leadershape

- international – usa, canada, qatar, south africa, and guatemala
- 77,000 participants – 55k institute; 12k catalyst
- 130+ partners per year – 92 institute; 45 catalyst
- not-for-profit organization started in 1988
- vision: to create a just, caring, thriving world where everyone leads with integrity & possibility
- the need for resilient leaders, hence this program – leadershape 2.0
our objectives

• understand stress
• define resilience
• explore how the brain works
• examine how our mind interprets
• improve our “paying attention” skills
• examine timeless principles for resilience
• become resilient leaders and communities
our process

• try to “disconnect” for today…seriously
• will dismiss on time at the latest
• lunch around noon
• breaks in the am and pm
• a personal reflection day for you
• share, as you wish, at your tables
• a workbook for you to capture your thoughts
• we are all teachers and learners
one of you asked to do an icebreaker...

so i guess we have to.
we live in stressful times
what causes stress?

demand is greater than resources to handle
what causes stress?

- worry
- change
- adversity
- trauma, tragedy, threats
- family & relationship problems
- serious health problems
- workplace problems
- financial problems
stress beneath the surface

- lack of control
- lack of meaning
- our finiteness
the avalanche
how the avalanche feels
how the avalanche feels
table talk (15 minutes)

1. what causes you the most stress in your life?
2. what do you do to cope with it?
3. discuss at your table.
coping mechanisms: the 3 c’s

breakfast
lunch
dinner
some stress is good
bad stress: too much, too long = disease
what is resilience?
our ability to withstand adversity
our ability to bounce back from adversity
our ability to preempt and prevent adversity
the willow tree

deep roots.

strong trunk.

flexible branches.
building resilience

- physical
- mental
- emotional
- spiritual
building resilience

physical

- nutrition
- exercise
- weight
- habits
- sleep
table talk (10 minutes)

1. what do you do now to build **physical** resilience?

2. what should you do **more** of?

3. what should you do **less** of?
building resilience

- physical
- mental
- emotional
- spiritual
each neuron is connected to other neurons by up to 40,000 individual connections (called synapses) between cells. multiplying 100 billion neurons times 40,000 synapses is equivalent to the brain having more connections in it than there are stars in the universe.
100s of trillions of connections:

“what **fires** together, **wires** together.”
Two Modes

- Default Mode
- Focus Mode
a model of the mind: the “software” of the brain

input = attention

processing = interpretation
a unit of experience

experience

interpretation
who remembers brushing their teeth last Sunday?

...that's because it's a routine.
our attention focus

threat
pleasure
novelty
the world offers occasional threats

world

mind

past | present | future

resilience
greater threat is in the mind

world

mind

past

hurts/regrets
depression

present


future
desires/fears
anxiety

resilience
attention; black holes

- rumination
- kernel of negative memory or fear
- avoidance response

imagination (catastrophizing)
Too much attention in the mind colors your world grey.

- Past: hurts/regrets, depression
- Present: desires/fears
- Future: desires/fears, anxiety
three domains of attention

- Planning, worrying, ruminations, problem solving: 80%
- Fear, anger, disappointed, lack of control: 20%
- Novelty in the world, joy: 60%
- Higher values or principles (gratitude, compassion, acceptance, forgiveness, meaning): 33%
distraction and our brain
resilience can be learned by focusing our attention outward and refining our interpretations:

- thoughts
- behaviors
- actions
step 1: savor the world with joyful attention
  • delay judgment & pay attention to novelty

step 2: cultivate a kind attention
  • compassion, acceptance, love, & forgiveness
pay attention to detail & find novelty
Break (15 minutes)

1. go outside.
2. find something novel in nature.
3. bring it back to discuss with your table.
Table Talk (10 minutes)

1. what intrigued you?
2. what did you notice that you had not noticed before?
joyful, focused attention in nature
novelty in nature
how do you greet your loved ones at the end of the day?

(lessons from our pets)
greet loved ones as if it’s the first time in a long time
how do you greet your colleagues during the day?
compassion
acceptance
love
forgiveness

“bless you” exercise
kind attention to others:
silent “bless you” or “i wish you well”
let’s practice: silent “i wish you well” (5 min)

1. stand up
2. silently walk around the room making eye contact with everyone and silently say “i wish you well”
3. sit down
4. how did it feel to give a silent “i wish you well”? 
5. how did it feel to receive a silent “i wish you well”? 
an approach to a resilient day: paying attention

- wake up
- breakfast
- commute
- work
- lunch

- work
- commute
- dinner
- relax/family
- sleep
why pay kind, joyful attention?

outward attention

• creates less worry
• creates less regrets
• focuses the mind
• changes the brain
• increases memory
• improves mood
• improves health
• gives more peace
• gives more joy

resilience
neuroplasticity

the brain can change throughout your life.

repetitive thoughts, behaviors, and actions change the brain.
a model of resilience

few seconds to a lifetime

few seconds to a lifetime

balance

imbalance

COPING

growth

rebalanced

disrupted

new balance
building resilience

- physical
- mental
- emotional
- spiritual
icons of emotional resilience

Helen Keller

President Nelson Mandela

Mother Teresa

His Holiness the Dalai Lama
building emotional resilience

your experience

how you interpret it

prejudices

altruistic & egotistical preferences

higher principles
interpretation

**prejudices**

- can be useful shortcuts (e.g., “leaves of 3, let them be” may be poison ivy)
- excessive prejudices lead to stress & anxiety
- they can limit our lives

**preferences**

- have few preferences
- egotistical preferences seldom satisfy
- altruistic preferences are helpful to others & to you
interpretation

principles are:

a more joyful way to interpret
a more refined way to live
possible every day
Lunch Time (about 1 hour)

on your way out, please write on each of the 7 white pages posted around the room what comes to mind with each of the words or groupings of words around the wall (gratitude, compassion, acceptance, meaning, forgiveness, celebration, & meditation/prayer/reflection).
building resilience

- physical
- mental
- emotional
- spiritual
higher principles

- gratitude
- compassion
- acceptance
- meaning & purpose
- forgiveness
- celebration & joy
- reflection/meditation/prayer
REFLECTION • MEDITATION • PRAYER
let’s read what you wrote about reflection/meditation/prayer

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
reflection/meditation/prayer: what to know & why practice

• it is personal.
• place doesn’t matter.
• it is the pause that refreshes.
• all wisdom traditions support.
• a chance to be, with no agenda.
• no judgment, accepting what comes.
• perhaps 10,000 ways to do it; none wrong.
meditation

let’s practice: resilience
meditation practice

what did you experience?
meditation practice

some tips:

• fewer thoughts with practice.
• connecting it with your faith helps.
• accepting what comes up is ok.
• no right or wrong way.
• no judgments.
let’s read what you wrote about gratitude

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
gratitude: what is it?

- gratitude is a positive emotion, recognizing the blessings we receive.
- it is a combination of humility, grace, love, and acceptance.
- it is not indebtedness. gratitude is a much purer feeling.
- it flows without expectations.
- it is not outcome dependent.
- gratitude is non-conditional.
- it keeps the ego in check.
- gratitude helps heal.
gratitude: why have it?

research studies associate a feeling of gratitude with better health outcomes including:

• well being
• positive mood
• better self-esteem
• lower risk of post-traumatic stress disorder
gratitude: how to practice?

• say “thank you” in the morning. as you awake, before rising, what 5 people you are grateful for?

• say “thank you” at the close of the day. ponder life’s pleasure, or experience, or lesson that day.

• gratitude becomes a way of being…even with those who might irritate us, when things don’t go our way.

• what you focus on expands. focus on the faults and they will grow. focus on what you learn from others, and their weaknesses will seemingly subside. be grateful for both.

• find an experience for which you are grateful, even though not pleasant.
gratitude
ponder & privately write (5 min)

who/what are you most grateful for in your life?
COMPASSION

resilience
let’s read what you wrote about compassion

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
compassion: what is it?

- it is universal in all religions: everyone suffers; everyone wants to be happy.
- compassion is the ability to feel another’s suffering, and try to relieve it.
- helping another is mutually beneficial. it can elevate your own mood.
- delay judgment in heated moments. time enhances compassion.
- compassion should be energizing and add meaning.
- everyone hurts. everyone wants to be happy.
- be compassionate toward yourself too.
compassion fatigue?

be like a tree:
take in carbon monoxide,
breathe out oxygen.
compassion: why have it?

research studies associate compassion with better health outcomes including:

- lower stress
- improved immune parameters with arthritis
- decreased pain
- patient satisfaction; they received good care
- less pain with arthritis
- earlier improvement of common cold symptoms
compassion: how to practice it?

• meditate on compassion: those you love, you don’t know, who are difficult.
• consider compassion an opportunity: send a silent “bless you” or “i wish you well.”
• serve another without expectation of return. the joy is in the serving.
• practice compassion. it will grow. it is energizing.
• be sure to give self-compassion to yourself.
ponder & privately write (5 min)

who in your life might you show more compassion to?

how might you do that?
ACCEPTANCE
let’s read what you wrote about acceptance

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH.
acceptance: what is it?

- acceptance engages flexibility vs. rigidity.
- it focuses on what is controllable vs. uncontrollable.
- acceptance focuses on the now vs. the past or future.
- acceptance sees things as they are, not as wished.
- it engages with the imperfect, the undesirable, the uncontrollable.
- what we fight we get attached to, making it bigger. suppression enlarges.
- acceptance allows learning from failures, converting experience to success.
acceptance: why have it?

Research studies associate acceptance with better health outcomes including:

- Tinnitus
- Quality of life
- Marijuana dependence
- Anxiety symptoms
- Marital satisfaction
- Depressive symptoms
- Life satisfaction
- Diabetes control
- Chronic pain
- Compulsive hair pulling
- Drug refractory seizure
- Coping among assault victims
acceptance: how to practice?

1. have fewer preferences so you can be more accepting.
2. choose and know your priorities carefully. where do you stand?
3. accept yourself, recognizing that disruption does not have to define you.
4. try to be less critical. too much criticism causes people to run away, if not physically, emotionally.
5. ponder the finiteness of who and what you love.
   • it is natural to be attached to who & what we love.
   • recognize the finiteness of all things and all people.
   • love finds its greatest intensity when rooted in acceptance of finiteness.
   • every moment then becomes unique, special, precious, not to be taken for granted.

resilience
table talk (10 minutes)

share with your table what you believe to be the difference between acceptance vs. trying to change things to make them better. in other words, how do you maintain high standards of performance and acceptance?
MEANING & PURPOSE
let’s read what you wrote about

meaning & purpose

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
meaning: what is it?

• suffering is pain that has no meaning.
• meaning amidst adversity is resilience.
• to increase joy, discover meaning in your life.
• to decrease suffering, give your life deep meaning.
• sync up your short-term actions to long-term meaning for peace.
• often our meaning comes from our relationships, the same source as our stress.
• meaning comes from doing what you consider meaningful work, whatever that might be.
some believe in god; some in nature;
some believe in religion; some in spirituality;
some believe in science; some believe in work;
some believe in family & community;
some believe in the moment, in the now.

whatever one believes in, it can become a sustaining force in good times & stressful times. perhaps we all can agree we are agents of service and love.
meaning: why have it?

research studies show the following outcomes to improve with finding meaning and purpose:

anger     survival
quality of life coping
depression physical health
anxiety self-esteem
life satisfaction post-traumatic stress
meaning: how to practice it?

in relationship with others …

• appreciate others’ struggles
• be willing to offer help
• come closer to others
• show emotions more
• accept others’ help
• connect with them
• accept them
• forgive them
• contribute

in relationship with self…

• be hopeful
• be thankful
• make a difference
• thrive in adversity
• let go of small things
• invite new opportunities
• be willing to change yourself
• seek solace in nature, kindness
• recognize your meaning evolves
ponder & privately write (5 min)

what gives you meaning & purpose?
FORGIVENESS
let’s read what you wrote about

forgiveness

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness.

—Robert Muller
forgiveness: what is it?

• it is a voluntary choice.
• forgiveness is a gift from you.
• it may go to the undeserving.
• forgiveness is for you, not the forgiven.
• it lets go of anger, resentment, and hurt.
• deep, fresh hurt may take time to forgive.
• it doesn’t justify, excuse, condone, or deny the wrong.
• forgiveness can be mentally challenging, a spiritual stress test.
• holding a grudge often gives an instinctual comfort zone to owner.
forgiveness: why have it?

research studies show the following outcomes to improve with forgiveness:

- better sleep
- stronger parenting alliance
- more regular heart rate
- lower stress level
- greater satisfaction with life
- fewer somatic complaints
- better marital quality
- lower number medications used
- lower blood pressure
- lower fatigue
- longer relationship duration
- less lower-level back pain
- lower cholesterol
- better psychological well being
- lower physical symptoms
- better cardiovascular stress recovery
forgiveness: how to practice it?

• lower expectations of others.
• be patient. deep hurt can take time.
• grant pre-emptive forgiveness to loved ones.
• forgive without creating a burden on the forgiven.
• keep an attitude of internal acceptance if your expectations are not met.
• try not to serve “unforgiveness” from a previous day. it is like stale food.
• know that everyone suffers. everyone wants to be happy, even the offender.
• try to understand the other. often an expression that’s not love is a call for help.
• as an opportunity, forgiveness lets you put more energy into the future, not the past.
ponder & privately write (5 min)

who should you work harder to forgive in your life?
let’s read what you wrote about

celebration & joy

would someone kindly read what the entire group said about this?
celebration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gratitude</td>
<td>celebration &amp; joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compassion</td>
<td>reflection/prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaning/purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forgiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A weekly schedule for refined interpretations with higher principles.

WEEKLY CALENDAR • LANDSCAPE

resilience
break

15 minutes
your “garden”

• did you sow all the plants (and weeds) in your garden?

• can you take away all the weeds from your garden?

• what is the cost of spending all your time removing every weed from your garden?
where are the weeds?
resilient communities

• what would happen if communities maintained that schedule of focus weekly? (gives a whole new definition to “tending our garden”)

• what are the “communities of purpose” that we are a part of?
relationships

- play together.
- be flexible in your preferences.
- be gentle when you have to say “no.”
- never let relationships sour because of trivial events.
- do not accumulate small, low-grade irritations. fix them.
- actively engage your tribe so it doesn’t slowly wither away.
- be present. when hearing, truly listen. when looking, truly see.
- try to understand others before expecting them to understand you.
- use kind language. “a compliment a day keeps the counselor away.”
- find meaning even in an argument. is a particular point so important?
- use language that focuses on you, not on them, the future vs. the past.
- criticize sparingly. when necessary, choose right time. don’t globalize.
- pass all words through old sufi teaching: is it true? is it kind? is it necessary?
- make more deposits than withdrawals in the other’s emotional bank account.
becoming a resilient leader

- thriving amidst adversity
- taking care of yourself first (e.g. lifeguard)
- keeping your vision in sight
- realizing that leading is hard work
- always being true and leading with integrity
LESS STUFF
LESS WORK
LESS EXPENSE = MORE MONEY
MORE TIME
MORE JOY
STOP THE GLORIFICATION OF BUSY.
STAND LIKE MOUNTAIN, FLOW LIKE WATER.
THANK YOU!

Please take a moment to complete the evaluation so we can improve this program.