

A woman with long brown hair, wearing glasses and a striped button-down shirt, is looking down at a laptop screen. She has white earbuds in her ears. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Part 2:  
**STAYING  
STRONG**

Maintaining Resilience  
as a Leader in  
Challenging Times

**CLARITY**<sup>VP</sup>

## **PART 2: STAYING STRONG**

### **WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?**

Building resilience, and demonstrating it to your team during times of crisis, does require conscious planning. Leadership expert Robin Sharma employs a number of tactics for this, with one of his most powerful being 'what's the opportunity here?' or The WTOH Question. In times of adversity, leaders should look to the opportunities each situation offers and act positively and responsibly to overcome – or at least minimise – any negative impact.

Unlike victims, who look to blame, make excuses, wait for others to take the initiative or just give up, leaders step up at a time of crisis. We need to counterbalance the 'end of the world' scenarios through our actions. We all know that fear can spread quickly, and it can result in unnecessary and unproductive 'water cooler' conversations in the workplace.

Leaders acknowledge the circumstances and take responsibility . . . even when we don't have all the answers, and resilience plays a major role in this. In fact, resilience underpins many of the key characteristics of effective leaders:

- Understanding the difference between being a victim and a leader.
- Being comfortable with and aware of what can be achieved as a leader.
- Leading when no one else is stepping up.
- Being authentic while doing your best to find/bring answers to your team.
- Being consistent in terms of your behaviour.
- Communicating relentlessly.
- Finding something interesting for your team to focus on that plays to its strengths.
- Being optimistic but grounded in the reality.
- And above all, being as honest as you can be.

Once you get a good sense of how you want to approach the challenge, bring it to life in a practical way. Look for genuine support from your team, and get them involved in developing potential solutions. And one key piece of advice: having a good sounding board, mentor or trusted associate is invaluable.

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## SOME PRACTICAL TIPS

I'd like to pass on some helpful advice from Sharma that can help you to maintain and enhance your resilience during this highly distressing time.

- Keep a positive morning routine. The first 60 minutes of the day really shape your perspective. Reading Sharma's *The 5am Club* has been transformational for me.
- Have a wise and selective view of the news.
- Avoid toxic people right now. Focus your attention on people who give you energy.
- Overcommunicate. Maintain and protect people's hope – build leaders, build confidence.
- Take time for yourself. Journalling allows personal time to process disappointment, and it gives you the opportunity to be grateful for what you have.
- Push mastery into the world. People are retracting; do the opposite.
- Use this time to develop your skills and competencies. Listen to podcasts, start an online course, find a mentor!

In the words of Tom Savage, former Director of the Communications Clinic and one of the most influential mentors I have been lucky enough to know:

Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want.

Let's use this difficult time to show our resilience, dial up our leadership capabilities and protect the hope of those around us. That's certainly something within our control!

*Valerie O'Keeffe is CEO of ClarityVP Consulting. For many years, she has helped leaders and teams to maximise their strengths and achieve significant results. With a former career in finance, Valerie uses her leadership experience and background in behavioural psychology to work with clients across a broad range of sectors.*

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