

# Images of Resilience



This workshop helps you to explore the concept of resilience – what resilience is and what resilience looks like.



My name's Robin Hills. I'm an emotional intelligence coach, trainer and facilitator working with Ei4Change – a company specialising in emotional intelligence. You can see from my logo, I'm very fortunate in having two concrete nouns for a name, which lend themselves to a logo. However, people see it in different ways!

You respond and make choices based not on absolute reality, but according to how you perceive the world. Everything you experience (your knowledge, understanding, involvement, exposure, memories, etc.) is a figment of your imagination.

Although what you sense is accurate and truthful, your internal representation of it is not necessarily the physical reality of the outside world.

Perception depends on complex functions of the nervous system, but subjectively seems mostly effortless because this processing happens outside conscious awareness. This internal representation is all you know. By the time you become aware of information coming through from the world around you it has been filtered.

The world you perceive is not reality – it's a filtered representation of reality.

It is interesting how many people see this logo, developed around my name, and interpret it in a different way to that intended.



Even my company logo is open to misinterpretation.

People who work with numbers (banks, insurance companies, HMRC, accountants, etc.) often refer to the company as E14 Change.

Emotional intelligence is not something that they are very familiar with!



Are you worn out from dealing with reduced resources, conflicting demands and relentless change?

If you are angry, how do you react? Are you controlled and rational, or do you say the first thing that comes to mind?

How do you react to pressure? How do you manage stressful situations?

How do you manage your emotional responses to events?

How do others influence the way you react to certain events?

How do you cope as you sink in the quicksand of modern life, filled with televisions and phones and social media and shopping and emails and advertisements and noise and traffic and the Internet and remembering what you may have forgotten?

Are you working with others who are struggling to maintain their own resilience?

Have you ever wondered why some people appear to remain calm in the face of disaster while others fail to cope?

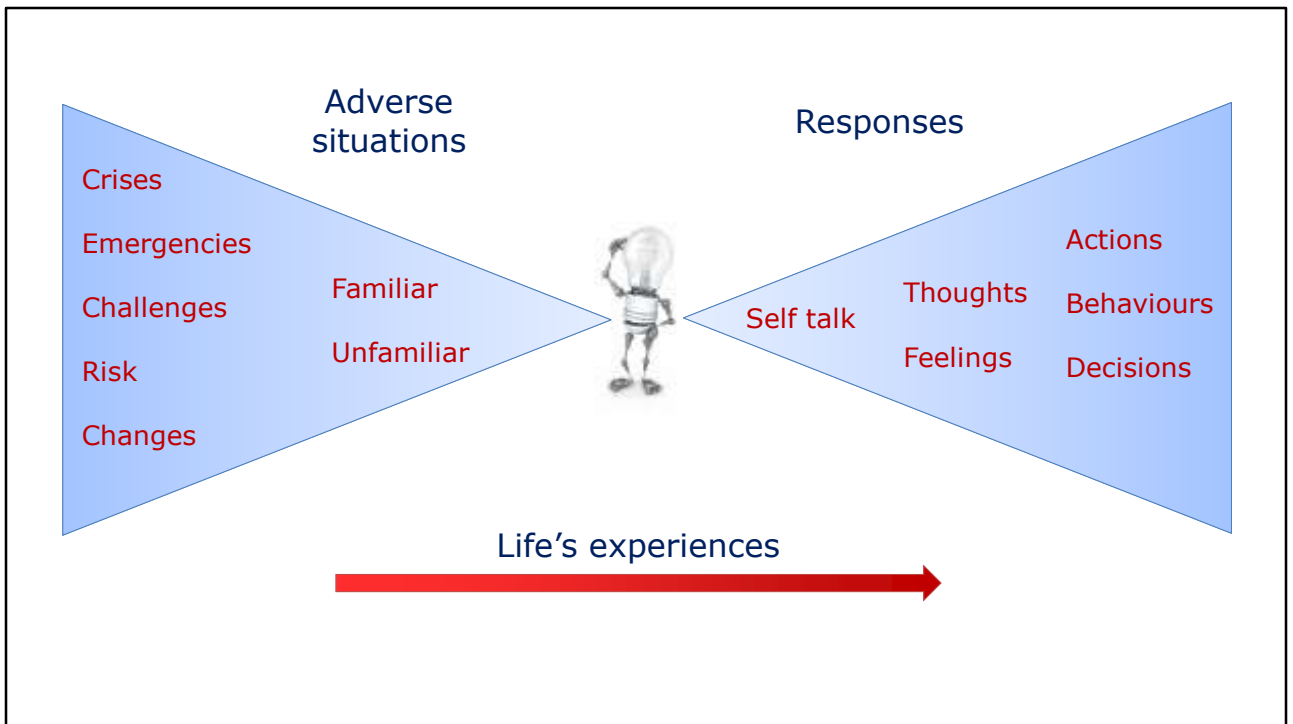


Everyone has to cope with the stresses and strains of everyday life. Your resilience is affected by the way you react to stressful situations.

Different people react to different situations in different ways. Coping is adapting your thinking and behaviour to manage demands that exceed the resources available to you or demands that you find taxing.

Resilience is the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. Resilience is an internal drive that relates critically to how you calmly engage with your environment.

So, being resilient is more than just coping. It is about learning through the experience to grow personally and become stronger to deal with adversity better as you encounter it.

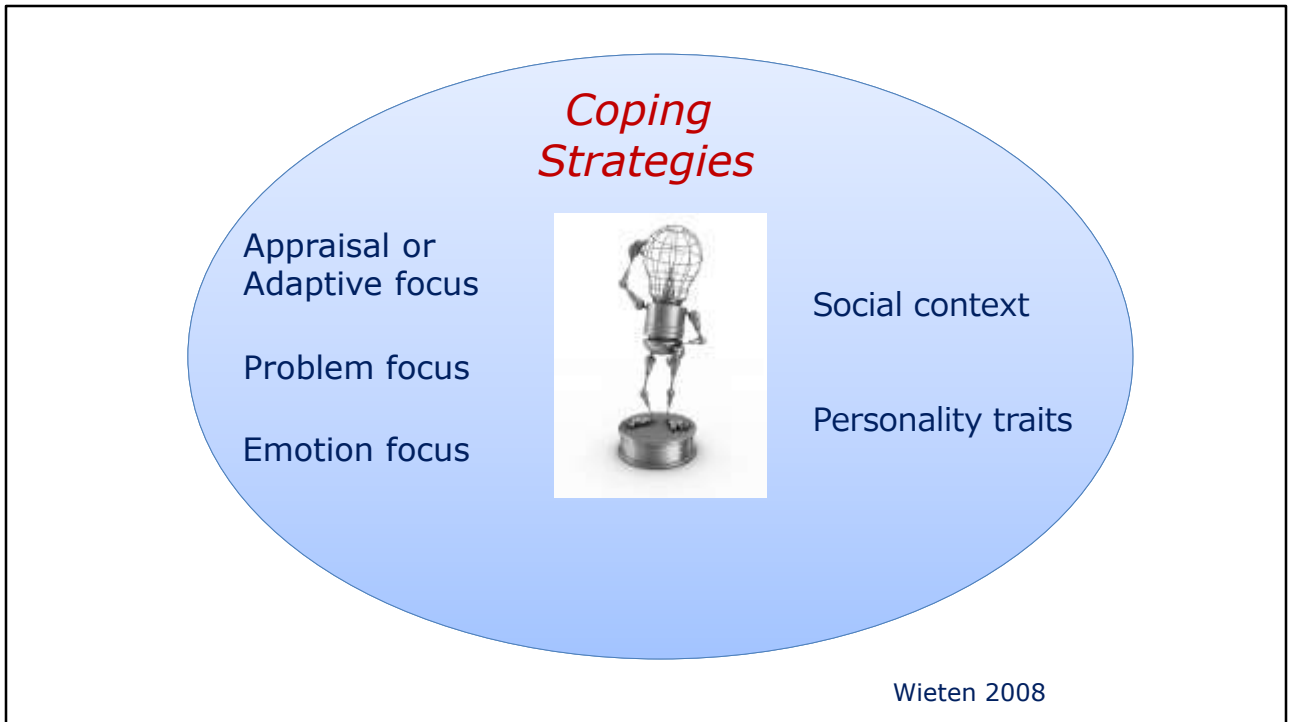


Challenges and changes are constant. Some of these involve taking some degree of risk, while some may be crises or emergencies that demand your immediate attention.

Adverse situations may be familiar or unfamiliar to you depending upon whether you have experienced them before or whether you have experienced circumstances that may be similar. You will have developed coping mechanisms and these will help you in dealing with familiar adverse situations and many unfamiliar ones.

The self-talk (your inner voice) that you use in these situations will drive your thinking and your feelings, leading to the decisions that you make and your subsequent actions and behaviours. Your emotional intelligence is a function of how you combine your thinking with your feelings to make good, authentic decisions and, consequently, how you act and behave.

All of this will add to your life's experiences and will underpin your resilience.



Coping strategies can be classified as

- Appraisal or adaptive focused strategies that assist with personal modifications around thinking, such as changing behaviour to work with the problem.
- Problem-focused strategies that are directed at work to eliminate the problem or the stressor through logical analysis
- Emotion focused strategies directed at changing one's own emotional reaction to the problem or stressor

These will vary according to the social context and / or how a person's personality traits are expressed.

## Resilience is...

the ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape — *to bounce back* — after being subjected to adversity or stress.



*Traditional view*



This is the traditional view of resilience, involving bouncing back, but what about too little resilience and too much resilience?

These levels of resilience are often not considered, overlooked or ignored.

Too little or no resilience is represented by the squonk – a mythological creature that, under pressure, cries itself into a pool of tears.

People with too much resilience can be more challenging to work with as those with low levels of resilience. Too much resilience can be seen at the Board Level in many organisations and within senior management teams. By driving through what they want and adapting to quickly to changing situations, they appear not to care about others' feelings. They can appear to be too emotionally controlled and demonstrate too much resilience – especially in relation to the emotions of others. By not comprehending the anxieties of others and by not understanding their inability to respond in the same way shows a lack of empathy, a degree of selfishness and a perceived lack of caring.



## Resilience is...

a metaphor taken from material science and applied to human behaviour



Can it be measured in the same way??

The idea of resilience originates from material science where it describes the property of a material to resume its original shape after distortion or stress.

Resilience is, in fact, a metaphor.

A metaphor is a figure of speech that describes a subject by comparing it to and describing it in terms of another, otherwise, unrelated topic.

- Metaphors can represent experience more fully than abstract concepts and so enable more effective communication
- Metaphors condense information, making things more tangible and easier to work with
- The metaphor for an experience has a similar structure to the experience that it represents

## Resilience is...

the ability of a material to absorb energy when it is deformed elastically, and release that energy upon unloading.

$$U_r = \frac{\sigma_y^2}{2E}$$

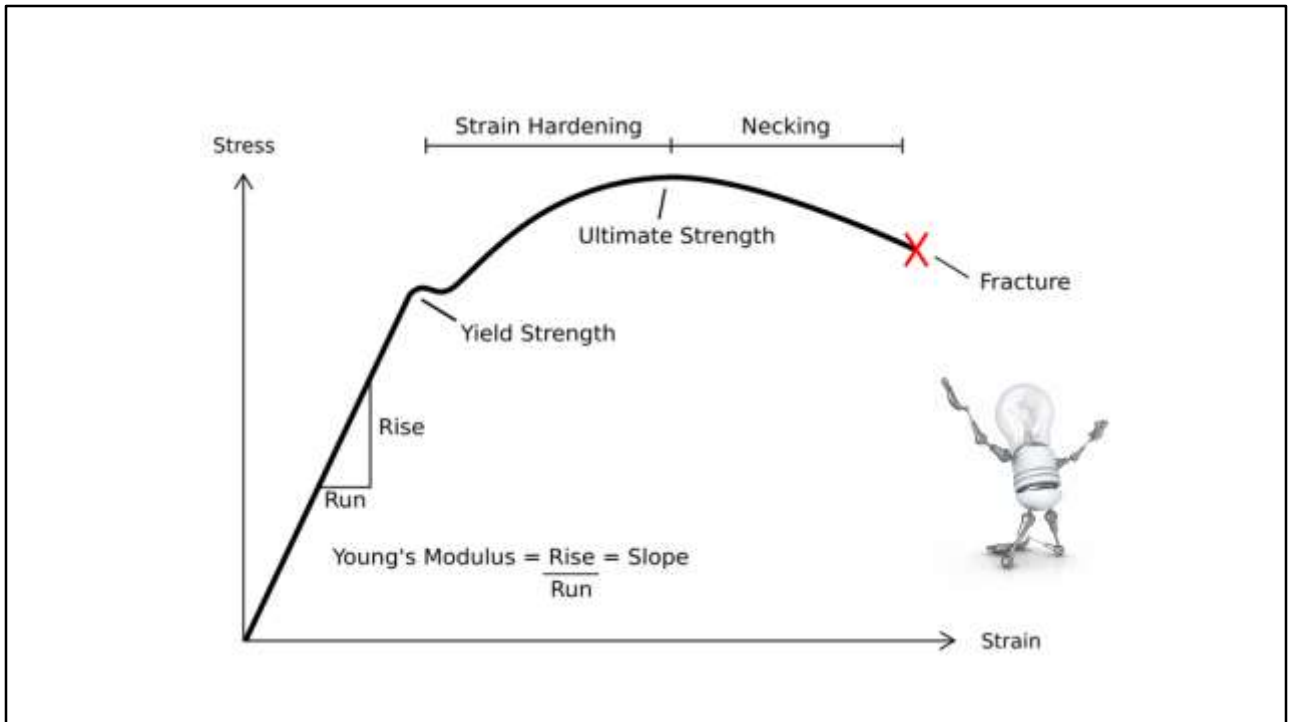
$U_r$  is the modulus of resilience

$\sigma_y$  is the yield strength

$E$  is Young's modulus



In material science, resilience is the ability of a material to absorb energy when it is deformed elastically, and release that energy upon unloading. Proof resilience is defined as the maximum energy that can be absorbed up to the elastic limit, without creating a permanent distortion.



The modulus of resilience is defined as the maximum energy that can be absorbed without creating a permanent distortion. It can be calculated by integrating the stress-strain curve from zero to the elastic limit.

Resilience, as a metaphor, in the context of human psychology and behaviour works but the metaphor has serious limitations.

- What about too much resilience?
- What about learning, growing and developing through stress?
- What about adapting to situations and environments?

In these instances, the metaphor does not work so well.

## Resilience is...

An ability to

- **accept harsh reality** – to take an objective view of the situation without subjective views, denial or emotion



If you have good levels of resilience, you possess three defining characteristics.

Recovery to adverse conditions is possible with one or two of these qualities, but to be truly resilient you need to develop all three.

- An ability to accept harsh reality – to take an objective view of the situation without subjective views, denial or emotion.

## Resilience is...

An ability to

accept harsh  
situation with

TYPE-NEUTRAL

the view of the  
or emotion



There are a few small Type connections to resilience, and they may surprise you.

Type data are clear that no Type or set of preferences is more linked to understanding reality or optimism than any other.

This ability in resilience, therefore, is Type-neutral.

## Resilience is...

An ability to

☛ **accept harsh** **TYPE-NEUTRAL** e view of the  
situation with or emotion

☛ **find meaning in adversity** – to build bridges from an  
ordeal in the present to a fuller, better future



- An ability to find meaning in adversity – to build bridges from an ordeal in the present to a fuller, better future.

## Resilience is...

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While people often assume that those with a J preference strive more often or effectively toward goals, data do not support that.

Type data are clear that no Type or set of preferences is more linked to finding meaning than any other.

This ability in resilience, therefore, is Type-neutral.

## Resilience is...

An ability to

☛ **accept harsh**  
situation with

TYPE-NEUTRAL

the view of the  
or emotion

☛ **find meaning**  
ordeal in the

TYPE-NEUTRAL

es from an  
culture

☛ **continually improvise** – to put resources to unfamiliar  
uses and imagining possibilities that others don't see



- An ability to continually improvise – to put resources to unfamiliar uses and imagining possibilities that others don't see.



## Resilience is...

An ability to

accept harsh  
situation with

TYPE-NEUTRAL

the view of the  
or emotion

find meaning  
ordeal in the

TYPE-NEUTRAL

comes from an  
culture

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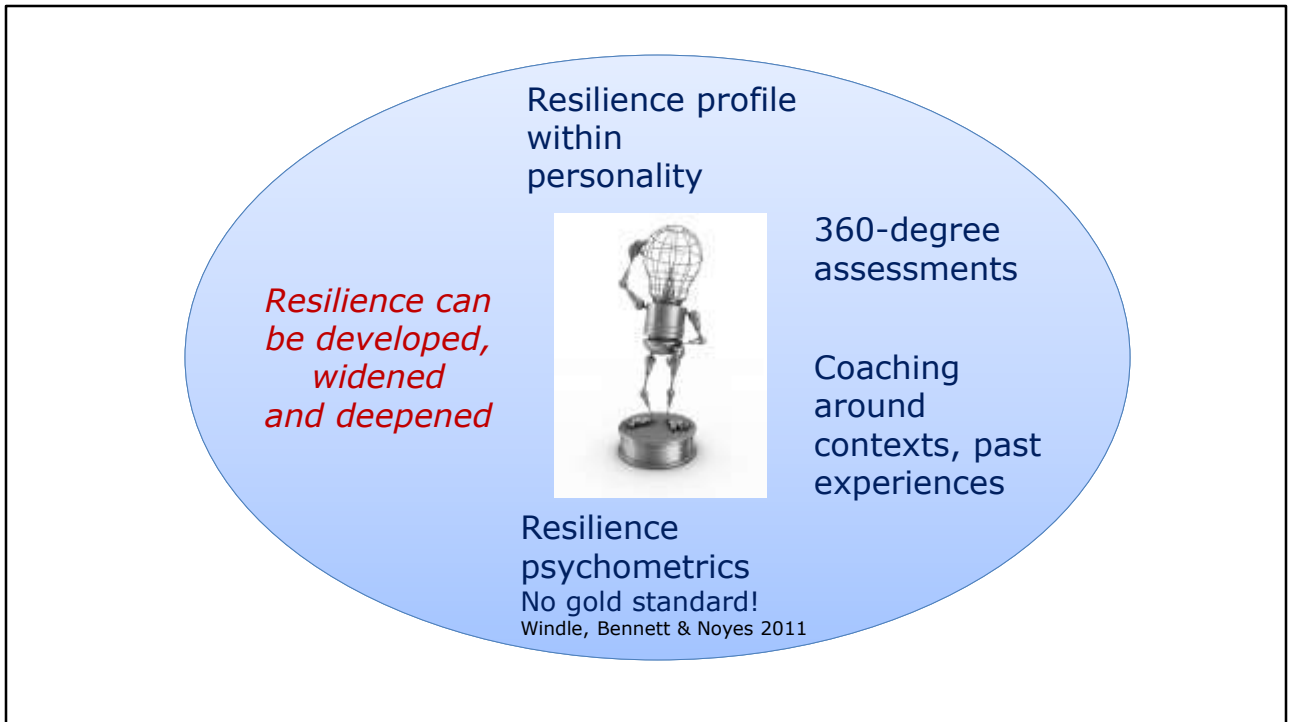
TYPE-NEUTRAL

to unfamiliar  
things don't see



While people often assume that those with an intuitive preference are more creative and can put resources to unfamiliar uses, data do not support that.

This ability in resilience, therefore, is Type-neutral.



Some researchers believe that individuals have a resilience profile within their personality evidenced in the way that their personality traits are expressed. These traits naturally equip them to cope with situations effectively and can be measured by using well constructed, highly valid and reliable psychometrics. Some questionnaires are designed to look at an individual's ability to cope with pressures and stress and demands, etc. and, using these, it is possible to have some measure of resilience.

A 360-degree assessment can help identify an individual's ability to deal with the different aspects relating to resilience at work. They can help with development and growth and can be applied across whole organisations.

Windle, Bennett and Noyes (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 19 resilience measures reported as reliable and valid. They concluded that there is no gold standard measure of resilience. A number of interesting scales are in the early stages of development; however, all require further validation work.

It can be helpful to use contexts, references and past experiences as a measure which can give deep awareness leading to insights and long-term learning, which grows individual resilience, particularly when supported by the right level of coaching support.

## Response to the Environment

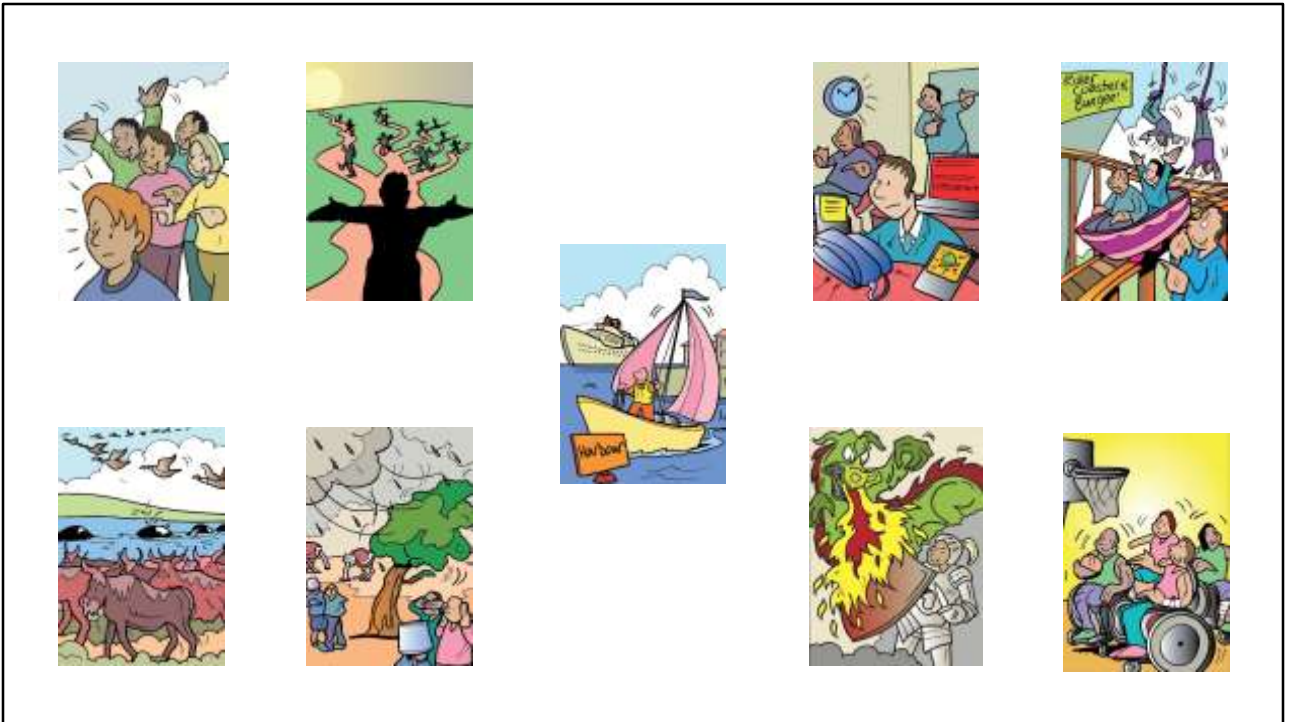
Resilience relates critically to how we engage with our environment



Within organisations, executive coaching is a good intervention that can be deployed to support the development of resilience.

Your resilience is tied up in the interactions between your behaviour and your environment. You cannot control your environment. So, your environment impacts upon you in a way that drives your reaction and the way that you behave.

Resilience is about finding meaning in your environment and using your core values to interpret and shape events.



Resilience can be very context specific and to address this there is a tool developed by Ei4Change Ltd., which can help.

Images of Resilience is a coaching tool that contains multiple copies of 18 carefully designed images drawn in an attractive cartoon style.

The images represent metaphors, depicting a range of experiences and emotions linked with the theme of resilience.

All 18 images in the Images of Resilience toolbox are drawn in a style that people at all levels in organisations find appealing and can immediately relate to.

Using the images depicted, they describe their experiences through their own metaphors, understanding and meaning.

The images facilitate the exploration of different facets of resilience and its connections with stress, change, challenge and the potential for learning. The dialogue that opens might otherwise be too risky or challenging to be tackled directly.



Questions can be introduced that allows for exploration of meaning promoting discussion around how strategies can be developed to build resilience and ways to cope with stress more effectively.

The set of images and the associated questions explore some of the components of resilience introducing the challenge to think about what it means and how resilience can be developed. They support discussions around how resilience can be used to enhance experiences rather than leading to ineffective or damaging behaviour.

The cards are designed to be used to stimulate thought and discussion in individual coaching or in group-work—whenever the learning objectives relate to personal, team and leadership development. They give focus to motivation, change management, stress management and an exploration of the balance of work as a part of life.

When you are at your most resilient, you are like what...?



Other questions that can be consider to ask are

- What does it mean to be resilient?
- When do you need resilience?
- How do you think resilience can be developed?
- What are your current strategies? Which could you do more to develop?

## The Paradox of Resilience

At our **worst** times we can become our **best**.

Resilience is forged **through** adversity not **despite** it.



An interesting thought!





A final thought!





Ei4Change have a range of online elearning courses based on emotional intelligence and resilience.

Further information can be found at <http://courses.ei4change.info>

Use code BAPT18 to get a 50% discount off any course.

There is a FREE course "Managing with Mindfulness" and a free book "Developing your Emotional Intelligence".



The Authority Guides are pocket-sized, practical books for the busy business owner or business professional.

Published in The Authority Guide series, each book has been written by an author who is an expert in their field and still working at the coalface of their specialism.

I have two books published in this series – The Authority Guide to Emotional resilience in Business and The Authority Guide to Behaviour in Business.

Available in all good book stores and on Amazon.

To purchase both The Authority Guide to Emotional Resilience in Business and The Authority Guide to Behaviour in Business at special prices, visit

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The Images of Resilience toolbox develops coaching conversations about the experience of resilience. Each image has a range of suggested coaching questions to help explore in what situations you might need resilience, and what qualities or skills you can develop to strengthen resilience.

The standard toolbox contains 3x sets of 18x different cartoon images with accompanying notes, designed to work within training workshops from 1 to 20 delegates.

The Education toolbox contains 6x sets of 18x different cartoon images with accompanying notes, designed to work with class sizes from 20 to 40 students. (Please note, some images are different in this toolbox to be more relevant to teenagers.)



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