

Extreme Resilience..... Four Strategies for Success!!

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Stress...we all have it! Good or bad, sometimes motivating and sometimes debilitating. This year has been a stressful one for me. After 15 years of providing career coaching to a large company I was asked by the new Manager to discontinue my services. In a state of shock and disbelief,.....I questioned," why?" Was it my competence...my value...my impact....my style....? "I asked if I could provide the proper transition to these employees that were dealing with the stress of this major merger. To my surprise, I was retained for another 3 months to provide the necessary coaching to assist these individuals on their path. I wondered why, as painful as this was, I was doing okay most days. I was told by a close friend," you are handling this so well because you are so **resilient**. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines resilience as an ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change.

As a result of this major merger, I provided career coaching to many employees whose jobs had been eliminated, to some who had decided to take the offered package and to others who had decided that it was the right time to take a different career path. As I traveled the journey with them, providing them support through the career development process, I realized the debilitating effect of stress. I noticed that individuals with **extreme resilience** were able to navigate much more effectively through the process. I found four common strategies that these resilient individuals had as part of their tool box:

1. Stress management was a habit.
2. They had positive supportive people in their life.
3. They focused on weekly goal setting.
4. They had the confidence to move forward.

One of my clients, an attorney with the company, was so proactive at every coaching session. Although frustrated by the interview process, she had the most positive attitude. At my stress management check-in, she shared with me that stress management was an integral part of her action plan. She exercised regularly! Every week she accomplished her job search goals but never stopped focusing on her exercise program. Now at the next stage, she is getting job interviews and is moving forward with her vision. It is so easy when one is out of a job or under stress to stop focusing on self care. This is definitely when we need it most. It is the first step. We need to focus on self care regularly so that we can move smoothly through our personal and professional journey successfully.

Another of my clients was told that he would need to go abroad for a few weeks for his company. In the middle of an MBA program and with a high demanding job....I wondered how he would manage this. I provided many coaching sessions on the phone to Poland as his one week stay turned to two and he ended up being away, most of the summer. How did he manage this stress?

Strategy 2: Surround yourself with positive supportive people! His wife understood how passionate he was in seeing this project end successfully, his graduate professors were flexible and understood the situation, he connected with colleagues in Poland that made work fun, and he found that having a coach gave him the opportunity to set goals as part of his regular routine. This individual's **extreme resilience** is definitely moving him forward in his career.

My client, who had been asked to be on the transition team for the next six months is wondering why she said yes. It is so stressful seeing her colleagues leave and working on projects that may or may not have a major impact. When we explore what keeps her going, it is her focus on goal setting, strategy 3. She is someone who already has a regular exercise program, supportive friends and although going to work right now is stressful, she finds that setting her weekly goals keeps her motivated and moving forward. Every week she focuses on one small step that will get her closer to the day when she will open her own consulting business. I know that part of the reason she was asked to temporarily remain with the company was not just her savvy competence but her **extreme resilience**.

During the three months transitioning with my coaching clients, I noticed that my emotions were like a roller coaster. I felt my confidence lacking and my usual high energy level dwindling. I realized that with the stress of this change, I was not practicing my usual stress management strategies. I realized that I needed to become proactive and focus on my coaching model for success. I started with step one and again began attending my weekly yoga class and returned to my regular exercise routine. When I reached out to my close friends who energize me, I felt so reconnected. I then realized I was in a state of shock, omitting my weekly goal setting. I took control! It felt so great to now wake up on Monday and write down goals for my business, personal life, etc. The best surprise was that I felt so reenergized and could feel my confidence and passion as a coach renewed. I could not believe how effective these four steps were! Within one month I received a brand new major training client and ten new coaching clients!

As I mentioned, stress can be debilitating but also energizing.... At the end of the three months, while informing another high level individual at this company of my transition, she proposed that my services be utilized in a different manner. My career coaching role was important in the past, but there was now a need for someone to focus on leadership and executive coaching. To my fortunate timing, I had completed my leadership coaching certification this year as part of my own personal goal setting. I thought it might be a great partnership with my career coaching. I have learned a lot from this experience and believe that my **extreme resilience** is the reason why I have continued to move forward as a coach, seeing my own business develop in ways I had always dreamed.

Today think about your resilience. Choose one new goal for this month so that you are better prepared to cope with the stress of life. Whether looking for a new

job or striving to be more successful at work or in your personal life focusing on your **extreme resilience** will make the difference! Remember the four steps:

1. Make stress management a habit
2. Seek positive support
3. Focus on weekly goal setting
4. Believe in yourself!