

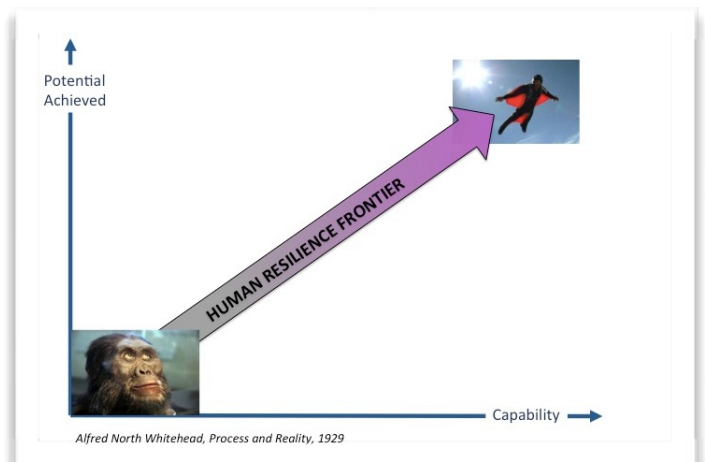
**“Existence ... is a creative advance into novelty.”  
Alfred North Whitehead, 1929.**

Since our ancestor Lucy started the hominin line 3.2 million years ago, humanity has become a pulsing 7.2 billion population of creative forces. Today, Lucy would be overwhelmed. Organisations at the front edge of creativity, endlessly redefine our perceptions, behaviours and lives. In this Resilience Insight, we look at why Resilience is so fundamental to all organisations and lay out a framework for organisations to engage with Resilience at a strategic level.

## Evolution: The Human Resilience Frontier



How would Lucy make sense of a BASE jumper? Flying to a safe, distant landing from cliffs and buildings is an extraordinary achievement. So is an iPhone 6 and a billion websites. Lucy could not do any of this. She had neither the vision nor the capabilities. The base jumper pushes the limit of possibility. He or she is a skilled athlete with advanced technology. In our mapping of the human resilience frontier, achievement is on the vertical axis and capability is on the horizontal axis.



Organisations face external, competitive and technological disruption. The board of any organisation needs to know that the capabilities of the organisation are ready to respond effectively and successfully. Strategic Resilience aspires to secure four factors:

1. Evidence: is work calm, energised, engaged, focused and meaningful
2. Capability: human capital bench-strength of knowledge, attitudes and skills
3. Leadership: model and embed the behaviours defining resilient culture
4. Agility: fast, skilful response to adversity, uncertainty or opportunity

Aspiring organisations stretch the vertical axis to achieve their potential. They apply vision, adversity, creativity, trial and error, and sometimes luck. To succeed through time and turbulence, we must develop capability. We do this with learning, development, skills and experience. The human Resilience frontier gives us freedom to choose how and when we match capability to achievement.

Evolution is Occam’s Razor, deciding the outcome:

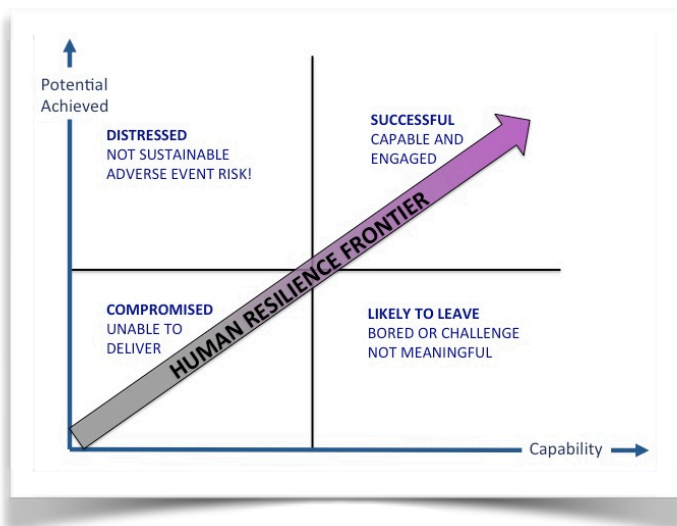
1. Match the situation with capability and thrive

2. Reach beyond capability, overstrain biology and fail
3. Underachieve capability and be replaced by others

To thrive we must understand and master the Human Resilience Frontier.

## Challenge 1: Understand the Risk in Human Factors

Risk assessment defines four zones. We want people in the top right – capable and achieving. Those in the bottom left are compromised - limited capability, for many reasons, means that they cannot achieve their potential. In the top left we have those who are achieving but operate beyond their capability causing distress, increasing risk and shifting to bottom left. In the bottom right we have people who have capability but limited scope or engagement. They are likely to leave and distract.



Consider a world-class sports team. The goal is to be the best in the world. Selection insures a base level of capability and resilience. The rest is relentless training, monitoring and fine-tuning to nudge players up the Frontier toward top right. A player in the top left is overloaded and performance fails under pressure. The player in the bottom right is

not adequately engaged to stretch their capabilities into new and demanding learning. The coach works to the Resilience Frontier – right and up.

## Get Evidence: Map your Human Factors

A Resilience Diagnostic maps your people to this framework. This secure, 10 minute **online self-assessment** gives an individual a map of their resilience. The organisation is able to map teams, divisions and the whole organisation. This is the evidence of where people are on the Resilience Frontier. It defines who is stretched beyond capability and who is disengaged. The results of the Resilience Diagnostic enable you to think and act wisely.

## Challenge 2: Human Capital Strategy

Leaders must define where on the Resilience Frontier their people need to function. This is defined first by the strategic objectives of the firm (vertical axis). What do we need from the four factors (evidence, capability, leadership and agility) in order to achieve objectives? Good coaches are crystal clear on this. The analysis phase helps the leader understand each of the factors. For example:

1. Evidence comes from your diagnostics and “after action reviews”
2. Capability is defined by training and critical event management
3. Leadership requires interviews and 360-degree competency assessment
4. Agility is defined by testing capability in simulated and real scenarios

Through this process leadership learns where people are distributed, defines the training and support required, cultivates leadership that models and embeds, and can assure the board that the organisation is capable of achieving strategic goals

and mastering risk. This is the Antifragile organisation. You prevail in disruption.

## Challenge 3: Raise Capability

Targeted capability is the goal of Resilience Training. Once you know where your people are you can deploy the appropriate training and support. Investing in calming skills, physical vitality, emotional intelligence and mind training helps your people build the skills that underpin achievement.

Those in bottom left focus on bounce back skills, those in top left develop self-mastery and those clustered in top right become your core influencers and leaders. Ultimately bounce, courage, creativity and connection are foundations of organisational success. If your people can do this, your organisation can thrive.

However, latent capability is wasted if not reinforced, tested and challenged. As we invest in capability, it is critical to bring it into practiced skill. Organisations can be guilty of “ticking the training box” and leaving the learning to decay. World-class operators learn and practice repeatedly over long periods of time to secure mastery. Leaders must engage in training initiatives and follow up with reinforcement, embedding and training drills to lift capability to the Resilience Frontier.

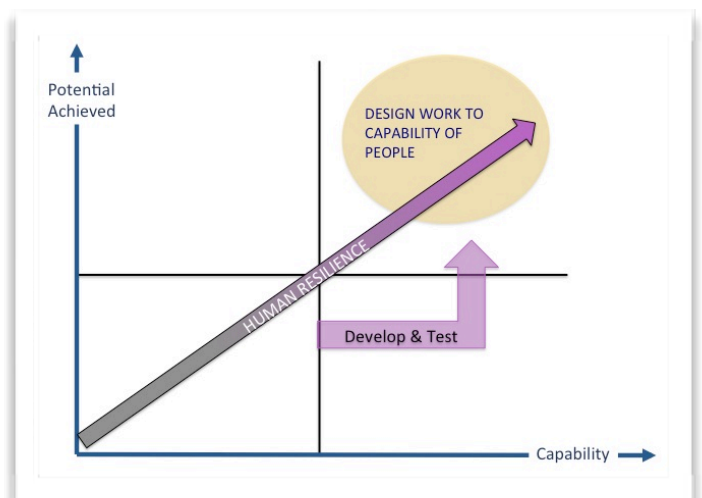
## Challenge 4: Stretch Capable People

Capability begs for meaningful achievement. The next step is to design work that engages and stretches the capabilities of your people. When you get this right, your people move up and right. They achieve excellence. While they achieve, the match of capability to achievement brings engagement, satisfaction and experience of resilience in action.

The leader as coach must remain vigilant. Relentless curiosity, nudging, challenging, reassuring, rebuilding, and creative influence is the work of resilient leadership. Ideally, this matching process can become part of a high performance

team. Elite teams are relentlessly curious about possibility, capability, skill stretch, state management and aggressive goals. They create an cycle of develop – test – develop.

This is the first pillar of our **strategic model for sustainable high performance**. It is personal. Resilient people connect into a resilient culture and secure achievement or human impact.



## Challenge 5: Team Discipline and Resilient Culture

Successful organisations are good at disciplined action when it comes to budgets, supply chains, and service. We are less adept at bringing resilience explicitly into the team (interpersonal) environment. Elite teams in combat or sport can teach us how this works effectively. If we want to reach our potential as organisations we have to be fierce in embedding resilience into the way our teams work.

Resilience must be fully integrated in the living behaviours of your team. Do you see your team working with bounce, courage, creativity and connection? Teams must learn which behaviours are in and which are out. Hold high standards of interpersonal collaboration. Physical, emotional and cognitive discipline becomes part of culture and social impact.

To truly crack the second pillar of **our strategic model** a long-term partnership is required with excellent measurement and a co-creative process over years rather than months. It is not a brutal boot-camp but rather a tough love approach that demands engagement and excellence. People love to be part of high performing teams.

### Challenge 6: Enlightened Leadership

Strategic Resilience needs leaders ready and skilful in facilitating the process. If the leader is not engaged or does not 'walk the talk' the journey stops. The perspective of Eric Anders' 10,000 hours to world class or Jack Welsh's 10 years to Embed Candour, helps us remember that building and sustaining world class results takes determined, tenacious and skilful leadership. It is not a weekend wonder!

This third pillar of **our strategic model** must be a priority of the CEO and needs board support. The cultivation of deep insight within your leaders that enables influence to operate at physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual levels takes time and skilled training. It will ultimately lead to profit and will manifest also as a great brand, sustainable impact and community upliftment. This is Conscious Capitalism.

### Challenge 7: Agility and Training for Resilience in Disruption

Imagine a natural disaster disrupting the foundations of your business. How would your people respond? How would leaders, teams and the organisation respond? We live in a time when many are confronted by human or natural violence. With experience in the Australian bushfires, Christchurch earthquake and essential services, we have seen the catastrophic immediate impact of disasters. Perhaps more alarming we also now understand how common post-traumatic stress (PTSD), depression and illness can be. The costs and suffering are huge. Recovery is tough.

We know from the frontline that soldiers, police, fire fighters, and athletes can learn how to be resilient in the face of serious adversity. We have had success in teaching people and teams how to bounce back from adversity. We believe that organisations must begin to plan and deliver preventive training.

If people understand and rehearse what might happen in extreme situations, they become far better at mounting a resilient response. Here capability leads to achievement in adversity. What research is showing us is that when trained in resilience the long-term consequences such as PTSD are far less likely. While 30% of soldiers returning from the Middle East have PTSD, it is almost unheard of in Navy Seals. The Seals specifically train to cope with torture, multiple bullet wounds and drowning.

Business today is tough, competitive, fluid and uncertain. Could we be more proactive in helping people prepare for the inevitable, unpredictable shocks?

This growing element of our work should be extended more widely. We can show people how adversity can affect them negatively and train them to prepare a more resilient response. First, they become "antifragile". Second, they learn how to be skilful and effective in situations that would normally disable. We can learn to master crises and limit the long-term trauma to individuals, families, organisations and communities.

Resilience is very good for people. Strategic resilience is critical for organisational success.

#### References

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