

Seven principles of Resilience for the pandemic times

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Apply the experience of a seasoned alpinist to stay strong no matter what!

TREŚĆ ARTYKUŁU:

We are stuck in an ice cave right below the formidable south face of Fitz Roy. After three days here, we are cold and wet, the food is gone and our spirits are sagging. There is a howling storm outside; it is too risky to try to climb down to our basecamp, and there is no way to get any help.

Currently, we are “ice-bound” by a howling pandemic. Our resilience is tested to the limit. While I will detail the above story in Discover Your Undeclared Spirit book series, here I present seven climbing principles that let us survive this ordeal – to help you navigate your current and future challenges.

As a leadership coach, executive MBA professor, author, and an alpinist who has survived many life-threatening storms, I offer workable, result-boosting and growth-saving strategies – often through the lens of an alpinist who carefully prepares for any contingency.



The word resilience has become an HR buzzword in 2020, and rightly so. It is fast becoming a leading competence for today's managers as well as employees, as proven by the latest research of Adecco Group published in Resetting Normal, defining the new era of work report.

Indeed, due to the fast-changing circumstances imposed by covid-19, managers and business owners grapple with magnified challenges, including those of resilience. With the successive pandemic waves looming at our doors and the economy that will likely fall again, it is time to reach for time-tested but often forgotten solutions.

Below are the principles I have presented at the Learning & Development Summit in Dec. 2020. At first glance, they may appear simple but don't be deceived – there is an extensive body of science behind them. If you would like to learn more, please contact me – details below.

7 Principles of Resilience for Leaders

1. The First Role of any Leader is to be in the best possible Shape.

You need strength to be able to lead, support, and to motivate others. As leaders, we are at the center of people's attention; we are standard-setters. The best way to share strengths with your employees is to model them. The strongest climber must always be ready to help his companions.

2. Your Resilience depends directly on your Personal Power/Energy

The stronger you are, the more resilient you will be. Quick fixes to boost your stamina beyond your current strength, like using substances or "wonder tricks," will backfire and lead to more significant problems, like addictions, exhaustion, depression. Alpinists treat their personal power seriously because lack of it is a sure path to accidents and death.

3. Your personal power consists of four aspects: Physical, Emotional, Mental, and Spiritual.

Power voids (strength gaps) in one or two aspects are frequent and will take a toll on your personal or professional performance. Not promptly addressed, they lead to a full-fledged crisis that all too often culminates in health and career breakdown. Preparation for climbing a tall mountain always includes all four aspects.

4. You cannot cheat your body-mind-spirit or the team spirit, for that matter.

Resilience-building is a lifetime endeavor that requires specific and systematic training, like that of a professional athlete or, as I say, a corporate alpinist. Overestimating or overusing personal power is a common managerial error that causes a host of business problems, including safety hazards, team conflicts and project failures.

It is vital to accurately gauge the current level of your strength and implement ways to improve it. The first thing I do with my new clients is an assessment of their power in each of its four aspects. Alpinists carefully check their energy levels and equipment state before an ascent.

5. All aspects of your resilience must be in Balanced Harmony.

For example, a lack of physical energy will impact your thinking and attitude. Spiritual ungroundedness will destabilize your emotions. Mental confusion or negativity will affect your discipline, required to confront difficult issues or persons and finish projects. An alpinist cannot afford to be unbalanced; holistic preparation is the key.

6. Revamp the weakest aspects of your power rather than rely on the strongest.

If you like strenuous exercise, you may shun mindfulness. If you are a proud cook, it may be tough to simplify your diet. If you are quick-witted, you may have difficulty listening. It is the weakest link that cripples your performance. To progress, athletes must overcome their shortcomings. Old beliefs and poor habits must be let go; the pain of change must be endured.

7. The real source of your weakness is often hidden.

From my experience with clients, it is rare that they or their HR managers accurately pinpoint their power gap. The solution is almost always in another aspect of their personal power. For example an HR director reports that one of the (overwhelmed) managers in the firm lacks clarity in their thinking, which leads to poor decision making.

In this case, the issue is not their poor decision making or the clarity of thinking but the root cause of their

overwhelm. With the aid of a power coach, the manager can untangle the surface business story from the underlying facts and work out viable solutions. Every alpinist has a buddy who vigilantly watches his partner for signs of fatigue that show up before fatal errors.



A business case: a female vice-president

Agata, a female vice-president of an agricultural corporation, was invited by her boss to claim the role of CEO. All her colleagues supported the idea, but she wavered because she felt she couldn't cope with the increased duties.

During verbal 360°, I discovered that she was already executing most of the previous CEO's tasks, and her performance was stellar! The issue was with her mental strength, namely self-confidence. She had doubts if she, as a woman, could do the job in an all-male management team.

This coaching required a delicate balance of emotional empathy and gentle boosting of her self-belief and openness to her own agency. Still, in the end, she took the position and proved to be very resilient in her new role, after first enhancing her capacity to believe in herself.

Every person is different, but whatever your challenge, you can always develop more personal power, and this power automatically makes you more resilient.

Please, treat your resilience as seriously as an alpinist. Doing so may not only save gains you've made in your life, relationships and career, but, in these uncertain times, it may also save your job and, which is not unlikely, your life.

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Jacek 'Skyski' Skrzypczynski has championed corporate leaders for over 20 years, empowering them to reach peak performance through guiding, training, speaking and real-world expeditions. Visit his website www.JackSkyski.com or contact him directly at coach@jackskyski.com. Discover Your Undeclared Spirit book series is based on the blend of Jacek's mountaineering and business experience – lessons gleaned from years of training and coaching people from all walks of life. In it he dives deeply into the strategies of staying resilient to achieve extraordinary personal and professional results no matter how tough are the challenges. You can buy the first book of the series: *Expedition to the Peaks of your Dreams* on Amazon, or the PL version *Wyprawa na Szczyty Marzeń* on internet.