



## Resilience... Your Greatest Ally in Your Quest for Success

By: F. Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA, TRA

In today's hypercompetitive world, it takes more than hard work to succeed. You must be willing to put yourself out there – even when you are faced with the fear of failure. Simply put, to move to the next level, you must take risks. And as you have experienced first-hand, these risks do not always bear fruit. For that reason, resilience is your greatest ally in your quest for success.

So what is resilience? It is that amazing skill that enables you to recover quickly from difficulties. With resilience at your side, you are at peace with humanity. Perhaps it is because your mistakes along the way have humbled you, or life experiences have helped you to accept your own vulnerabilities.

Let's take a look at the lives of three famous people who prove these points – J.K. Rowling, Colonel Harland Sanders, and Oprah Winfrey<sup>1</sup>:

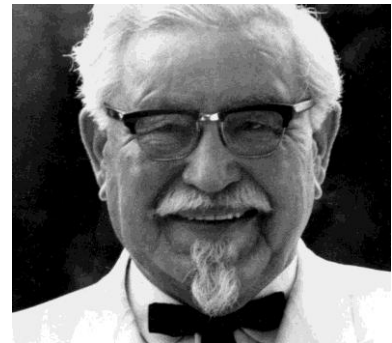
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<sup>1</sup> Scottbert, Erin. Learnvest.com



J.K. Rowling had just gotten a divorce, was on government aid, and could barely afford to feed her baby in 1994, just three years before the first Harry Potter book was published. When she was shopping it out, she was so poor she couldn't afford a computer or even the cost of photocopying the 90,000-word novel, so she manually typed out each version to send to publishers. It was rejected dozens of times until finally Bloomsbury, a small London publisher, gave it a second chance after the CEO's eight year-old daughter fell in love with it.

Colonel Harland Sanders was fired from a variety of jobs throughout his career before he first started cooking chicken in his roadside Shell Service Station in 1930, when he was 40 years old, during the Great Depression. Worried about how he was going to survive off his meager \$105 monthly pension check, he set out to find restaurants who would franchise his secret recipe for a nickel for each piece of chicken sold. He drove around, sleeping in his car, and was rejected more than 1,000 times before finally finding his first partner.



Oprah Winfrey has dealt with a lot throughout her public life—criticism about her weight, racism, intrusive questions about her sexuality, just to name a few—but she never let it get in the way of her ambition and drive. Growing up, Oprah was reportedly a victim of sexual abuse and was repeatedly molested by her cousin, an uncle, and a family friend. Later, she became pregnant and gave birth to a child at age 14, who passed away just two weeks later. But Oprah persevered, going on to finish high school as an honors student, earning a full scholarship to college, and working her way up through

the ranks of television, from a local network anchor in Nashville to an international superstar and creator of her OWN network.

These three people give evidence that resilience is that ineffable quality that allows you to get knocked down and come back stronger than before. Rather than letting challenges, difficulties, or failure overcome you and drain your resolve, you find ways to rise from the ashes.

### Resiliency Quiz

The 20-question Resiliency Quiz<sup>2</sup> was created by the late Al Siebert, Ph.D., the author of *The Resiliency Advantage* and *The Survivor Personality*.

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<sup>2</sup> Al Siebert Resiliency Center

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on the following: (1 = very little, 5 = very strong)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.					
2. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.					
3. I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.					
4. I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.					
5. I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.					
6. I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. I have friends I can talk with. I can express my feelings to others and ask for help. Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.					
7. I feel self-confident, appreciate myself, and have a healthy concept of who I am.					
8. I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.					
9. I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.					
10. I'm good at solving problems. I can use analytical logic, be creative, or use practical common sense.					
11. I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.					
12. I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.					
13. I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I'm different in different situations.					
14. I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.					
15. I "read" people well and trust my intuition.					
16. I'm a good listener. I have good empathy skills.					
17. I'm non-judgmental about others and adapt to people's different personality styles.					
18. I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.					
19. I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.					
20. I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.					

**Scoring:**

- 80 or higher    Congratulations. Resilience is your ally.
- 65 – 80        You recover from difficulties better than most.
- 50 – 65        Your adversity coping mechanisms are adequate, but work to improve.
- 40 – 50        Take time to appreciate how resiliency can help you.
- 40 or under:    You react poorly to unexpected challenges. Don't fret.  
                          Learn from others who have mastered this trait.

**Characteristics of Resilient People**

In taking the resiliency quiz, do you better appreciate the qualities of resilient people? While research confirms that the coping skills of people vary drastically after a crisis, resilient individuals are able to manage their feelings, keep perspective in check, and maintain control as they tackle problems.

An October 27, 2015 article in *Inc.* magazine by Jeremy Goldman<sup>3</sup> suggests that there are eight key habits of resilient people:

**1. Resilient people are independent**

They don't rely solely on others for validation and their self-worth. They are proud of who they are and what they have accomplished.

**2. Resilient people have a support system**

Springing back from failure requires all tools and methods available to you. And what better tool could you have than good friends? Your support system can talk you down from the metaphoric ledge, and is crucial for helping you deal with failure, stress, and negativity.

**3. Resilient people look to the future**

When they experience failure, setbacks, or even tragedy, resilient people realize that life goes on and that things will get better.

**4. Resilient people constantly strive for self-improvement**

They recognize that they are not perfect and treat this as an opportunity, not a weakness. Self-improvement is always possible, for anyone, in anything they do.

**5. Resilient people embrace failure**

While many people understand this principle conceptually, they struggle to put it into practice when the time finally comes. The good news? Even resilient people feel this way...for about a

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<sup>3</sup> Goldman, Jeremy. "8 Habits of the Most Resilient People," *Inc. magazine*.

day. Then they reframe failure as an opportunity, and start figuring out what they're going to do with their newfound freedom.

#### **6. Resilient people don't build their lives with dominoes**

When one thing tumbles, the rest do not follow suit. When you allow unrelated segments of your life to impact one another negatively, you are allowing yourself to enter a vicious cycle that exacerbates each problem and ultimately makes you feel worse about it all.

#### **7. Resilient people are not rigid to the point of detriment**

Unshakeable inflexibility is a weakness. It's great to have routine and structure, but you also need to have the ability to shuffle obligations and make room for new opportunities, or you'll burn yourself out and won't take advantage of lucky breaks and happenstance.

#### **8. Resilient people are human**

Last, and perhaps most importantly, they will make mistakes and have true setbacks. But they'll come out the other side, and pick things right up again the next day, or the day after. That's really what resilience is, after all: It's about not giving up, even when things go badly, even when we've made a mistake or let ourselves down.

You now have a sense of the characteristics of resilient people. You may ask how does one go about becoming more resilient? Below are a handful of tips:

- Work on building positive attitudes and emotions
- Spend time on your sense of purpose
- Develop coping strategies and use them
- Establish and nurture a supportive social network
- Look after yourself – exercise, rest, eat well
- Create time to do the things you enjoy
- Recognize and develop your natural strengths

Confucius once said, "Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall." Resilience...your greatest ally in your quest for success.

#### About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace.