A Leader’s ability to demonstrate personal resilience is arguably the most important factor when coping well during stressful situations and times of change. Since we live in a world that is constantly evolving and changing, being able to manage our own reactions to change, as well as lead others through change, is critical.

**Why Change is so Challenging**
Typically, most individuals choose the comfort of familiarity (even if things aren’t functioning as they should) rather than the anxiety that comes with the unknown. In a recently published book, Change or Die, Alan Deutschman explains why “the odds are nine to one that individuals will not alter their behavior even when faced with the likelihood of dying prematurely as a result of bad habits.” Business leaders who see this statistic might question their chances for success in leading less threatening initiatives in their organization. Surrounded by the pressure to respond to a rapidly shifting world, leaders need tools to address the many challenges in building and maintaining new initiatives, so that they can address the needs of their employees and respond appropriately to their reactions to change.

**Cultivating Resilience**
Resilience is the ability to remain productive during turbulence. Resilient leaders help people achieve better outcomes for themselves and their organizations. If a team can recognize and use its resilience strengths as effectively as it uses other knowledge and skills, it lays the groundwork for outstanding performance when the team encounters major change.

**Benefits of Resilience**
A resilient leader enables others to absorb high levels of disruptive change while at the same time displaying low levels of unproductive behavior. Resilient leaders are also able to help people apply their energy more effectively as they adapt to change. This allows them to:

- COPE effectively with stress and uncertainty.
- BOUNCE BACK from physical and psychological stress.
- ABSORB high levels of change and remain effective.
- ADJUST to disruption in life.
- MAINTAIN high levels of productivity.

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An effective leader will attempt to combine their personal resilience and the synergy of the team to operate efficiently in the midst of disruptive change.

This can be accomplished by encouraging the team to be:

- Positive about each member’s capability to contribute and the team’s ability to influence the organization during change,
- Focused on the team’s shared goals during change, and
- Flexible about incorporating diverse perspectives into its approach during change and elicit open participation from team members.

In addition, the leader needs to be able to anticipate the needs of their team members and where they may be in the change curve. Not all team members will jump on board when a new change initiative is introduced. It will take careful planning by the leader to adapt their communication when explaining the vision and purpose of the change. A resilient leader will also want to engage their employees through the process and ensure mechanisms are in place to support the change.

By focusing on being resilient and addressing your staff’s skill gaps through personal development, you can increase team and organizational effectiveness during times of change.