

Mental Toolkit

Make a plan to deal with the unexpected

We have very little control over the external variables that make plans go awry—geopolitics, market conditions, a partner’s pathological fear of the open ocean. Inspired by Debra Searle, who rowed solo across the Atlantic in a boat built for two, this exercise will help you build resilience in the face of adversity.

BUILD YOUR MENTAL TOOLKIT

Resilience, according to Debra, is all about “mindset not magic.” Your resilience toolkit will consist of four things to decide in advance, and three practices to enact in the midst of an unexpected storm.

BEFORE YOU SET SAIL	<p>TOOL 1: ALTER EGO Someone you channel when you need a dose of courage.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE Debra calls upon her inner Xena: Warrior Princess—or business magnate Richard Branson.</p>	<p>Whose example is a source of strength to you?</p>
	<p>TOOL 2: MEMORY SONGS A song, album, or playlist you can play (audibly or mentally) during challenging times.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE I play <i>Don't Look Back</i> by Boston whenever I take the stage at a Workfront Conference.</p>	<p>What is your fight song?</p>
	<p>TOOL 3: CONTAGIOUS BELIEF A positive belief or personal motto you can call upon when times get tough.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE “I felt I was the luckiest person alive on so many of the days I was out there,” says Debra.</p>	<p>What is your contagious belief?</p>
	<p>TOOL 4: DISCOMFORT ZONE The practice of voluntarily pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone, so you’ll feel more “comfortable” there when unexpected challenges arise.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE I recently rappelled down the side of Workfront’s 5-story office building, despite an intense fear of heights.</p>	<p>How are you expanding your comfort zone today?</p>
IN THE MIDST OF A STORM	<p>TOOL 5: ARRIVAL SCENE What it looks like, feels like, and sounds like when you arrive safely on the other side of this challenge.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Debra continually envisioned arriving safely in Barbados, being reunited with family and friends.</p>	<p>What does your arrival scene look like?</p>
	<p>TOOL 6: WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT Supportive thoughts you would offer to someone else in your situation.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: I often draw on Chip Nemesi’s words: “I know you will surprise them, and they will draw strength from your example.”</p>	<p>What can you say to yourself and others to build resilience?</p>
	<p>TOOL 7: ATTITUDE CHOICE The outlook you choose when everything feels out of control.</p>	<p>EXAMPLE: Says Debra: “Every day I made an attitude choice: I said it out loud. It had to be a positive attitude—negative attitudes were banned on the boat.”</p>	<p>What is your attitude today?</p>

THREE NIGHTMARES

The anticipation of a terrible event is always worse than the event itself. To help build up your immunity to unexpected challenges, write three nightmare scenarios and then apply the last three tools to them for practice.

TIP: You can pull some of the nightmare scenarios you brainstormed on the milestone level in Exercise #5, or invent new ones.

NIGHTMARE #1:

Scenario: _____

Arrival Scene: _____

Words of Encouragement: _____

Attitude Choice: _____

NIGHTMARE #2:

Scenario: _____

Arrival Scene: _____

Words of Encouragement: _____

Attitude Choice: _____

NIGHTMARE #3:

Scenario: _____

Arrival Scene: _____

Words of Encouragement: _____

Attitude Choice: _____