

Busting the Myths – Being Tough

This tool sets out to bust one of the greatest myths of resilience: that it's about being tough. Whilst being strong is an outcome of resilience, being tough is not. Toughness leads to brittleness, the opposite of adaptability.

Hands up, do any of the following statements resonate with you? Or are they part of your organisation's culture?

- Don't show your emotion unless you're happy and smiling.
- Just say everything is 'fine'.
- Don't show you are feeling vulnerable.
- Don't show you are stressed.
- Don't show you don't know.
- Beat yourself up for being so stupid, but only after they have gone.
- Do show when you've punched through the challenge.
- Do show when you've beaten the opposition.
- Do show when you're ok.
- Do show when you're feeling smart.
- Do show when you've done a lot of smart things.

Any of these statements running around your own head? Unvoiced possibly, but still driving your action? Do any of these drive your organisation? You may have a lot of learnt values from your upbringing, your workplace, your friends. You may collectively live this kind of culture. And these result in a set of values, not necessarily your own, that drive the way you live.

Good	vs	Bad
Strong	vs	Weak
Win	vs	Lose
Right	vs	Wrong
Control	vs	Out of control
Keep going	vs	Give up
Power	vs	Powerless
Knowledge	vs	Don't know (aka stupid)
Hard	vs	Soft
Unemotional	vs	Emotional
Just do it	vs	Try

It ends up a bit like a set of polarities that you have to choose sides on:

What about you?



Write down

Go through the attributes on the left-hand side, the Good side, and tick which you are drawn towards.



Review

How many out of the Good ten are you strongly pulled towards? What thoughts do you have whilst doing this exercise?

Holding on intensely to a singular option, either away from ‘Bad’, or towards ‘Good’ behaviours, is a brittle approach. It is the opposite of adaptability, a resilient way of being. The Resilient Way is altogether different:

Good	Bad		Resilient Way	Unresilient Way
Strong	Weak		Self-acceptance and with voice where safe Plus the grace to wisely use the power that comes from self-acceptance	Without voice
Win	Lose		Learn	Bypass the learning Stuck in learning short-cuts that stop change being effective
Right	Wrong		There are many ‘right’ solutions Enquire	One way only, often my way is the only way Have to be seen to know
Control	Out of Control		Take responsibility and accountability for what you can, let go of the rest	Shirking responsibility and accountability Placing blame on others
Keep going	Give up		Expect to change path to achieve same goal	Keep going no matter what (on the same solution)
			Change will be driven by data gathered along the way The resources needed for the change identified and made available	OR Give up without knowing why and what
Power	Powerless		With power that comes from confidence, synergistic with resilience	Without power Without voice

			Plus the grace to effect that power wisely	
Knowledge	Don't know		I can learn	I must know Not knowing will make me seem stupid
Hard	Soft		Flexible	Inflexible
Unemotional	Emotional		Accept and honour all emotions whilst remaining resourceful	Hiding or blocking emotions
Just do it	Try		Experiment and learn with openness and curiosity	Try, try, try

Applying the Resilient Way

Which is more attractive? You can do this as a solo or team exercise.

Step 1



Write down

Circle the items in the Resilient Way column that you are attracted to.



Review

For the Resilient Way, how many out of the ten are you strongly pulled towards?

Step 2



Write down

Circle the items in the Unresilient Way column that you find least attractive.



Review

For the Unresilient Way, how many do you really abhor?

Step 3



Change

Which list do you want to operate from: the Good/Bad or the Resilient Way/Unresilient Way?

The key difference in living the Resilient Way is being intentional. What new intentions might you consider in contexts where you are stuck between the Good versus Bad?



Commit

What intention for yourself and your resilience will you now hold?