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#GLS20

## SPEAKERS NOTES

# GLS20 Session 3

## MARCUS BUCKINGHAM: How the Best Leaders Build Resilience

*The following are notes from Marcus Buckingham's talk at #GLS20. Use them to help you apply the content you learned at the Summit.*

What can the best leaders do to build resilience during challenging times? Marcus Buckingham leads the ADP Research Institute which, among other things, focuses on identifying the core components of critical aspects of people at work, such as resilience. Drawing from a recent 25-country study, 1,000 workers per country, we can now identify and measure the components of resilience, and what you can do to cultivate it in yourself and in those you lead. What we have learned is that resilience is made up of two sets of feelings: (1) How you feel about yourself and your working world (2) How you feel about the behaviour of your own team leader and leader of leaders.

### TEAM FOCUS

#### What is resilience?

- Is it a trait you're born with, or is it a state?
- Is it something that you can cultivate?
- Is it even a set of skills that you could build in yourself or your team?
- Engagement is all about whether or not you're ready to give of your very best.
- Resilience is when the world hits you, the challenges hit you and you get blown back. Can you withstand it?
- If you can't—can you get back up and bounce back?
- To see the team's technical report, go to [hbr.org](http://hbr.org) or [ADP Research Institute](http://ADP Research Institute)

### STUDY

- Took a stratified random sample of all of the different workers and worker types in 25 different countries
- Asked questions on resilience, looking to see which questions were most closely related to resilient outcomes like accidents on the job, lost workdays or first year voluntary turnover
- Finding out what items or the questions that predict those actual resilience sort of behaviours
- Ended with 10 questions

#### If you want to know what resilience is, know how to measure it:

1. I have all the freedom I need to decide how to get my work done.
2. No matter what else is going on around me, I can stay focused on getting my work done.
3. In the last week I felt excited to work every day.
4. I always believe things are going to work out for the best.
5. My team leader tells me what I need to know before I need to know it.
6. I trust my team leader.

7. I'm encouraged to take risks.
8. Senior leaders are one step ahead of events.
9. Senior leaders always do what they say they're going to do.
10. I completely trust my company/organisation's senior leaders.

### **Evaluation:**

- The top four questions deal with yourself—how you feel about your own work, your own choices, your own feelings about the way that the world of work is going to play out.
- The next three questions deal with how you view your team leader—the person who's directly responsible for the team.
- Lastly, the remaining three deal with how you view the behaviour and the choices of your senior leaders.

### **Resilience isn't a trait. It's a capacity built through this combination of three distinct sources:**

1. How you feel about yourself
2. How you feel about your team leaders
3. How you feel about your leaders of leaders, of leaders

*Specific Things Senior Leaders Can Do To Build Resilience In A Team:*

### **VIVID FORESIGHT**

#### **CONNECTION | Ritualizing Death:**

- Why do we ritualize death? Because we fear the unknown.
- The problem as a leader is that conversations are about the unknown.
- Leaders are supposed to be dragging us into some better future that you see so clearly. So, the challenge is how to take people's really legitimate anxiety about the future and turn it into confidence, turn into spiritedness. How did you do that? Vividness.

### **VISIBLE FOLLOW THROUGH**

- Current challenges leaders are facing is saying too much about what they're going to do, and then not doing it.
- The team's confidence dissipates and resilience bleeds.
- Senior leaders, pick a few things that very publicly you say you're going to do, and then do them.
- Shine a spotlight on the fact that you've done them.
- Each one doesn't have to affect every single employee.
- Pick something you're doing that's just going to affect this cadre of employees, but when you do that, and you follow through, and you actually execute it, shine a spotlight on it.
- People need to see constant ongoing evidence that you're the kind of senior leader that only makes a commitment to do something when he or she could follow through and do it.
- People need you to show yourself to be someone who visibly follows through..

### **What People Need:**

- *I trust my team leader.*
- *I'm encouraged to take risks.*
- *Tell me what I need to know before I need to know it.*

### **What does that suggest that you can cultivate as skills?**

## ***Anticipatory Communication***

- Check in with your people every week one-on-one.
- This really says, “my team leader tells me, not us, me.”
- Weekly check-ins for 15 minutes to ask simple questions
- What are my priorities this coming week and how can I help you?
- Questions about the upcoming week—not about the past
- If you’re going to check in, don’t give a bunch of feedback.
- Meetings are short-term future-oriented
- More quality frequency of touch base, frequency of check-in creates resilience.

**Result:** employees are constantly being told something about next week they didn’t know they need to know.

## ***Psychological Safety***

- Team leaders have the ability to make people feel either like they need to watch their back or like they can take risks.
- During times of challenge all of us are going to have to come up with new ways to serve a customer, new ways to deliver a product, new ways to collaborate internally inside organisations.
- What people need to see from leaders is the willingness to let them experiment and try.

## ***Patience***

- Keep the confidences.
- Give a bit more rope.
- Risk and resilience are intricately linked.
- If you let people risk and you don’t chop them off, they’ll do it again.

**What can you do as an individual, not as a team leader, not as a leader of leaders—but as an individual to cultivate more resilience in your life?**

## **AGENCY**

- People will only feel resilient when they understand which parts of their world they can control.
- What are they?
- The more you can identify what you can control—the rhythms, the routines, how you do your work, the more you can understand what you can control the more resilient you feel.

## **Connection | Virtualisation**

- Almost everybody has been affected by going to the office less and doing things more remotely.
- This is a challenge because the natural breaks between home and work are gone.
- Establish new breaks, new rhythms at home.
- Life is a series of sprints.

## **COMPARTMENTALIZATION**

- Different parts of our life have different feelings and different outcomes.
- The most resilient people seem to understand that we’ve got many different lanes in our life.
- The most resilient people understand this is just one lane.
- Cultivate compartmentalisation

## **Strengths & Work**

- Resilient people figured out how to use life to fill them up.
- How do you use the activities you fill your week with to strengthen you?
- Each one of us draws strength, love, or joy, whatever word you want to use from different situations and different activities.

## CONNECTION | BOOK:

- There are 5 Love Languages—learn how to speak yours.
- What are the particular activities, situations, context, and people in your week that you love? Use that to invigorate you.
- Your ability to be resilient depends hugely on whether you can figure out which activities in your week actually invigorate you.
- The Mayo Clinics: fill 20% of the work week with these activities.
- You know what strengthens you better than anyone else does.
- There is power in knowing specifically what you love.

## NEXT STEPS:

Take the [“StandOut” strengths assessment](#) by StrengthsFinder.

- Will help with figuring out how to draw strength in work
- Resilience is being able to sway in the face of the vicissitudes of life, the challenges of life, sway and, if you do fall beneath the surface, which you will, you don't berate yourself for it.
- The question isn't, “Will I fall and be submerged?” **BUT** “How quickly can I bounce back?”