Resilience in the Workplace for Lawyers

Marlo Lyons

J.D., Career, Executive, and Team Coach

Marlo Lyons Coaching

Because Life Isn't Linear

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Resilience in my life



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Resilience

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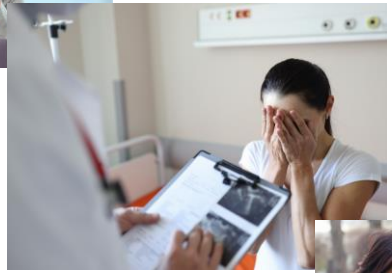
Objectives

- Understand the difference between resilience v. resistance
- Learn different kinds of resilience, why resilience is important, and and why lawyers struggle with resilience
- Explore internal and external factors that impact our level of resilience
- Understand how to develop resilience

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Resilience

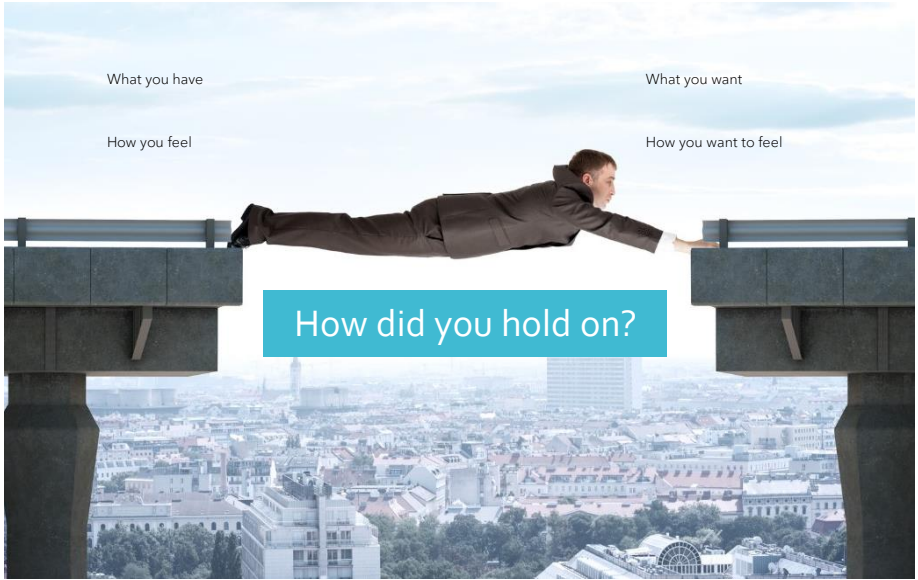






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Life isn’t linear



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What is resilience?

Re·sil·ience
/rəˈzilēəns/
noun

The capacity or ability to recover quickly from a difficult experience.

Any trauma, adversity, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress

- *Adapted from Dictionary*
- *American Psychological Association*

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Resilience v. Resistance

Resilience

the **capacity or ability to recover quickly** from a difficult experience including stress and trauma

"Overcoming/Adapting"

Resistance

The act or power of **resisting**

Resisting
verb

Enduring or withstanding a difficult experience

"Fighting against/Refusing to accept"

- Adapted from Dictionary

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What is resilience?

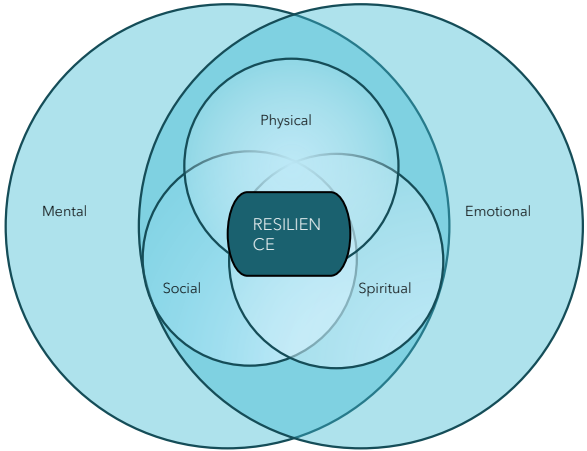
> *Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good.*

— Elizabeth Edwards

Attorney, Author, Health Care Advocate

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Kinds of resilience



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Why having resilience matters?

80%

of US workers feel stressed in the workplace

- Increasing workloads
- Interpersonal issues
- Imbalance between work and personal lives
- Adverse working conditions
- Lack of job security
- Lack of support
- Conflicting/overlapping roles
- Poor communication
- Low sense of contribution to society

- Economic pressures
- Competition
- Ways of working models
- Downsizing
- Tight budgets
- Overall uncertainty

- National Institute of Health

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Why having resilience matters?

80%

of US workers feel stressed in the workplace

- Depression
- Aches and pains
- Heart disease
- Headaches/Migraines
- Digestive problems
- Concentration issues
- Dizziness
- Forgetfulness
- Insomnia
- Elevated blood pressure
- Decreased sex drive
- Weight gain
- Irritability
- Diabetes
- Heart palpitations
- Reproductive issues

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Why having resilience matters?

Mental health impacts:

- Those who have lower resilience **have 4x more prevalence of depression** and **3x more prevalence of anxiety** compared to those who have higher resilience.

- **Higher resilience in the workplace** is associated with better mental health, reduced stress, and greater overall well-being.

- National Institute of Health

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Why having resilience matters?

Attorney statistics

57%

Career doesn't provide enough work-life balance

- Attorney at Work

60%

Rated stress level high or very high

- Attorney at Work

66%

Time in the legal profession is a detriment to their mental health

- Healthcare Journal

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Attorney resilience



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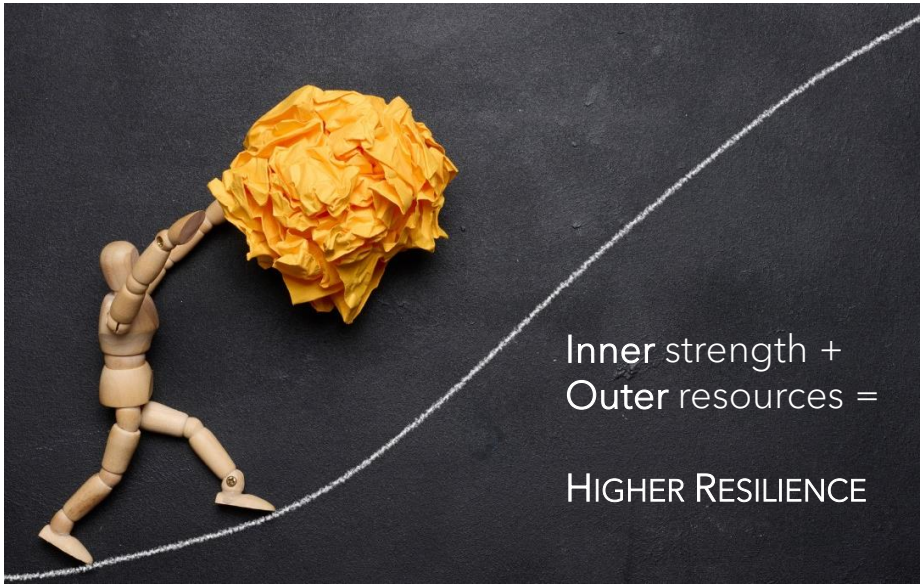
Attorney resilience

Why lawyers struggle with resilience:

- Profession is inherently high stress, tight deadlines, high stakes and intense scrutiny
- Adversarial nature of work; high conflict situations
- Drive for perfection and high professional standards
- Setbacks feel deeply personal
- High value on reputation and public perception
- Emotional isolation due to work demands
- Ethical and moral dilemmas which clash with personal values or ethical standards

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Why some people are more resilient?



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Factors that impact level of resilience

External Factors
"Outer Resources"

- Support system
- Nurturing relationships
- Interactions
- Access to resources
- Safe environment

Internal Factors
"Inner Strength"

- Self-confidence
- Adaptability/Embracing change
- Optimism / Gratitude
- Perfectionism
- Overall health
- Self-awareness
- Emotional regulation
- Neurodivergence

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Developing resilience

> *When we **learn how to become resilient**, we learn how to embrace the beautiful broad spectrum of the human experience.*

Jaeda Dewalt

Photographic Artist

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Developing resilience

Mental

- Accept change/adversity
- Cultivate a growth mindset
- Build coping strategies when not in a situation that needs resilience
- Understand your values
- Observe and learn from others

Emotional

- Manage anxiety through concentrated breathing
- Prioritize self-care
- Build deep connections/ relationships
- Find meaning in work/life
- Monitor news intake
- Develop positive lifestyle habits (sleep, nutrition)
- Monitor and be self-aware of length of emotion
- Give yourself grace

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Developing resilience

Avoid:

- Negative self talk
- Limiting beliefs
- Isolation
- Quick fixes
- Comparing to others
- Fear of failure



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Developing resilience

1. Identify triggers
2. Monitor reaction
   - What emotion do you feel?
   - How does your body feel?
3. Practice power of the pause
   - Practice mindfulness
   - Engage in self-care
   - Break down tasks
   - Lean on your support system
   - Stop doing things that trigger you
   - Step outside of yourself in the moment
4. Shift perspective to growth mindset
   - Turn negative thoughts to positive affirmations
5. Reflect and learn
6. Celebrate successes



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Resilience case study 1



Triggers and reactions

- People who didn't listen the first time
  - Baffled and disappointed
- Lack of urgency
  - Annoyed
- Clients who withheld information
  - Aggravated and exasperated
- Technology issues
  - Upset and impatient

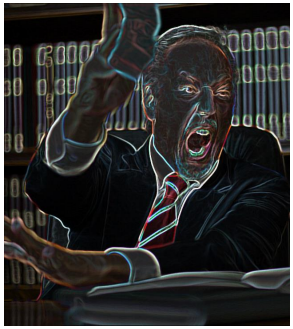
Resilience case study 1

Power of the pause

- ✓ Breathing
- ✓ Meditation
- ✓ Sipping cold water
- ✓ Staring out the window at nature

Step outside yourself in the moment

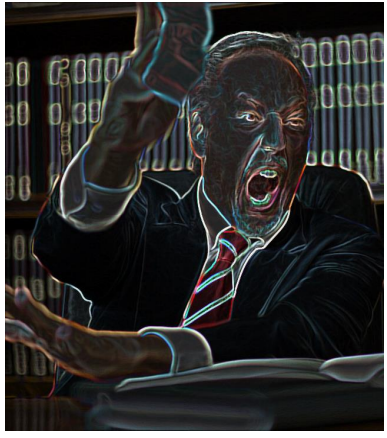
- ✓ No one was dying
- ✓ Would be concerned for the person's health
- ✓ Wouldn't tolerate others to behaving this way



Resilience case study 1

Shifting perspective -> Growth mindset

- People who didn't listen the first time
  - Baffled and disappointed
  - ➢ Teach associates how to listen effectively.
- Lack of urgency
  - Annoyed
  - ➢ Set specific deadline
- Clients who withheld information
  - Aggravated and exasperated
  - ➢ Accept the challenge
- Technology issues
  - Upset and impatient
  - ➢ Believe the universe is sending a message



Resilience case study 1

Reflection

- People who didn't listen the first time
- Lack of urgency
- Clients who withheld information
- Technology issues



- ✓ Every trigger is an action by someone else he couldn't control – can only control your own actions and reactions.
- ✓ When he was frustrated or angry, he wanted others to be as well.
- ✓ Will practice mindset shift in the moment

Developing resilience

> *Our greatest weakness **lies in giving up.** The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.*
>
> **— Thomas Edison**
> American Inventor

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Resilience case study 2



Deshauna Barber
Captain, US Army Reserves



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Resilience leads to success

The reality of life is that we will hear more "Nos" than we hear "Yesses" and we will fail a lot and I mean a whole lot, but what I ask of you today is not take "No" for an answer. Don't be afraid of "Nos" – ***be afraid of the possibility of a "Yes" that you have prematurely destroyed*** *because you decided to quit before the clock strikes 12.*

— Deshauna Barber

Miss USA, Motivational Speaker,
Captain, US Army

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Wrap up

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