



# RESILIENCE: FACING ADVERSITY AND EMERGING STRONGER

By Meghan Koransky

Resilience is a non-negotiable trait for success. It can help us absorb setbacks, adapt to challenges, and carry lessons forward as part of our experience.

The word resilience comes from the Latin *resilere*, meaning “to spring back.” Anyone who has faced adversity knows resilience is more than simply bouncing back. It can be transformative, leading to clarified priorities, deeper relationships, and renewed purpose.

For law firm owners, that transformation may mean rethinking strategy, staffing, or client service models in response to challenges. For employees, it can shape how they grow in their roles, build confidence, and navigate the pressures of practice.

Researcher and journalist Diane Coutu identified key traits associated with highly resilient individuals.

**Seeing the world clearly, no matter how harsh the circumstances.** Rather than minimizing or denying difficulties, resilient individuals confront reality head-on. They acknowledge fear, uncertainty, and loss without allowing those experiences to define them. Reflecting on his life story, Nelson Mandela remarked, *“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.”*

In practice, this might look like acknowledging when a case is not going as planned or when workloads become unsustainable—and addressing those realities directly rather than avoiding them.

**The ability to find meaning in adversity.** Purpose can provide an anchor when circumstances are uncontrollable. Renowned psychotherapist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl argued that even in the most extreme conditions, people retain the freedom to choose their attitude and find meaning. He wrote, *“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”*

**A remarkable ability to improvise.** Resilient individuals do not fixate on what has been lost; they focus on what remains, discovering new paths forward where old ones no longer exist. Reflecting on the Great Depression, Academy Award-winning lyricist Yip Harburg remarked, *“I was left with a pencil, and I finally had to write for a living.”*

Law firms frequently face unexpected shifts—changes in client needs, staffing challenges, or market pressures—and resilience is reflected in the ability to pivot while maintaining quality and service.

Below are practical tips for building your resilience.

**Reframe setbacks as growth opportunities.** There is a strong connection between optimism and moving forward. Resilience involves focusing on where your efforts can have the greatest impact. That does not mean ignoring or denying setbacks; but rather, viewing them as temporary and surmountable.

**Build inner strength through social connections.** Maintain relationships with people you can count on to provide thoughtful support. Martin Luther King, Jr., profoundly remarked, *“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”* Notice who stands beside you during difficult times and nurture those relationships.

Within law firms, these relationships are not only a source of personal support but also the foundation of effective collaboration, mentorship, and long-term professional development.

**Maintain clear and respectful boundaries.** Trying to be available for everyone will wear you down. You may not be able to accept every social invitation or client request. Setting boundaries may feel uncomfortable at first, but it is crucial for avoiding burnout and cultivating resilience.

**Invest in self-care and doing things you enjoy.** Healthy practices like getting plenty of exercise and sleep, eating nutritious meals, and mindfulness build resilience. Time spent in nature is linked to lower stress, a brighter disposition, and creative problem solving.

Resilience is not about bouncing back from hardship but growing stronger and wiser because of it. By taking practical steps to build resilience, we can transform challenges into meaningful opportunities for growth and forward momentum.