you are to recognize the good things in your life that you can be thankful for. This, in turn, leads to greater satisfaction and happiness. Being mindful of your surroundings is crucial for appreciating the beauty of nature, the kindness of others, and the opportunities that life presents. Whether it's noticing someone's help in the kitchen or the color of the sky, simply taking the time to be aware will generate a sense of gratitude.



3 Share your gratitude for your loved ones

It's common for many of us to unintentionally overlook the kindness shown to us by our loved ones. To combat this, why not make it a habit to express gratitude through simple gestures like saying 'thank you' or giving a hug when you notice their acts of kindness? It's important to appreciate and acknowledge their efforts, and not take them for granted. This practice of regularly showing gratitude improves and fortifies your relationships with those around you.

Studies have shown that sharing your gratitude with others has a positive impact on your relationships. So, the next time your partner, friend, or family member does something that you appreciate, make it a point to let them know how grateful you are for their kindness.



4 Be Grateful for Adversity

Try reframing every event, including negative ones, as something that happened for your benefit. Even if it was bad, remember it. It's useful to recall past hardships to cultivate gratitude in your present state. By reflecting on how challenging life used to be and how much progress you've made, you create a clear contrast in your mind. This contrast provides a rich foundation for gratitude.

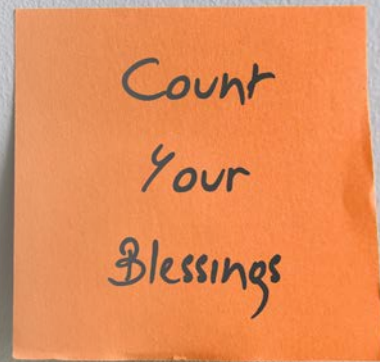


5 Use Visual Reminders

Visual reminders are effective in triggering gratitude as forgetfulness and lack of mindful awareness are the primary obstacles to gratefulness. Other people often serve as the best visual reminders.

6 Make a Vow to Practice Gratitude

According to research, taking an oath to perform a behavior increases the chances of actually following through with it. As a result, create your own gratitude vow, such as "I pledge to acknowledge my blessings every day," and display it somewhere where you'll see it daily to serve as a reminder.



7 Watch Your Language

Your words are powerful in shaping the way you view the world. Individuals who experience gratitude tend to utilize a specific style of language that emphasizes gifts, givers, blessings, being blessed, good fortune, being fortunate, and abundance. It is important to note that when expressing gratitude, the focus should not be on one's own inherent goodness, but rather on the good deeds performed by others on their behalf.

8 Pretend to be grateful

Performing grateful gestures such as smiling, expressing appreciation, and composing letters of gratitude induces feelings of gratitude. Even when you don't feel grateful, engaging in these "grateful motions" frequently helps evoke the emotion of gratitude more regularly.



Conclusion

Gratitude and resilience are powerful tools for maintaining a positive outlook and overcoming challenges. By focusing on the good things in our lives and building a sense of perspective, we develop the resilience we need to thrive in the face of adversity. Whether we are facing personal struggles or workplace challenges, cultivating gratitude and resilience helps us to stay strong and move forward with our lives.

Additional Resources

- **The Science of Gratitude**, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/the-science-of-gratitude>
- **How to Practice Mindfulness**, <https://www.mindful.org/how-to-practice-mindfulness/>
- Fierce Resilience
- Pulse by Fierce

Tip 11



Think Positive



Positive thinking is not avoiding negative reality, but reframing it so you have the power to make productive change. This week's tip is to turn positive thinking into a method for reframing obstacles.

There is a well-established psychological principle that our thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes have a significant impact on our behavior and our perception of reality. This principle is often referred to as the "self-fulfilling prophecy," which suggests that if we believe something to be true, we are more likely to act in ways that make that belief a reality.

You've seen this play out in the lives of friends and co-workers. Some seem to always be falling into opportunity and others into constant chaos. While we can't promise a life of ease and financial abundance from this week's tip. We can promise that shifting your mindset toward a positive direction and learning to reframe negative situations will improve your resilience and even impact those around you.

Benefits of Positive Thinking

Over the last several decades much research has been done on happiness. This has been an interesting shift for many psychologists and sociologists. Rather than focusing on the negative and disturbing parts of human nature, groups of psychologists embarked on finding ways to improve happiness and well-being.

The results of the research have proven to be beneficial. In studying happy and positive people several major benefits for the modern workplace have risen to the surface.

1 More productive

According to a study by the University of Warwick, happy employees are 12% more productive than their unhappy counterparts.

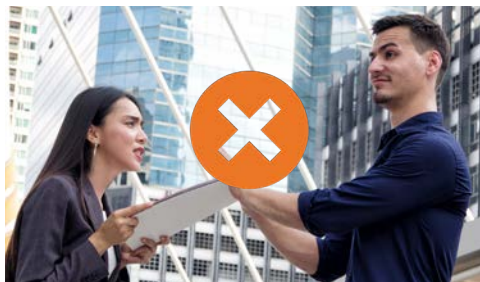
This shouldn't be too surprising. When you are overwhelmed and allow yourself to sink into negativity about challenges it drains your energy and often leads to procrastination.

It doesn't only apply to project work or daily tasks but has a direct impact on how effective your salespeople are.



A study by the University of Pennsylvania found that optimistic salespeople outsell their pessimistic counterparts by 56%.

No one wants to buy from grouchy unhappy people. A key component of the sales process is the initial rapport with a prospect. Positive people immediately are more engaging and connect faster, especially on new sales relationships.



2 Deeper engagement at work

With issues of employee retention and engagement at critical levels in workplaces. Anything we can do to move the needle in a positive direction will have a massive impact on bottom-line profits. A Gallup survey found that employees who receive regular recognition and praise have 34% higher engagement levels than those who don't.

Also, in a study by the University of California, researchers found that positive feedback can lead to increased motivation and better performance among employees.



As a leader, expressing yourself to your teams in positive language not only increases your work engagement but ripples out into greater productivity for everyone you connect with.

According to a report by the Society for Human Resource Management, companies with a positive corporate culture have lower turnover rates and higher employee retention rates.

Learning to think and act positively is a critical quality of leadership that not only supports the growth of your people but improves company metrics as well.

3 Creative and innovative

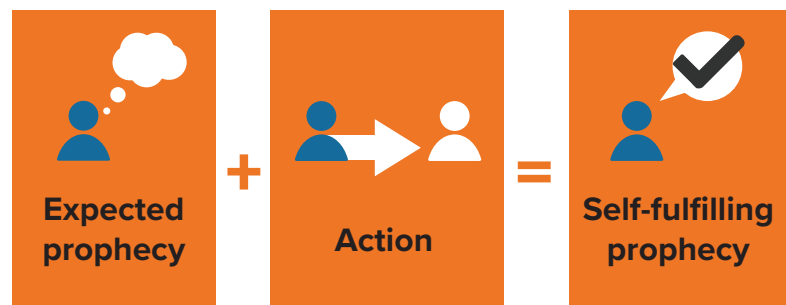
Creativity and innovation among leaders and employees allow all of us to solve problems effectively and efficiently. In a study by Harvard Business Review, researchers found that positive emotions lead to more creative and innovative thinking in the workplace.

Every organization needs innovation to succeed and win in the marketplace. Your ability to be innovative is a key element in setting yourself apart from competitors.



How Does Positive Thinking Work

There is a well-established psychological principle that our thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes have a significant impact on our behavior and our perception of reality. This principle is often referred to as the “self-fulfilling prophecy,” which suggests that if we believe something to be true, we are more likely to act in ways that make that belief a reality.



For example, if you believe that you are capable of achieving your goals and that you have the skills and resources necessary to succeed, you are more likely to take proactive steps toward achieving those goals. On the other hand, if you believe that you are destined to fail or that you lack the necessary skills or resources to succeed, you are more likely to give up or not even try in the first place.

In this way, our thoughts and beliefs create a kind of feedback loop, where our beliefs shape our behavior, which in turn reinforces those beliefs. This leads to a self-reinforcing cycle where our thoughts and beliefs become increasingly entrenched over time.



Myths about Positive Thinking

Before we jump into practical ways for becoming more positive, let's talk about significant misunderstandings about positive thinking. Positive thinking has been a buzzword in the self-help industry for decades. It's the idea that if we simply focus on the positive, we can manifest our dreams and create a happy life. However, this popular way of thinking is a pitfall to our progress. It's not about avoiding negative reality, but rather reframing it so we have the power to make productive change. This is not beneficial positive thinking but rather - toxic positivity.

 Denial of negative emotions	SIGNS OF TOXIC POSITIVITY	 Authentic feelings are dismissed	Toxic positivity is the excessive and ineffective overgeneralization of a happy, optimistic attitude. It is the belief that one should always focus on the positive and suppress any negative thoughts or emotions. This is harmful because it ignores the reality of difficult situations and prevents individuals from processing and coping with negative emotions.
 Feelings of guilt & shame	 Brushing off real problems	 Always faking happiness	

To combat this misunderstanding of positive thinking it's important to acknowledge negative emotions when they arise. It's okay to feel sad, angry, or frustrated. These emotions are a natural part of the human experience. Instead of trying to avoid them, we use them to our advantage.

How to Think Positively

1 Acknowledge Obstacles

In any job, it is essential to acknowledge that encountering obstacles and negative circumstances is a typical occurrence. These manifest in many forms, such as an uncooperative coworker, a complex project, or a career setback, and they lead to stress and demotivation. By acknowledging reality, you identify ways to learn and improve from these experiences.



One crucial step is accepting mistakes. It is only human to make errors, and it is essential not to dwell on them. Every mistake presents an opportunity to learn and develop. Rather than fixating on the mistake itself, it is more productive to analyze it objectively and determine what can be done differently in the future. By doing so, mistakes are transformed into opportunities for improvement and help you grow both personally and

2 Learn to Reframe

Reframing negative situations by focusing on solutions instead of problems transforms your thinking. By shifting your mindset, you find creative solutions to overcome obstacles. To practice reframing, analyze how you process information and retrain your thinking habits to be more positive. Reframing questions help you and your employees see things through a different lens and improve problem-solving skills.



Reframing negative emotions means taking a step back and looking at them from a different perspective. It helps us see them as an opportunity to learn and grow instead of a roadblock. Positive thinking and reframing go hand in hand, as they both involve consciously choosing to focus on the positive aspects of a situation, rather than the negative. Reframing reduces negative emotions, increases feelings of optimism and hope, and improves overall mood and outlook on life.

3

Combine with Gratitude



Practicing gratitude and positive thinking helps to shift your mindset towards positivity, enabling you to navigate even the most difficult situations. Seek out positive things happening around you, such as the love of your family and friends, the support of your colleagues, and the beauty of nature. By focusing on these positive aspects, you maintain a positive outlook and carry this mindset into the workplace.

While you cannot control everything in life, it is important to focus on the things that you can control. Rather than feeling helpless when things go wrong, become a problem solver and search for ways to improve your situation. If you cannot find a solution, try to learn from the experience and comfort yourself with the knowledge that things can always get better. By focusing on what you can control, you regain a sense of agency and increase your resilience in the face of adversity.

4

Network Positively

When facing difficult situations, seeking support and feedback from others is crucial to finding effective solutions. Many people are hesitant to ask for help or advice, fearing that it may make them appear weak or incompetent. However, recognizing when you need help and reaching out to others is a sign of strength, not weakness. Seeking guidance from others provides fresh perspectives on the situation, and working together with others leads to creative and innovative solutions that you may not have thought of on your own. Whether it's seeking feedback from a mentor, brainstorming with colleagues, or asking for assistance from a friend, remember that you do not have to face challenging situations alone.

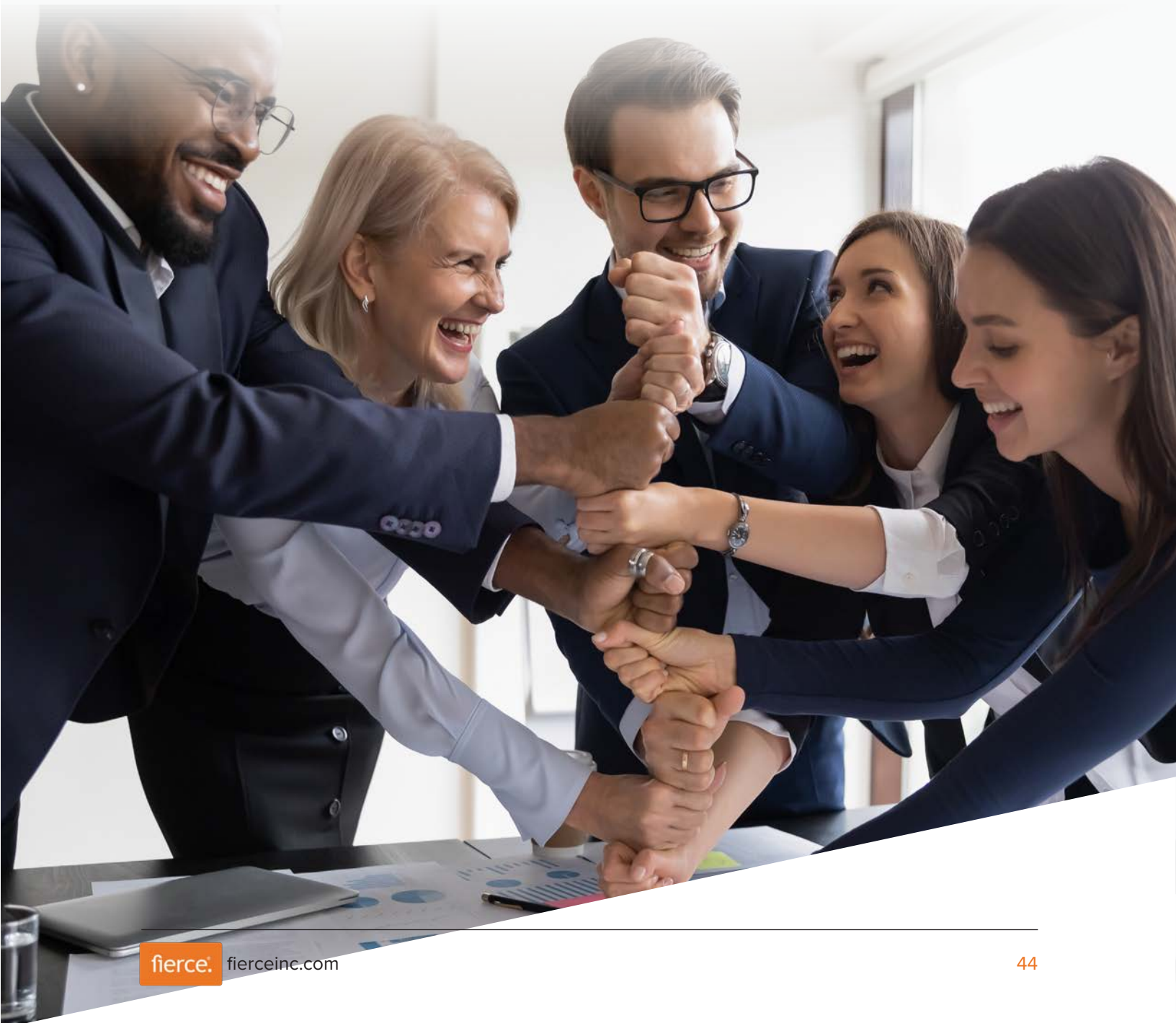


Surrounding yourself with positive people also has a significant impact on your overall well-being. Positive people help elevate your mood and inspire you to be your best self. They provide you with encouragement, support, and motivation during difficult times. In contrast, negative people drain your energy, bring you down, and make it challenging to stay focused and motivated. Try to cultivate relationships with positive coworkers or friends who share your values and help you achieve your goals. Surrounding yourself with people who uplift and inspire you to navigate through challenges with a more positive outlook and a greater sense of resilience.

Summary

We can learn to navigate the intricate interplay between our thoughts, behavior, and the world around us by fostering self-awareness and critical thinking. As a manager, leader, or team member, negative situations and obstacles are inevitable. Nevertheless, it's crucial to approach these challenges positively and view them as opportunities for growth and development.

Leaders, especially, must possess the essential skill of healthy positive thinking. By concentrating on solutions, cultivating gratitude, reframing negativity, and seeking support from others, leaders can surmount even the toughest challenges and emerge more resilient and stronger than before. So, the next time you encounter an obstacle, take a deep breath, change your thinking, and prepare to tackle it head-on.



Tip 12



Embrace Radical Responsibility

It's all my fault!"

My team's results, the culture inside my organization, the communication issues, everything.

Doesn't sound like a positive way to wrap up the 12 Tips for Resilience, does it?

But there's power in taking full responsibility for your life and circle of influence. While it may sound counterproductive initially, accepting full responsibility for every aspect of your world transforms you from a victim to an overcomer. This tip this week is to embrace radical responsibility.

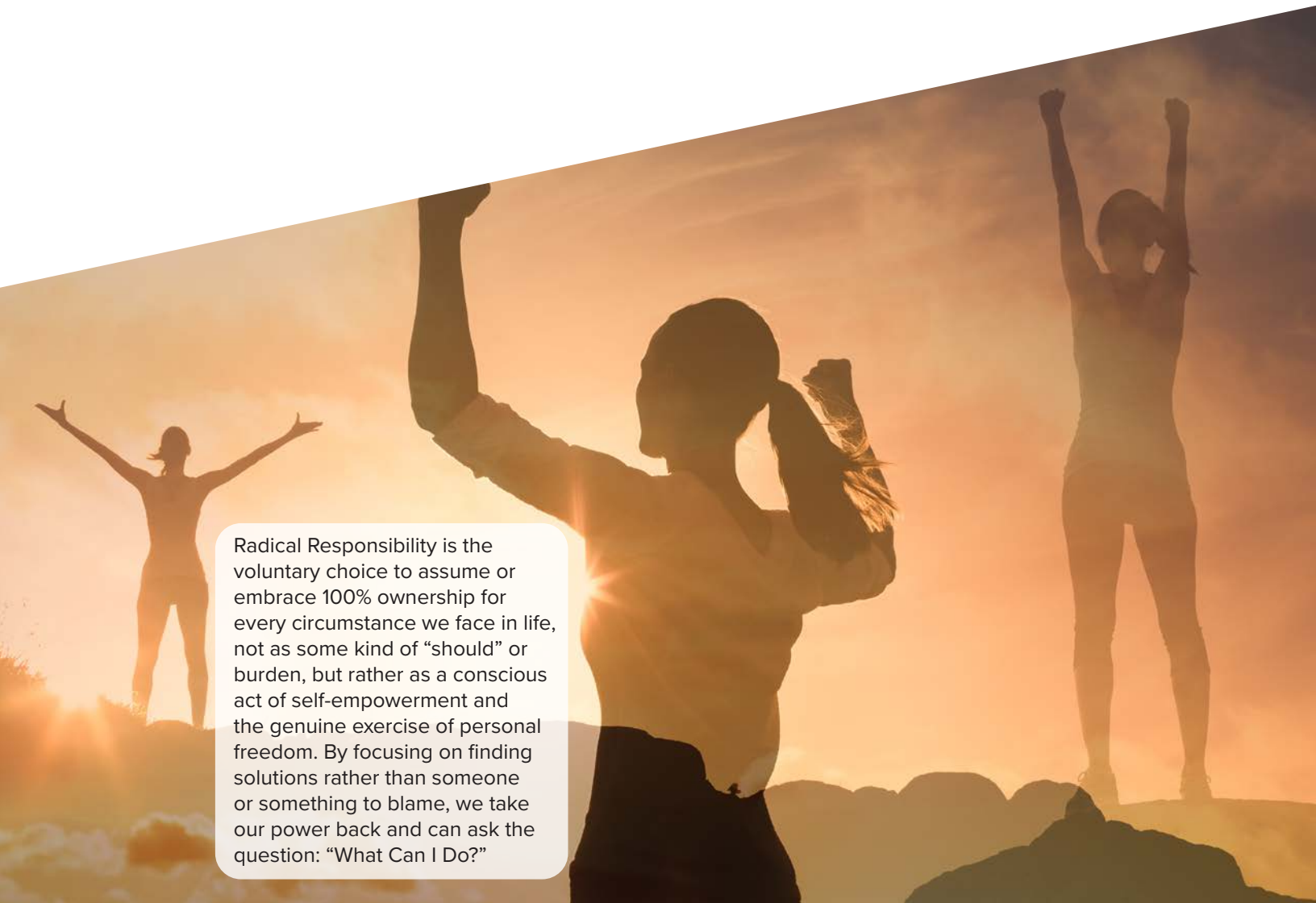
What is Radical Responsibility?

Radical responsibility is the idea that you are 100% responsible for your life and the outcomes you experience, regardless of external factors. This mindset shift is essential for achieving success in any area

of life and greatly enhances your ability to be resilient in any situation. By embracing radical responsibility, you take full ownership of your decisions and outcomes, stop blaming external factors for problems, and start looking for solutions.

Radical responsibility goes beyond just taking responsibility for your actions and consequences. It means taking full responsibility for your emotions as well. Emotions are generated internally, and no one can make you feel anything. When you don't take radical responsibility, you rely on blame, shame, and guilt to rationalize your circumstances and feelings and keep the ego intact. Blame, shame, and guilt all come from toxic fear. Radical responsibility means locating the cause and control of our lives in ourselves, not in external events.





Radical Responsibility is the voluntary choice to assume or embrace 100% ownership for every circumstance we face in life, not as some kind of “should” or burden, but rather as a conscious act of self-empowerment and the genuine exercise of personal freedom. By focusing on finding solutions rather than someone or something to blame, we take our power back and can ask the question: “What Can I Do?”

The Benefits of Radical Responsibility

Taking radical responsibility is crucial for leaders, especially given the high stakes involved in your work. Leaders are accountable for making critical decisions that can significantly impact their team and organization’s success. By taking radical responsibility, you transform your approach to the external world. You will see an immediate improvement in 3 key areas of your leadership as you shift your mindset.

Decision Making

Radical responsibility leads to improved decision-making. You lead from strategic choices based on your own values and goals, rather than being influenced by external factors or others’ opinions.





Accountability

Taking radical responsibility increases accountability, you take ownership of their mistakes and take action to correct them, instead of blaming others. This behavior has a cascading effect inside the culture prompting others to shift toward action rather than hiding mistakes and blaming others.

Resilience

Taking radical responsibility also promotes resilience because you view setbacks and failures as opportunities to learn and grow, rather than reasons to give up.



How to Practice Radical Responsibility

Radical Responsibility is a mindset shift and by embracing the concept and seeing the world through this lens the path to change becomes apparent.

Yet reprogramming our minds can be difficult. Most of us live in a world where blame, shame, and guilt are used to justify feelings and situations and protect the ego. These negative emotions stem from fear. Instead of placing the blame on external factors, accept that you control and determine the outcomes of your life.



These steps will help begin shifting your mindset:



1
Accept responsibility for your life and outcomes. Stop blaming others and start looking for solutions.



2
Develop mindfulness and emotional intelligence to recognize when you are giving away your power through blaming.



3
Practice self-awareness to reflect on your actions and decisions and identify where you may be falling short.



4
Set clear, measurable goals to take ownership of your future and commit to taking action.



5
Take action to achieve your goals and hold yourself accountable for your progress.



6
Embrace failure as an opportunity to learn and grow, rather than a reason to give up. View every experience as a chance to become a more conscious leader.

Summary

The idea that you are responsible for your life and every outcome you experience, regardless of external factors, is a demanding concept, but a powerful step toward becoming resilient. By embracing this mindset, you take full ownership of their decisions and outcomes and stop blaming external factors for problems. This makes you a powerful leader with improved decision-making and increased self-accountability.

To practice this new mindset, accept full responsibility for your life, emotions, and outcomes. Develop mindfulness and emotional intelligence. Practice self-awareness, set clear goals, take action and embrace failure as an opportunity to learn and grow. By doing so, you take control of life, make better decisions, and become a more effective leader.

As a closing action when obstacles and challenges and mistakes occur, instead of asking “Who’s to blame?” ask:

“What can I learn and how can I grow from this? What is my responsibility in this?”

Radical responsibility will create huge growth opportunities on a personal and organizational level.

Check out these Fierce Resources for Resilience, Responsibility, and Self Awareness: