

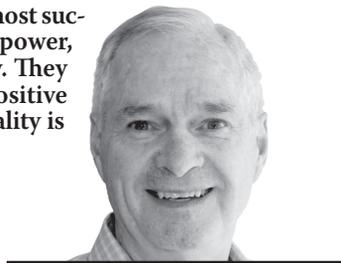
## Fail wisely to be resilient

There are several qualities found in most successful people. Tenacity, drive, willpower, integrity and passion, to name a few. They all are valuable and all produce positive results. But the one “must-have” quality is resilience.

What is resilience? It's the ability to successfully bounce back from, or adapt to, serious external risks, threats and adversities, and to achieve emotional and intellectual growth from these experiences. It also means to not get too euphoric when all the stars align. Remember the old Persian adage: “This too shall pass.”

Resilience is special because it's most useful when things go bad. For instance, when key employees inform you they are quitting to start a competitive company or when a main supplier decides to eliminate all distributors and sell direct only — how well would you bounce back?

It's moments like these that test our mettle. Sure, it's great to have the other qualities and they are all very important, as long as our road is clear and free of any surprises. To paraphrase an old African proverb, “Smooth roads do not make skilful



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LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

travellers.”

Businesses are facing greater challenges as they try to survive, let alone catch up to this ever-accelerating market pace. Competitors are re-inventing themselves overnight. Most companies' best-before dates have come and gone. Technology is creating new routes to market by leaps and bounds. And the millennials are here.

How does one cope? Many executives can't. Why not? Because they haven't experienced many misfortunes or severe hazards, nor have they been run over or beaten up in their careers.

Even recent cohorts of overly protected graduates have never experi-

enced academic failure — one of the most important lessons any training facility could provide.

Neither group has been exposed to situations from which they could acquire firsthand knowledge of what it really takes to recover quickly and prosper from failures. It's not easy. So what can they do about it? How do we become more resilient?

Some think we are born with varying degrees of resilience, while others think we acquire most of our resilience from life's everyday experiences. It's true we learn more from our failures than from our successes. Failures really grab our attention while we usually take success for granted.

But if this is the case, the obvious solution is to fail as many times as we can. But a more effective solution is “Fail wisely.” Be mindful of when and how we fail, understand why we fail, and examine how we react to these failures. Be honest and objective in our analysis — strip out all emotional content. Perform a “lessons learned” diagnosis to determine what went wrong, what went right, why they did, and how we can avoid any mistakes in the future.

By doing so, we will hone our re-

silience and build our confidence. We will also improve our attitude — viewing problems more as welcomed challenges and growing opportunities, rather than as threats.

As is nicely captured in Rudyard Kipling's poem “If” and in the Buddhist teachings within the *Noble Eightfold Path*, mindfulness is a powerful tool with which to gain insight into the motives of our behaviours. So too is awareness of the alignment between our apparent resilience and our emotional intelligence (EI), namely in the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness and social skills.

How will we survive and thrive when any of these external challenges are thrown at us? One way is to always keep a cool head, be mindful of our actions and reactions, and keep a positive attitude throughout.

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