

START



THE LONG ROAD TO RESILIENCE



To get a rough idea of how resilient you are, on the right is an abbreviated version of the Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ), which has been developed with the help of several hundred clients and other contacts. For each question, **score yourself between 1 and 5**, where **1 = Strongly disagree** and **5 = Strongly agree**. But be honest: understanding the specific areas in which you lack resilience will enable you to get the most out of our 10-point booster plan.

RESILIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE		SCORE	
1	In a difficult spot, I turn at once to what can be done to put things right		
2	I influence where I can, rather than worrying about what I can't influence		
3	I don't take criticism personally		
4	I generally manage to keep things in perspective		
5	I am calm in a crisis		
6	I'm good at finding solutions to problems		
7	I wouldn't describe myself as an anxious person		
8	I don't tend to avoid conflict		
9	I try to control events, rather than being a victim of circumstances		
10	I trust my intuition		
11	I manage my stress levels well		
12	I feel confident and secure in my position		
TOTAL			
0-37	38-43	44-48	49-60
A developing level of resilience. Your score indicates that, although you may not always feel at the mercy of events, you would in fact benefit significantly from developing aspects of your behaviour.	An established level of resilience. Your score indicates that you may occasionally have tough days when you can't quite make things go your way, but you rarely feel ready to give up.	A strong level of resilience. Your above-average score indicates that you are pretty good at rolling with the punches and you have an impressive track record of turning setbacks into opportunities.	An exceptional level of resilience. Your score indicates that you are very resilient most of the time and rarely fail to bounce back – whatever life throws at you. You believe in making your own luck.

To go into more depth about the specific areas in which you score high, average and low, log on to www.testyourrq.com, where you will find further information about the NMRQ.

Leonard Dickson



Research carried out by Jane Clarke and Dr John Nicholson suggests resilience will be the name of the game for leaders in the years to come. Resilient people are self-confident, seem immune to stress, take whatever life throws at them – and still come up triumphant. Without resilience (RQ), you may never realise the benefits of both your analytical intelligence (IQ) and your emotional intelligence (EQ). How much resilience do you possess, and how can you get more of it? *MT* asked the authors to explain



Regardless of your current RQ, the following 10 steps will help you become more resilient.

- 1 Visualise success
- 2 Boost your self-esteem
- 3 Enhance your efficacy, take control
- 4 Become more optimistic
- 5 Manage stress
- 6 Improve decision-making
- 7 Ask for help
- 8 Deal with conflict
- 9 Learn
- 10 Be yourself



1 Visualise success

Resilient people create their own vision of success. This helps them achieve their goals by providing a clear sense of where they're headed.

Your vision needs to be rounded and vibrant and based on what is currently

possible; resilient people don't waste time on impossible dreams or hankering after things they'll never have. They recognise the fine line between stretching goals and unrealistic goals – and when to cut their losses.

2 Boost your self-esteem

Some people are naturally blessed with high self-esteem. Others – perhaps most of us – need to work on self-esteem, which involves

understanding where it comes from and what makes you feel good about yourself. The checklist below may help.

Self-esteem checklist

- Identify what you're good at. What can you feel positive about?
- Remind yourself of these things regularly
- Recognise what other people appreciate about you
- Allow others to praise you, and resist the temptation to brush compliments aside
- When something goes wrong, try to avoid

- beating yourself up unnecessarily; others will undoubtedly do it first...
- Don't compare yourself with other people
- When things go well for others, feel genuinely pleased for them
- Enjoy it when something goes better than you thought it would
- Praise yourself

3 Take control

Resilient people believe they can make a difference and be successful. Others suffer from unhelpful beliefs, or 'drag anchors'. Here are six of the most common:

I am the victim of my personal history
Your past must have an impact, but is no excuse for not improving yourself now.

There's so much to do, it's not even worth trying

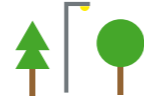
Life is complex, and you now have to do more with less. As a result, you may come

to believe there are simply so many imperatives that you can't see where to start.

Psychologists call this 'agglomeration' – feeling overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of issues that you face. Break the problem down, establish priorities and take first things first.

You only get one shot

Occasionally this may be the case, but not often – especially in circumstances where even the experts can't predict the right way



to go. It then becomes a question of trial and error, always being alert to the worst-case scenario and unintended consequences.

There's a right answer to everything

Analysts dream that by scrutinising the data hard enough, the 'correct' answer will emerge. This rarely happens in real life. The danger is that analysis becomes a substitute for, rather than a prelude to, action.

I'm on my own

In tough times, it's easy to believe that you are the only one suffering, and that you have to weather the storm alone. The old adage 'a problem shared is a problem halved' works well in these circumstances; talking things through is a source of strength, not a sign of weakness.

This isn't fair

Doctors claim that perpetrators of crimes heal more quickly than their victims. More generally, if you believe you have in some way contributed to a problem, you may feel more motivated to resolve it – with the corollary that, if you're not to blame, you tend to dwell on the unfairness of the situation, rather than what can be done.

The easiest way to slip these drag anchors is by using a technique called reframing. The concept will be familiar, even if the name is not – it involves recognising when your thinking is negative and immediately turning it around – ideally by 180 degrees – so that it becomes positive. Essentially, switching from a glass-half-empty to a glass-half-full perspective.

4 Become more optimistic

Optimism is one of the most important characteristics of resilient people; it is vitally important to look on the bright side, have confidence in your own abilities, and salvage what you can from problematic situations. Even those who lean towards the glass-half-empty mindset can learn.

5 Manage stress

Psychologists see stress as an energising force – up to a point, beyond which it becomes debilitating. Highly resilient people have a higher tipping point and, when things threaten to get them down, they know how to deal with it. Sources of stress are unique to you: to boost your resilience, you need to identify what your stressors are and how to counteract them.

There are also personality traits that make some individuals more stress-prone. Look at the list below. If you tend towards any of these, discipline yourself to reduce or eliminate them:

- Displaying hostility
- Being generally critical
- Being over-perfectionist
- Being unable to listen properly
- Hiding feelings
- Having difficulty relaxing

Taking precautions to avoid negative stress will only go so far in difficult times, so you also need to know how to deal with distress. Stress-management strategies fall into two categories – distraction and resolution. Distraction techniques include taking exercise, breathing deeply, walking round the block or merely extracting yourself from a situation.

Resolution is focused on solving the problem. The strategies are not mutually exclusive and both are immensely useful.



6 Improve decision-making

Resilience requires you to make rather than avoid decisions. Resilient people trust their own judgment, but aren't afraid to change their minds. They know that decisions are rarely irreversible and that procrastination is the enemy of resilience.

Understanding your preferred decision-making approach – and when it is and isn't appropriate – is a critical step towards building resilience. For example, a rational, independent approach might help when you have a difficult financial decision to take, but it may not serve you well when you are trying to win over a large number of people on a sensitive issue. Tips for shifting your style are given below.

Becoming more intuitive	Becoming more rational
Build experience	Stand back – don't rush to judgment
Understand your decision-making shortcuts	Gather data
Trust your gut	Talk to the relevant parties
Establish the worst-case scenario	Establish decision-making criteria
Take a risk	Use a rational decision-making process
Learn	'Sense check' the answer

7 Ask for help

You don't have to do this alone; resilient people know when to reach out to others – and who best to turn to. Do you have this strength of network? If not, it might make sense to map it out. Take a sheet of paper and draw a circle in the centre. This is you. Then draw your network, with others depicted as circles too: the more important they are to you, the larger the circle; the stronger the relationship, the closer they are to you on the page. Draw lines linking you to others, and others to one another, dotted lines for indirect relationships. Once you have done this, consider what you want from them – and what you can offer – and add this to the map. Then review and reflect. What actions do you need to take to make sure that you have all the support you need from your network?

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

NATURE OF PROBLEM	POSSIBLE APPROACH
Although I'm annoyed about this, it's really a trivial matter.	This is one to let drop – get over it. You may need to lose a few battles in order to win the war.
My solution to the problem is better than the other person's, but their approach could work.	It's not worth fighting over. Let the other person have their way; win credit for your flexibility.
This is an important matter – something that requires a well-thought-through solution. I have strong views about it, but so too does the other person.	This one requires some honest talking – constructive, of course – and some listening. We need to understand each other's perspective and to collaborate to find a solution acceptable to us both.
In this situation, I'm convinced I'm right – and that the other person is wrong.	Here you'll need to use your powers of influence and persuasion. Either sell the benefits of your idea, or just tell the other person that this is the way it has to be – but in a way that preserves your relationship.

8 Deal with conflict

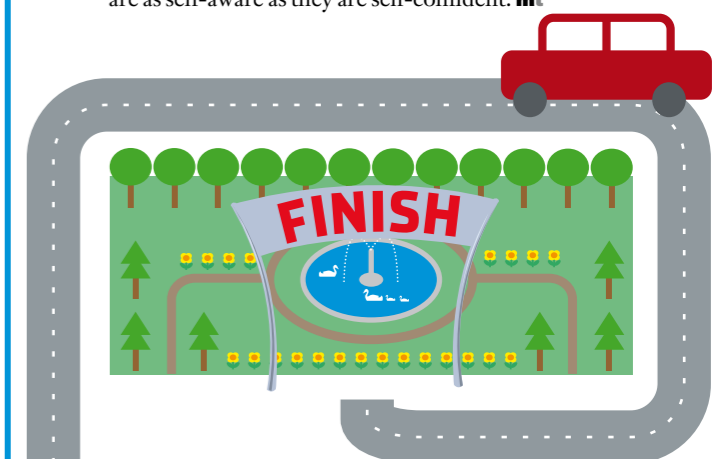
Conflict occurs when our views differ from those of another person – so we have to deal with conflict every day. The ability to handle it constructively is an important part of resilience – ensuring that the style of resolution is appropriate, given the nature of the conflict and the personality of the other party. Although this sounds obvious, it's remarkable how many people always approach problems in the same way. The 'Conflict Resolution' panel below left gives different examples of conflict and suggested tactics.

9 Learn

Thinking regularly about what lessons can be drawn from your experience strengthens your 'learning muscle' and helps you build resilience. Understanding how you learn can help. In the 1970s, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford identified four patterns: 'activist', 'reflector', 'theorist' and 'pragmatist'. Activists learn through doing, while reflectors absorb information by reading, observing or listening. Theorists are concerned with intellectual rigour and concepts, while pragmatists focus on practical considerations. Consider these four styles. How do you best learn? This will help you take the most from the experiences life throws at you.

10 Be yourself

One of the main reasons we fail to change is that the new, improved version isn't actually how we want to be – though we may not be aware of this. You may be determined to enhance your resilience, but you won't succeed if your plan for doing so offends your core identity and values. We have found that the most resilient leaders are as self-aware as they are self-confident. **mt**



Resilience: Bounce back from whatever life throws at you by Jane Clarke and Dr John Nicholson, published by Crimson, is available to MT readers at a special discount of 25% off RRP £10.99. Visit www.crimsonpublishing.co.uk and quote reference RSO1