Resilience Tools for Tough Times

Tool: Your Resilience Role Model

Several days after leading a 90-minute resilience webinar for over 800 federal employees, the impact of what had transpired truly sank in. I had asked each participant to think of a personal resilience role model and describe them in three words. As these words populated our online word cloud, vibrant themes emerged like "Calm," "Patient," and "Encouraging," (along with "Beer" the popular Pacific Northwest curative), painting a vivid, ever-evolving bloom of collective admiration.



And here's what hit me later that week: As the word cloud grew, there was a palpable wave of energy that unfolded, a deep and loving regard for these resilience role models, the 800+ remarkable beings who inspire and enable us through their kind hearts, tough love, and wise insight.

This exercise isn't new to me; I've facilitated it for over 20 years, and the descriptors consistently echo virtues like perseverance, positivity, love, and humor. Reviewing these, I reminded everyone that these attributes are not just ideals but are attainable qualities we all can embody.

Personally, when I face tough times, I often think of Doris, my spirited mother-in-law who taught us how to turn adversity into opportunity (or wise acceptance), even in her final years. Her encouraging, often humorous voice still resonates with me, reminding me of our capacity to find hope and strength even when the odds seem stacked against us.

How to use this tool

Reflect on your own resilience role model. What about them inspires you? Identify a few of their key traits. Next, consider a current challenge. Imagine seeking their counsel. What wisdom might they share? How could their supportive perspective empower you to face this hurdle?

Your turn

Please share a bit about your resilience role model. Describe them briefly, list a few traits that stand out, and reflect on how this exercise affects you. This isn't just about appreciating others' strengths; it's about reconnecting with our own resilience to navigate life's challenges, for ourselves and those around us.

