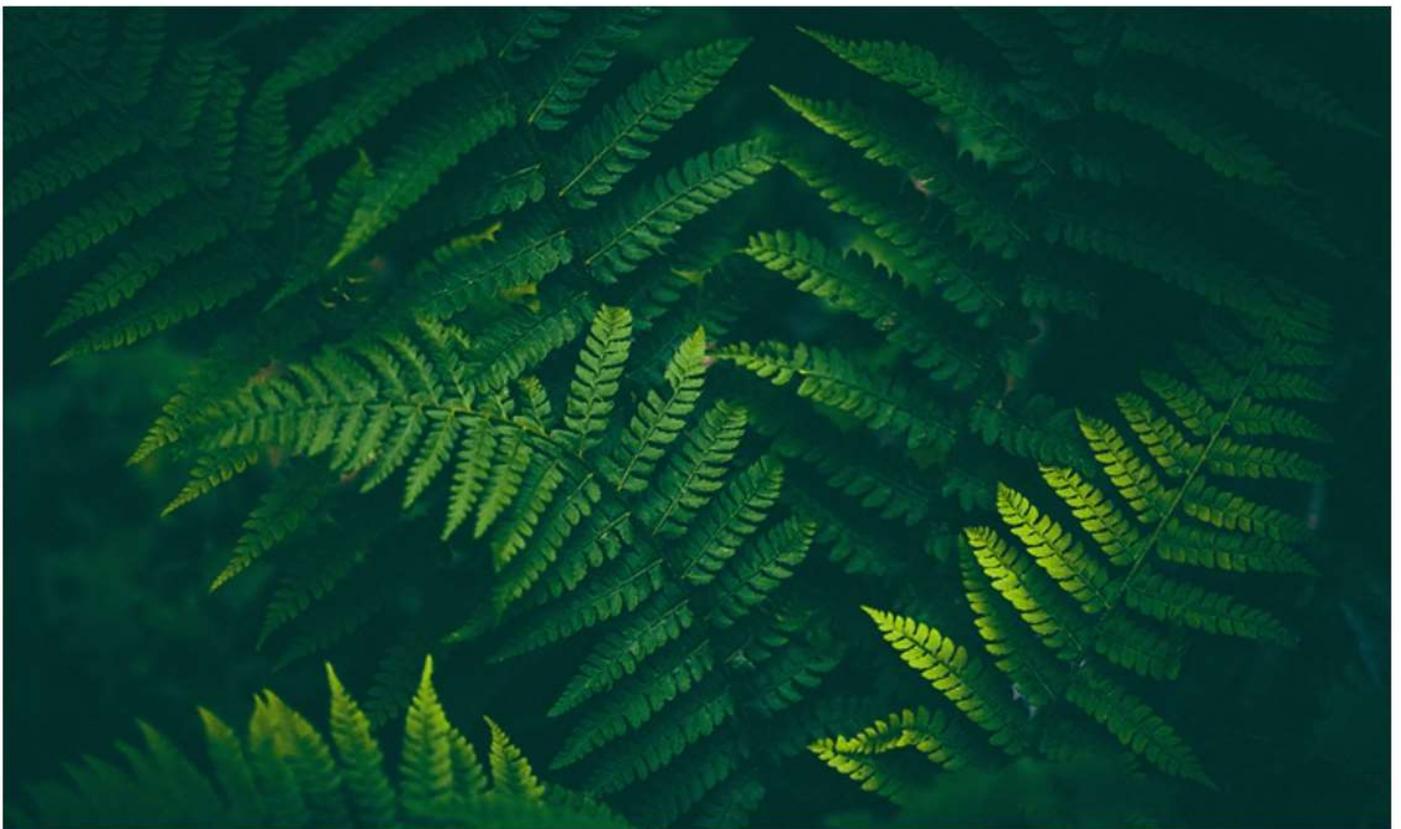


# RESILIENCE

delivering results during disruption



DAVID DONALDSON

## Resilience Muscles Quick Reference

### **POSITIVITY** Helps you see possibilities & hope in challenging situations

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- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ↓ Prefer to avoid challenges     | ↑ Keep going despite setbacks  |
| ↓ Drain energy by worrying       | ↑ Inspire those around you     |
| ↓ Focus on problems/difficulties | ↑ Seize & create opportunities |

### **CONFIDENCE** Helps you engage your energy in approaching challenges

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ↓ Prefer situations requiring less effort | ↑ Know your strengths & weaknesses           |
| ↓ Wait for others to initiate action      | ↑ Assert yourself calmly & powerfully        |
| ↓ See situations as out of your control   | ↑ See setbacks as opportunities for learning |

### **PRIORITIES** Helps you direct your energy towards your most important goals

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- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ↓ Burn-out trying to do everything    | ↑ Say “no” without guilt             |
| ↓ Let others’ priorities become yours | ↑ Be clear about values & goals      |
| ↓ Get sidetracked by distractions     | ↑ Stay on track despite distractions |

### **CREATIVITY** Helps you generate a wide range of possibilities & ideas

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ↓ Stick with familiar ways of thinking  | ↑ Generate & embrace new, crazy ideas    |
| ↓ Look for one “right” answer           | ↑ Keep multiple options in mind at once  |
| ↓ Focus on flaws in others’ suggestions | ↑ See differences of opinion as valuable |

### **CONNECTION** Helps you draw on others for resources & support

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- |                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ↓ Strongly prefer independent work | ↑ Recognize when others could help    |
| ↓ See asking for help as weakness  | ↑ Reach out for emotional support     |
| ↓ Feel others cannot do it right   | ↑ See yourself as part of a community |

### **STRUCTURE** Helps you apply organization & discipline to use energy efficiently

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ↓ Resist routine – improvise as you go | ↑ Build habits to use energy efficiently |
| ↓ Become impatient with details        | ↑ Think things through before acting     |
| ↓ Try to keep everything in your head  | ↑ Accurately estimate time & effort      |

### **EXPERIMENTING** Helps you take action in the face of uncertainty & learn by doing

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- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ↓ Enjoy “tried & true” approaches   | ↑ Are curious about new experiences      |
| ↓ Avoid acting until fully prepared | ↑ Deliberately stretch your comfort zone |
| ↓ Prefer low levels of risk         | ↑ Take a chance that you will fail       |





# Personal Resilience Overview

## Introduction

As the pace of change in the world continues to increase, managing the many disruptions in our lives has become one of the most important tasks we face. If you work in an organization, you are almost certainly involved in a number of major transitions, such as new technology, shifts in systems and structures, and reorganizations of teams and functions. You probably have additional challenges affecting you and those close to you, such as health issues, moving to a new home, or changes in relationships (such as marriage, divorce, having kids, or losing loved ones).

When you face multiple, overlapping challenges, chances are that you won't always be able to get the results you hope for. Research suggests that a large number of organizational changes fail to accomplish their desired goals, and our personal lives don't always fare better, even when we think we're doing the right thing—consider the number of marriages that fail, and the New Years' resolutions that are never kept.

At its core, successfully navigating challenges and achieving desired outcomes depends on whether you as an individual can adapt to new ways of thinking and operating, solve problems, and overcome obstacles. But many people lack an understanding of how adversity and change affect them and what they can do to better anticipate and adapt to challenges that come their way.

## Challenge, Change, and Adversity

As human beings, we face a wide range of challenges in life. Whether personal or work-related, planned or unplanned, and brief or lengthy, our ability to navigate these challenges is what enables us to flourish—to maintain or regain a sense of well-being and to achieve the outcomes we desire. Sometimes challenges are fun, but sometimes they present danger, risk, or threat— we experience these as *adversity*.

*Change* is one of the most common sources of adversity we face. Although we don't always like to admit it, humans seek control. We use our past experiences to establish expectations about how things in our life are likely to unfold. When we encounter change, or unexpected circumstances occur, we experience a gap between our expectations and reality, our sense of stability is disrupted, and we are motivated to regain a sense of control.

*Adaptation* is the process we use to adjust to the positive or negative implications of a major shift in expectations. Adapting to change and dealing with other types of challenges is costly because it requires personal resources to make the shift. The resources we use include physical energy (to get things done and engage in new behaviors), mental energy (to solve problems and learn new ways of thinking), emotional energy (to work with our feelings and reactions), and spiritual energy (to connect with a sense of meaning and purpose).

Some people have more energy than others do, but no one has an unlimited amount. Think of your adaptation capacity as a “bank account” of points you can use to pay for challenges that take place in your life—each one draws on this account. When the level of demand for adaptation exceeds the energy available, people display a wide range of behaviors that do not contribute to their own well-being or that of their organizations, families, or others. This unproductive behavior can show itself in a variety of ways, including defensive behavior, stress-related illness, depression, and increased errors and accidents.

## Personal Resilience

Of all the factors that contribute to dealing with challenges and adapting to change, the single most important factor is *resilience*—the capacity to maintain or regain high levels of performance and well-being when dealing with high levels of disruption and turbulence. When facing the ambiguity, anxiety, and loss of control that accompany difficult challenges, people demonstrate resilience by avoiding harm, staying or getting back on track, and sometimes even by learning and growing from their experiences.

What is resilience? Based on a great deal of research and observation of people going through difficult times, we have identified a set of characteristics that help people use their adaptation energy more effectively. We think of these characteristics as “resilience muscles.” We believe that everyone has the ability to apply and develop each one. Just as certain physical muscles are stronger in some people than others, people differ in the strength of their resilience muscles. And, just as regular exercise will strengthen physical muscles, so resilience muscles can be strengthened through practice. When one of these muscles is weak, it can certainly still be used, but the person must apply more effort to get the same result as a person who has developed greater strength in that area.

There are seven resilience characteristics:

1. **Positivity:** Resilient individuals find hope and possibility in the midst of difficult situations.
2. **Confidence:** Resilient individuals recognize and use their skills and abilities.
3. **Priorities:** Resilient individuals identify and pay attention to the most important things.
4. **Creativity:** Resilient individuals generate a range of possibilities and options.
5. **Connection:** Resilient individuals reach out to others for help or support.
6. **Structure:** Resilient individuals create and apply disciplined approaches.
7. **Experimenting:** Resilient individuals try new and different strategies.

Each of these characteristics plays a role in the effective use of energy when you encounter difficulties.

- *Positivity* and *Confidence* allow you to engage your energy in addressing the challenge, rather than draining energy by retreating into worry and defensiveness.
- *Priorities* allows you to direct energy toward your most important goals, rather than diffusing it across too many options.
- *Creativity* and *Connection* allow you to open up a wide range of possibilities and resources rather than limiting yourself to the familiar.
- *Structure* allows you to generate efficient, effective approaches rather than applying your energy unsystematically.
- *Experimenting* allows you to try new actions in the face of uncertainty rather than holding back until everything is clear.

Each of these seven characteristics of resilience is important by itself, yet they are most effective when combined in action. This allows you to call on the specific change muscles that are most needed to address a particular challenge. As an example, you might run into a situation where the most important element is the ability to be extremely creative and think of a wide range of possible actions. Another situation might call for you to stay deeply focused on your priorities. At various points in time, all the characteristics are important. For this reason, it is impossible to say that there is a single “trait” called resilience. Instead, we view resilience as the ability to draw on whichever characteristic, or combination of characteristics, is called for in a particular situation.



## Developing Resilience

Each of the resilience characteristics can be developed through consistent practice and development of new mental habits. For example, developing strength in the *Positivity* characteristic involves taking time to look for possibilities and opportunities in situations that may at first seem primarily negative, and doing this consistently enough that it becomes a regular part of your thought process. It's important to practice during the times when you are not overwhelmed with disruption, so your muscles are ready when the challenges hit. It may also be helpful to identify someone who can serve as a resource or a coach as you work to develop one or more of the characteristics.

The payoff for increased resilience is strong for both organizations and individuals. Organizations benefit from being able to implement changes more quickly and effectively, which gives them a competitive advantage compared to organizations with less-resilient people, and from lower levels of unproductive behavior during turbulence. Individuals benefit from being able to achieve their own goals in the midst of uncertainty with less wasted energy, leading to greater productivity and greater satisfaction.

## Team and Organizational Resilience

While the focus of this article is on individual resilience, we can also describe resilience of teams and organizations using the same basic set of resilience characteristics. A team with strong *Positivity* for instance, is one that is able to effectively engage the energies and talents of all its members. An *Experimenting* team is one that can effectively evaluate risk and take action in the face of uncertainty. Team resilience is a function of both the resilience of its individual members and the process by which the team draws on its combined strengths.

An organization's resilience is, of course, partly determined by the resilience of the individuals and teams within it, but it is more than that. Various aspects of the organization's leadership, context (vision/mission/strategy), and culture set the stage for effective performance during change. For instance, an organization with high *Creativity* typically has effective capabilities to innovate as market conditions change, while one with a strong *Structure* muscle has effective disciplines around the use of processes and systems.

While challenge and change place significant demands on everyone, both inside and outside organizations, identifying and developing resilience can help individuals, teams, and organizations effectively use their available physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy to respond to these challenges with higher levels of performance.

## Resilience Characteristics: Highs & Lows

CHARACTERISTIC	LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<b>POSITIVITY</b> Related constructs: <i>Optimism,</i> <i>Optimistic explanatory style</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possess a high degree of caution about opportunities that present themselves.</li> <li>● Tend to focus more on the negative aspects of a situation than the positive.</li> <li>● Tend to spend energy fretting and worrying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can see the value and benefit to be gained from opportunities, even if they are not yet ready to pursue them.</li> <li>● Are able to create positive situations, turn negative ones around, and see lessons that can be learned from negative outcomes.</li> <li>● View the world as an exciting place filled with opportunities—this tends to liberate energy.</li> </ul>
<b>CONFIDENCE</b> Related constructs: <i>Self-esteem,</i> <i>Self-efficacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sometimes lack faith in their ability to deal with challenges—this may be due to lack of experience or the perception of having failed in the past.</li> <li>● Tend to avoid situations in which success depends heavily on their own capabilities.</li> <li>● Spend a lot of energy worrying and seeking to avoid failure when dealing with challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Possess a strong belief in their ability to influence the environment and deal with challenges.</li> <li>● Realistically assess their own capabilities.</li> <li>● Tend to seek challenges that allow them to test and strengthen their capabilities.</li> <li>● See setbacks as opportunities for growth.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIORITIES</b> Related constructs: <i>Clarity of values,</i> <i>Clarity of priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May lack clarity about their direction—this can result from temporary disorientation due to life changes, a lack of reflection on values and goals, or many competing priorities.</li> <li>● Are often involved in a wide variety of activities with no clear overarching purpose or vision. This can lead to a high use of energy while trying to accomplish everything at once.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Typically have a clear sense of purpose and direction—have thought through their priorities and know what’s important.</li> <li>● Can make decisions relatively quickly about which activities are most relevant and where to allocate their energy.</li> </ul>
<b>CREATIVITY</b> Related constructs: <i>Tolerance for ambiguity,</i> <i>Ideational fluency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tend to dislike confusion and ambiguity; are more comfortable with clear-cut problems and solutions.</li> <li>● Often see issues in absolute, black-or-white terms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appear to actively enjoy playing with new, unfamiliar, or complex ideas.</li> <li>● Cope well with confusion and ambiguity.</li> </ul>



CHARACTERISTIC	LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<p><b>CREATIVITY</b> (cont'd)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Look for quick solutions and may take the most obvious route instead of pursuing new approaches.</li> <li>● Can become locked into a flawed strategy and waste time and resources repeating the same approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Open up new approaches to complex problems and discover imaginative ways to adapt to unfamiliar circumstances.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CONNECTION</b></p> <p>Related constructs: <i>Extraversion,</i> <i>Social comfort</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Often feel that initiating contact with others takes a lot of energy.</li> <li>● Are less likely to seek assistance from others—this may be due to lack of interpersonal skills, a sense of isolation and loneliness, or a very strong preference for operating independently.</li> <li>● In extreme cases, respond to stress by withdrawing completely from others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Generally find engaging others to be easy and natural.</li> <li>● Are prepared to reach out to others for help when needed.</li> <li>● Tend to be aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and limitations and can visualize how others might complement their capabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRUCTURE</b></p> <p>Related constructs: <i>Planfulness,</i> <i>Initiating structure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Typically spend very little time analyzing information before taking action.</li> <li>● Spend high amounts of energy locating important information, prioritizing tasks, and coordinating actions with others.</li> <li>● Tend to rely on keeping things in their head and get overwhelmed when challenges reduce the mental energy they have available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Often spend a great deal of time analyzing information and thinking things through before taking action.</li> <li>● Appear to enjoy creating, managing, and applying structures that enable systematic movement when dealing with challenges.</li> <li>● Use systems and processes to coordinate activities with others.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EXPERIMENTING</b></p> <p>Related constructs: <i>Risk tolerance,</i> <i>Sensation-seeking</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tend to avoid taking on unfamiliar challenges, preferring activities that are familiar and comfortable.</li> <li>● May be reluctant to take chances and/or initiate action when outcomes are unclear.</li> <li>● May use too much energy trying make familiar solutions fit new conditions when a new approach would be much more effective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seek out new challenges and have a strong belief that positive results will occur; this often shows up as curiosity and an exploratory approach to the world.</li> <li>● Are likely to enjoy exploring new arenas and taking action “outside the box,” even if there is some possibility of looking foolish or incurring other risks.</li> </ul>

## Building the **Positivity** Characteristic



### This characteristic helps you:

- see the positive side of unfamiliar situations easily
- look at the world as an exciting place filled with opportunities
- see the value to be gained from pursuing a potential opportunity, even if you are not ready to pursue it
- see the lessons that can be learned from negative outcomes
- envision the possibility of turning negative situations around

### You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- have an unusually high degree of caution about new situations
- focus more on the negative aspects than the positive
- are usually skeptical when other people propose new ideas
- find it hard to get excited about anything
- spend a lot of energy fretting and worrying about change



### Changing Your Self-Talk

When you encounter change and disruption, you generate *explanations* that influence your *feelings and actions*. Something disruptive happens → You decide why you think it happened (explanation) → You respond based on your explanation (feelings/actions)

Explanations can be *pessimistic* or *optimistic*

- *Pessimistic* explanations for negative events tend to focus on broad and long-lasting reasons
- *Optimistic* explanations for negative events tend to focus on specific and short-term reasons

Explanations tend to come to mind *very quickly*; most people don't spend a lot of time thinking about them but move quickly to feelings and actions.

Example: *Your boss yells at you and tells you that the report you sent him was awful.*

- *Pessimistic explanation: He's stupid and incompetent (broad, long-lasting reason)*
- *Optimistic explanation: He's having a bad day (specific, short-term reason)*

*Pessimistic* explanations often make it hard to come up with useful responses while *optimistic* explanations often suggest next steps.

### Challenging Pessimistic Explanations

1. The first step is to pay attention to your explanations (sometimes called "self-talk").
2. Next, ask yourself some questions:
  - ? *Is there good evidence to support this explanation?*
  - ? *Are there other possible explanations that are at least as likely and are more optimistic?*
  - ? *Is the situation really as bad as I think it is?*
  - ? *Is it helpful for me to think this right now?*

### Try It Yourself

1. Identify a change that is disruptive to you. Keep a simple journal with your weekly observations. What explanatory "self-talk" do you notice?
2. Make a list of your negative self-talk. For each negative statement ask yourself, "What can I do to revise this explanation to be more *optimistic*?"

### Micro-Practice: What can you do "in the moment"?

- ✓ If your first reaction to something is "no", try out a "yes".
- ✓ If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take a deep breath and think of one thing you are grateful for.

## Building the Confidence Characteristic



### This characteristic helps you:

- accurately assess your capabilities and skills
- believe in yourself when facing uncertainty
- persist in the face of failure and disappointment
- see how to influence your own environment
- view yourself as capable of meeting challenges

### You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- lack confidence in your own abilities when facing new situations
- perceive yourself as having failed at important tasks in the past
- avoid situations in which success depends heavily upon your own capabilities
- spend a lot of energy worrying about how to avoid failure when change occurs



### Developing Learning Goals

When facing a challenge, some people adopt performance goals, which focus on demonstrating a certain level of competence. Others adopt *learning goals*, which focus on increasing their capability compared to where they are now. Learning goals are generally more helpful than performance goals during change. Why?

- People with performance goals often define setbacks as failures that are due to lack of ability and become discouraged. They focus on the gap between their “ideal” level of performance and their current level. They often focus attention on “looking good” to themselves and others.
- People with learning goals tend to see setbacks as information about the effectiveness of their strategies and become motivated to keep trying. They focus on the progress compared to their previous level of performance. They understand that learning new skills often requires going through a phase of awkwardness, confusion, and failure.

*Example: Ayesha was moving into a new role that required her to give a number of public speeches. The first time she did this she lost her place in her notes twice, told a joke that didn't make people laugh, and felt awkward. She spent time afterward fretting and feeling bad because she hadn't done it perfectly. Before her second speech a friend helped her set a learning goal—to try out a couple of new ways of engaging her audience and ask a couple of colleagues to attend and give her constructive suggestions. Although there were a few awkward moments in the talk, she came away with several ideas to try the next time.*

### Try It Yourself

1. Identify a skill or capability you would like to develop. Think about the next occasion you will have to practise this skill.
2. How can you use this situation as an opportunity to stretch yourself and learn something new?

### Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ If your first reaction to something unfamiliar is “I can't do that” try saying, “How do I learn to do that?”
- ✓ If you feel like you are being attacked or victimized ask yourself, “How can I be influential in this situation?”

## Building the **Priorities** Characteristic



### This characteristic helps you:

- direct your energy effectively during change
- have a clear sense of purpose and direction
- define and clearly articulate your goals and objectives
- maintain a sense of direction in confusing situations
- avoid taking on too many activities

### You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- find yourself drained of energy during change
- lack clarity about your goals or priorities
- experience disorientation during a major transition
- are involved in a variety of unconnected activities
- find it hard to say “no” to requests from others
- do not receive clear direction from leaders in your organization



### Clarifying Your Values

Each day, we make judgments about how to spend our time and energy based on what is most important to us. The important things include people and activities that are meaningful to us, and they also include our values—important and lasting beliefs about what is worthwhile and desirable. During change, we often have many choices to make. If we have not thought about what’s important to us, we may make these choices based on what is most convenient, or what is most urgent, rather than on the basis of our true priorities. Each time we say “yes” to one thing, we are saying “no” to other things that may be more important. Being out of touch with our values can lead us to waste energy on less-important things, while being clear about our values enables us to use that same energy more effectively.

### Try It Yourself

Here’s a simple exercise to help you get in touch with one of your core values:

1. Identify a specific goal you want to achieve.
2. Then answer the question, “What is the purpose of that?” and write down your answer.
3. Take the answer you just wrote down and ask, “What is the purpose of that?” again.
 

*For example:*

  - “I want to run a marathon.”
  - “What’s the purpose of running a marathon?”
  - “I want to fully develop my running abilities.”
  - “What’s the purpose of fully developing your running abilities?”
4. Continue this process for three to five rounds or until you can go no deeper and feel you have reached an awareness of a core value.
5. Think about the ways this core value is expressed in your life, and whether you are making decisions that reflect its importance.

### Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ If you feel overwhelmed, stop, take a breath, and identify what is most important to do right now.
- ✓ When someone asks you to do something you don’t want to do but feel you should, ask yourself what you will be saying “no” to if you accept the request.

# Building the Creativity Characteristic



**This characteristic helps you:**

- feel more comfortable in situations of ambiguity and uncertainty
- entertain multiple perspectives
- enjoy playing with new, unfamiliar, or complex ideas
- open up new approaches to complex problems and imaginative ways to adapt to unfamiliar circumstances
- create breakthroughs by considering unusual possibilities

**You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:**

- tend to see issues in absolute, “black and white” terms
- look for quick solutions even when change calls for innovation
- are uncomfortable with ambiguity, preferring clear-cut problems and solutions
- rarely feel playful and creative
- get stuck in trying the same ineffective approach over and over



**Stretching Your Thinking**

One of the ways to increase your creativity is to move from “either/or” thinking, which tends to polarize ideas, to “both/and” thinking, which helps open up a range of options, connections, and possibilities. A simple exercise to practise this is to take a pair of seemingly opposing ideas and seek to value in both of them:

1. Pick a pair of words/ideas that seem to represent opposites of each other. As an example take, “Flexible” and “Structured”.
2. Take the first word (Flexible) and identify three positive things about that concept.
3. Take the second word (Structured) and identify three positive things about that concept.
4. Now go back to the first word and find three negatives/potential drawbacks about it. Do the same for the second word. Your answers might look like this:

	<i>Flexible</i>	<i>Structured</i>
Positive	Open, Adaptable, Fun	Stable, Predictable, Strong
Negative	Wishy-washy, Unreliable, Weak	Rigid, Boring, Limited

5. Now see if you can find a way to integrate the two concepts. Is there something that could be described by both words? Could you create an option that contains both sets of strengths while guarding against both sets of weaknesses?

**Try It Yourself**

Pick a pair of concepts (ideas: *optimism/pessimism; generous/stingy; courageous/cautious*) and apply this process. This technique can be especially useful if you are in conflict with someone over two differing approaches to solving a problem.

**Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?**

- ✓ Explore a situation by asking questions that you don’t know the answer to.
- ✓ Catch yourself when you use the word “but” and change it to “and”.
- ✓ Switch roles in an argument and try taking the other side.

## Building the **Connection** Characteristic



### This characteristic helps you:

- draw on others' resources to address the challenges of change
- build and work in synergistic relationships
- use social support to help you deal with stress and uncertainty
- engage others easily and naturally
- reach out for help when it is needed

### You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- tend to try to do everything yourself
- find it difficult to seek assistance from others
- feel isolated or alone
- respond to stress by withdrawing from others
- wait for a long time before seeking help
- find it much easier to give than to receive



### Asking for Help

The strongest relationships have an element of reciprocity—people give and receive help from each other easily. But this give-and-take can be hard to develop. Helping another person can put you in a position of strength, while asking for help can make you feel that you are putting ourselves in a position of weakness or vulnerability. Small requests for help from another person can start the process, and can help you create a supportive network before you get into a crisis situation.

### Try It Yourself

1. Think of a situation you're facing that feels challenging or difficult.
2. Decide what help would be most valuable to you. This could include:  
**Practical Support:** resources, knowledge, actions, referrals, etc.  
**Emotional Support:** listening, hugs, empathy, prayers, etc.
3. Think about who could help. This could include:

Family	Friends	Neighbours	Community
Bosses	Peers	Subordinates	Network Contacts
Religious Organizations	Classmates	Strangers	Others

Identify one or more people you could reach out to.

4. Ask for help.
5. Offer thanks/gratitude.
6. Reciprocate in some way when the time is right.

### Micro-Practice: What can you do "in the moment"?

- ✓ Don't wait for someone to call or contact you—make the call or send the e-mail first.
- ✓ When you're in a new situation, reach out and introduce yourself to someone.
- ✓ Take time to appreciate another person for something they do well.

# Building the Structure Characteristic



**This characteristic helps you:**

- create order in a chaotic or confusing environment
- take time to analyze information before moving into action
- build and manage structures that enable planned movement during change
- create systems that allow you to coordinate with others
- apply the discipline to use and maintain systems you have set up

**You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:**

- try to keep everything in your head
- tend to move into action during change with little analysis
- find yourself overwhelmed with disorder
- enjoy setting up systems but find it tiresome to maintain them
- have trouble coordinating your actions and systems with others



**Creating Structure**

Structures can be constraining, but they can also be liberating. When you can employ effective systems and processes to help you manage the predictable parts of a challenge, it frees your energy to focus on the things that truly need your attention. However, if you wait until you're in the midst of turbulence to establish effective systems, or if you set them up and then lack the discipline to use and maintain them, you will not achieve the full potential benefit.

There is an art to setting up good structures. They need to work for you and for others who will use them.

**Try It Yourself**

Think about where in your life it might be helpful to create an effective system or structure.

1. Decide what needs to be structured:
 

Time	Energy	Space	Priorities
Objects	Interactions	Data/Information	Something else
2. Who will need to use this structure?
 

Just you	One or two others	A group of people	Lots of people
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3. What preferences, capabilities, and other issues do you need to keep in mind as you create this structure?
 

Technology skills and/or access	Language	Schedules	Other things
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4. Select a system that will work for you and any others who will use it.
5. Try the system out for a while. Make adjustments if needed.
6. Set aside regular time to maintain the system.

**Micro-Practice: What can you do "in the moment"?**

- ✓ When you feel like you have too much to do, try making a list with deadlines.
- ✓ Take five minutes to create order in one small corner of your world.
- ✓ Take the time to put something where it belongs or enter a commitment on your calendar.

## Building the **Experimenting** Characteristic



### This characteristic helps you:

- try new behaviors in unfamiliar situations
- seek out challenges and explore new arenas
- approach the world in an experimenting, exploratory manner
- take action outside of your comfort zone despite the possibility of looking foolish or incurring other costs
- move into action even when things are uncertain

### You may want to strengthen this characteristic if you:

- avoid taking risks
- are uncomfortable acting when the possible outcomes are unclear
- stay in undesirable situations because you prefer the comfort of the known to the ambiguity of the unknown
- are unlikely to take on new challenges
- spend energy trying to make familiar solutions fit new conditions



### Taking Small Risks

Some people, when faced with the possibility of trying something new, ask “why?” The mantra of the experimenting person is “why not?” The biggest difference between the two is that the first person is focused primarily on the possible losses associated with action, while the second person is focused primarily on the possible gains. In seeking to develop this characteristic, your goal should be to move outside your comfort zone a little at a time rather than to take huge leaps into the unknown.

### Try It Yourself

1. Think about something you would like to try, either because it sounds like fun or because it could help you achieve a work or personal goal that is important to you. Identify an initial small step you could take. *(For example, if you'd like to run a marathon, try a short run in your neighborhood.)*
2. Make a realistic assessment of the level of risk vs. benefit involved by asking yourself the following questions:
  - What's the best thing that could happen if I do this? *(I might discover that I like it and am good at it!)*
  - What's the worst thing that could happen if I do this? *(I might hurt myself; people might laugh at me.)*
  - How likely is it that the worst-case scenario will happen? *(Possible, but not highly likely.)*
3. Think about what you could do to reduce the likelihood of the worst-case scenario, and/or to prepare yourself to deal with it if it happens. You might also want to discuss your concerns with a friend to put them in perspective. *(I will take it easy to reduce the possibility of injury. If someone laughs at me I will keep in mind that I'm doing something for myself, while they're just sitting there.)*
4. **Prepare:** Set a date to take the step. Mentally rehearse the activity. Relax.
5. **Go:** Take the step. Celebrate! Reflect on your experiment to see if there's something you'd do differently next time.
6. Repeat with a slightly larger step.

### Micro-Practice: What can you do “in the moment”?

- ✓ When something new catches your interest, give it a try rather than talking yourself out of it.
- ✓ See if you can transform a feeling of fear into a sense of excitement.
- ✓ Take a very small (even a ridiculously small) step in a new direction.



# RESILIENCE

delivering results during disruption

