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The Secrets of Resilient Leadership: When Failure Is Not an Option.Six Essential Characteristics for Leading in Adversity

George S. Everly Jr.
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With an almost continuous barrage of books about leadership, it is unusual to find one that distinguishes itself. *The Secrets of Resilient Leadership* does so because the authors examine leadership from a different perspective: "How to lead when everyone else retreats."

The premise of the book is that great leaders"—those who are resilient"—actually excel during the most daunting times. The authors demonstrate leadership resilience, or the lack of it, through examples as diverse as the Civil War, Hurricane Katrina, and the economic collapse of 2008. They point to individuals in history, including Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill, all of whom succeeded because of their resilience. Interestingly, the authors reference US President Barack Obama's inaugural speech which, they say, "echoes the themes of this book"—honesty, loyalty, hard work, and responsibility."

Everly, Strouse, and Everly explore "six essential skills for leading in adversity," skills which the authors assure the reader can be learned. These are: acting with integrity, communicating effectively, harnessing the power of optimism and self-fulfilling prophecy, taking responsibility for your actions, building a resilient culture, and using stress management as a competitive advantage.

The authors devote a chapter to each skill, discussing both its meaning and its application. At the end of the skill-specific chapters, the authors include key point summaries, as well as "leadership assessments," which should prove to be of value to novice and experienced leaders alike. Some of the assessments pose "cases" "—brief scenarios with compelling questions that test an individual's ability to apply a particular skill. Other assessments present "exercises"—opportunities to answer insightful questions about the skill. The optimism assessment, for example, includes this exercise: "List two times in your life when you 'psyched yourself up' by creating a positive self-fulfilling prophecy."

The authors conclude the book with these intriguing chapters: "Building a Culture of Resilience," and "Developing Behavioral Body Armor." The first offers helpful advice

regarding “group cohesion” and “nurturing friendship;” the second unapologetically addresses such realities as leader burnout, traumatic stress, overload, and fatigue.

The Secrets of Resilient Leadership is remarkably compact: the authors use words economically and get right to the point without diversions. Despite its brevity, however, this excellent work offers a wealth of insightful thinking and sound advice. It is a thought-provoking and timely book that will benefit anyone who wants to learn how to lead in adversity.

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