CREATING A RESILIENT ENTERPRISE

Learn how 'antifragile' thinking and stressors help us to survive disruptive change, and become more resilient.

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Resilience Needs A Little Disruption

Imagine a workplace that developed resilience and change readiness so people didn't just survive disruptive change, but got stronger because of it.

With all the systems and support for leaders and teams in the average business – performance management, change management, development courses, engagement surveys, career guidance, collaborative software, efficient systems and so on – you might assume that environment already exists.

However, do these practices really make people and enterprises stronger, or could they be having the **opposite effect**?

Stressors Help Adaptation

Rules, structure, linear planning, reliance on protection from outside, and size, all have potential increased fragility.

Look to the human body as an example, of response to stressors and becoming stronger. Vaccinations and physical training stimulate our bodies' adaptive capabilities. People, teams and organisations can do the same, provided they are set up to do so.

Many of the very practices that we rely on to enable adaptability and resilience in a business enterprise actually have the opposite than intended effect. For instance:

- **Change Management** - Instead of assisting people to navigate adaptive change, a lot of change management actually protects them from the experience and from learning by experiencing some stress
- **Performance Management** - here is a process that consistently misses the point that adaptability requires a rapid and continuing cycle of alignment, collaboration and learning, not simply an annual review
- **Disconnected Training** - classroom training by itself is a poor way to embed learning so that behaviours stick under pressure
- **Restructuring** - organisation restructuring to address silo behaviour suggests that leaders aren't aware that effective cross-boundary collaboration develops because of tension, not in the absence of it

Counter Culture

Some enterprises use *'antifragile'* thinking to develop a different set of principles.

These principles run counter to the mainstream, but they are emerging in a new style of capability development.

Four Trends Are Emerging:

- Replace linear or protective change management with in-the-field **adaptive change coaching**, where leaders and teams are supported to apply problem solving and decision making tools within their real challenges
- Replace performance management with frequent and robust two-way learning and **performance conversations**
- Replace most classroom training with experiential knowledge gained from real life experience, coupled with powerful **debriefing**
- Replace the bias to restructure with a one-team agile model of **nimble connected teams**

Less Protection More Learning

Each of these practices moves away from notions of protecting, managing and controlling, and towards a more natural learning process. They acknowledge that people learn and adapt without needing overt management control.

These approaches are increasingly used in enterprises to empower employees, boost engagement and develop the capability for adaptive change.

The challenge for everyone is to accept that adaptive change involves a level of discomfort and squirming, and it's from the squirm that we learn and adapt.

For our careers, our businesses and our nation, we can only hope that our leaders learn how to create an environment that bolsters our individual resilience and adaptability, rather than one in which we feel the need to be protected by our leaders.

Resilience and strength has always been a trademark of successful leaders and teams – perhaps we just need to remind ourselves again.

Less Protection More Learning