

# Developing Resilience At Work

Resilience is learnable and it is an 'internal' job

Brought To You By:



Inspiring leaders to live, love, and lead remarkably so they and their company become 'rockstars' in their industry



SHELLEY HOLMES



By Shelley Holmes

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If you're leading a team - what's not to like about this small list?

- ✓ More productive people
- ✓ Bigger goals being achieved
- ✓ Obstacles being overcome
- ✓ People succeeding against the odds
- ✓ Stronger, more determined and focused employees

If you want this for your team, then you need to develop stronger resilience in yourself and your team members. The report released by Global Corporate Challenges (GCCC), builds on the swell of well-documented research, that informs us that developing resilience at work isn't a nice to have, it is a must-have.

For the past couple of years I've been running a workshop called "Inspired to be Inspiring " - and a big part of that program is about building resilience and self-belief in leaders, so that they can go on and inspire the same in their people.

One point before we move forward - resilience doesn't mean withstanding. It is more about having the skills that enable your life to flourish. And what the research tells us, is that resilience can be learned!

Below is the model, I use in the 'Inspired To Be Inspiring' program to illustrate the elements that need to be in place for a person to strengthen their personal resilience.



In this article we certainly can't cover all those topics, however, I want to share with you a couple of the concepts, from the module on Focus and Mind Mastery, that we spend time exploring in the program; which are self-esteem, self-compassion and growth vs fixed mindset.

# Self-esteem vs Self-compassion

During a workshop, it occurred to me that there is a lot written about self-esteem (and certainly you can find several articles I've written about self-esteem here on this site), but not so much on self-compassion. Research by Eherte, Joormann and Berking (2014) suggest that self-compassion certainly does have an impact on resilience.

Before we move on to self-compassion, a quick thought about self-esteem.

In recent decades, much emphasis has been given to growing self-esteem. Regrettably, somewhere along the way, we lost our way! We have a load of flawed thinking around self-esteem and self-worth.

For the past few decades, we've been teaching kids that they are better than average. That they are a success no matter what. In other words they are infallible and superior. All kids get gold stars; in junior school they play sport with no scoring.

And this sense of "I can't/don't fail" and/or "I'm the best, even when I fail" creates a real problem. A real problem in life in general. More importantly though, in the workplace, you as a leader, are

going to hit up against people who haven't 'failed' or when they did 'fail', they were propped up so much that they don't have the resilience to bounce forward (not back, but forward!) into a new level of performance or determination to improve their capability.

For example, nobody wants a performance appraisal that says you are “average”.

However, many younger people who've grown up with this flawed self-esteem system, are often crushed when they get the 'average' rating. Whereas others, who've grown up with the:

- ✓ Fail
- ✓ Learn
- ✓ Reassurance of 'you're doing ok'
- ✓ Now move on

method of self-worth building, may still not like the average rating. But they're more resilient at shrugging it off and moving into 'improvement' mode.

The challenge, for you the leader, is this. If someone has grown up feeling they don't fail, that they are infallible, then the moment they are challenged (whether it is through their own appraisal, or

the appraisal of others), you'll get angry, defensive people in your team. Ouch!

Please don't get me wrong, self-esteem can and should be nurtured. But self-esteem must be built in a way that an individual believes he or she is capable of taking on big goals, even after failure. That they are resilient enough to say, "I failed", then identify ways they can enhance their capability to improve performance the next time.

In fact, in the [Thought Patterns for High Performance Program](#) we teach you exactly how to do this ... with yourself, your children, the people you work with. Unfortunately, we've got a lot of work to do. In some arenas, people have taken limited knowledge and implemented practices that have had pretty harsh consequences for our young people. I'm about re-dressing that challenge.

## **Growth vs Fixed Mindset**

As part of the Focus and Mind Mastery module, as we are examining self-compassion and self-esteem, we discuss the linkage between these concepts and the growth vs fixed mindset... you can read more about this way of thinking in the great book [Mindset by Carol Dweck](#).

A person who is running on the flawed self-esteem model mentioned above is likely to have a fixed mindset. Whereas, a person who is strong in self-compassion is more likely to have a growth mindset.

If you want to take a quick quiz to see if you've got a growth or a fixed mindset [click here](#).

People who are good at self-compassion accept that they aren't perfect - that they are part of the learning tribe called humanity.

They don't need to get cranky, oversensitive and self-justifying - (in other words trying to protect their ego) - when they mess up or things don't go quite as they'd hoped. That every situation gives them an opportunity to learn and grow.

They understand that if they keep putting the effort in they'll get better at whatever they are trying to master.



Whereas people with a fixed mindset give up easily, turn away from challenges, put in little effort (if I'm not good at it or have no ability in it, why bother), are threatened by other people's success and if they fail at something they feel it has marked them forever! Ouch it's a hard way to live.

When we fail, or mess something up, most of us have that **voice inside our head** that says, "You aren't good enough. There you go again, how could you have failed at that" and other such negative self-judgments and evaluations. For some it is just a low murmur that they can control fairly quickly ... for others it is a boom box blaring inside their head and keeps popping up on a regular basis.

When someone has that boom box banging on **it can be very hard for them to perform at their best.** They are more likely to go for smaller goals, give up more easily, take it out on others etc.

Gaining capability at managing the impact of that voice in your head – getting good at self-compassion - is a critical skill if you want your life and your career to flourish.

## So, how do you grow your capability at self-compassion?

Firstly, its about controlling that dialog in your mind. It's about saying things like, *'Sure I made a mess of that, but no-one is perfect. I've learnt from that experience and am stronger and wiser now.'*

And, let's be clear here, I don't mean be all pollyannerish - when you mess up you need to fess up to yourself. Take responsibility for your part in whatever unfolded in not the way you planned.

Then quickly move into solution mode - not rumination mode. See the situation for what it is - not worse than. Understand your role in it - and then guide your self-talk so that you learn from the situation. These are the sorts of skills you need to get good at practicing.

Secondly, if you had someone talking to you the way you sometimes talk to yourself would you hang around them? Likely not!

So, become your own coach. When you find yourself ruminating on something that you messed up, ask yourself, "How is this type of thinking moving me forward? If I was coaching and reassuring someone dear to my heart, someone I want to see be kind to themselves and flourish in life, what would I say to them to get them into a growth mindset, to get them into a solution-finding mode?"

Then go ahead and write down your answers! Yes, don't just think it. Grab your journal, Notes on your iPad or the proverbial napkin on the bar and write down the positive things you can focus upon. What you've learned, what you'll do differently, where you can go for more information, who you can seek out for help or to apologize to, and so forth.

There is something about writing that makes things real.

That gets it out of your head and helps you to greater clarity. Please do yourself a favor, next time you find yourself ruminating and beating yourself up, practice getting it out of your head and down in black and white.

The first thing you do is write all the negative stuff you are telling yourself, when you have it down in black and white, you can actually start to refute some of the nonsense you are telling yourself.

I suggest three columns

- ✓ What I am saying to myself
- ✓ What the actual facts are
- ✓ What I can do to change the situation

For example, you might have a line in the first column that says something like, "*I always end up shouting at John and he hates me*". In your head you probably nod sagely and say to yourself, "*Yep that's right I always shout at John. John hates me*". In black and white though, you've got the opportunity to actually start thinking about the times that you haven't shouted at John.

The times when John was supportive of you. Then you can start to think about what was different in those times. What did you, or John, do differently so that shouting didn't happen. Then using a [solutions coaching model](#) on yourself, you can start to look for ways to build on those successes (the 3rd column).

Once you've you've used the process a few times, i.e. writing your thoughts out, you'll be surprised at how much it will change your mindset. **Virtually all of my coaching clients have commented on just how much this one small technique has helped them.**

Here's why this is so important. *If you aren't able to be empathetic and coach yourself in a positive way ... you sure as chips won't be able to positively coach one of your team members when they make a mistake.*

If you want to grow a high performing resilient team you need to be really good at coaching up. It's a great skill to have and one that you can master and learn pretty quickly.

There is more to self-compassion and resilience than I've covered in this article, but these couple of tips, if you practice them, are a great starting point.

I finish a lot of my coaching calls with clients by saying, "*Be kind to you*". So, this article ends with, "*Go, be kind to you*" do this and you'll start to build your resilience muscle ... and as a great role model to others, you potentially will help them improve their resilience.

If you'd like to dig deeper into how to do any of these tips at a remarkable level, feel free to [contact me about coaching](#),

workshops or one of the online training programs. I've got something that will suit most budgets!

## Intelligence

<b>Read each statement and decide whether you mostly agree with it or disagree with it.</b>	<b>Mostly Agree</b>	<b>Mostly Disagree</b>
1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much		
2. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are		
3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit		
4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are		

## Personality

Read each statement and decide whether you mostly agree or disagree with each one.	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree
1. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that		
2. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially		
3. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed		
4. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are		

## Intelligence

Questions 1 and 2 are the fixed-mindset questions. Questions 3 and 4 reflect the growth mindset. Which mindset did you agree with more? You can be a mixture, but most people lean toward one or other.

You also have beliefs about other abilities. You could substitute "artistic talent," "sports ability," or "business skill" for "intelligence". Try it.

## Personality

Here questions 1 and 3 are the fixed-mindset questions and questions 2 and 4 reflect the growth mindset. Which did you agree with more?

## Related Resources

[Access The Mindset of a High Performance Employee \(free\)](#)

[Access Successful Feedback](#)

[Appreciation Letters](#)

## Related Articles

[How to Build Self-Esteem](#)

[Controlling Your Self-Talk](#)

[Step to Positive Thinking](#)

[Moment of Choice](#)

[What's Your Vibe?](#)

[Align Yourself](#)

## About Shelley Holmes

Shelley inspires leaders to be inspiring ... by being bigger than the people and personal problems they face each day. Using tools, tips, ideas and strategies that help them to be really clear about what is 'success critical' and how to get there fast, **Shelley guides leaders to flourish as they lead, live and love at a remarkable level ...** making the dent in the universe they are destined to.

For several years, Shelley was a key leader in a High Performance Organization (that had national and international recognition). It is this real world experience that underpins and brings to life the theory and insights gained, from her deep study of high performance leadership.

Around the globe, she has worked with organizations (with total revenues in excess of \$116 billion) and supports thousands of individual leaders through, coaching, consulting, workshops, webinars, audio programs and the Make A Dent Leadership website (which has over 5,000 visitors per day).

## Shelley's Philosophy...

Whether you like it or not, to a great extent, the work that you do defines you as a human being.

On grand and small scales, the way you interact with others, the products and services you are a part of delivering, all roll together to become a part of the legacy that you leave behind. The way you deal with others, the things you teach them, that cause them to grow, and become a better version of themselves .... as individuals, work colleagues, leaders, and parents ... now that defines who you are!

If you are ready to be the best possible version of yourself, to lead with more energy and passion than you thought possible... if you are ready to make a dent in the universe ... then:

There are hundreds of resources like this article at [Make A Dent Leadership](#) where you can join our community of leaders who are focusing on being inspired and inspiring and making their dent in the universe.

You can connect with Shelley

Website: [MakeADentLeadership.com](https://MakeADentLeadership.com)

Contact: [Email](#)

Twitter: [twitter.com/MakeADentLeader](https://twitter.com/MakeADentLeader)

Facebook: [facebook.com/MakeADentLeadership](https://facebook.com/MakeADentLeadership)