

# SUCCESSFUL *Culture*

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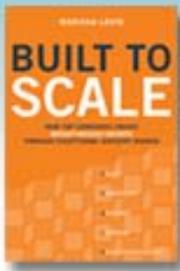
## Nine Strategies of Resilience

As Founder of three companies, a hands-on mom to two teenagers, a mentor & coach to many other leaders, and as someone who has had her share of personal setbacks including two cancer scares, people often ask me how I maintain such positive energy, day in and day out, even in the midst of adversity...how I have the endurance to keep going. I have nine core strategies. They are **faith, gratitude, future-focused patience, forgiveness, self-renewal, priority balancing, resistance to drama, my web of influence**, and my commitment to core **values**. Not every day is a “good” day, but every day has goodness within it. Knowing that all things are impermanent – the good and the bad, and that we can never reclaim the time that passes, has helped me to become very disciplined with how I expend my energy, and to appreciate the positivity of every moment.

My hope is that this white paper enlightens you with a few strategies that can help you increase your resilience and appreciation for the daily good.

**1: Embrace the Journey.** Faith plays a central role in my life. While I discard the belief that “all things happen for a reason,” I do believe that all circumstances provide a doorway to growth and learning if our minds are open...that all of the paths put before us offer experiences we might not be able to understand or see at the time they are happening, but are significant nonetheless. It has been said that spiritually, faith and fear can not co-exist. If we can have faith in a higher reason as to why things are happening, we’re able to let go of the fear of uncertainty. I’m not suggesting we surrender to what’s happening and blindly accept difficulty or defeat. What I suggest is to release the **fear**, which impedes our rational thinking. Often when we are in the midst of change and challenge, we are unable to grasp why events are transpiring. Fear clouds the courage we need to weather a storm. It is only after we have gone through an experience that we can look back and see why the dots connected in the manner in which they did. This philosophy is what has helped me navigate my way through great pain and difficulty. And as I move forward, I can honestly say that while I know there is uncertainty in my future, I have very little fear. No matter where I am in my path, my blessings will travel with me. And I have faith that I will emerge from any difficulty in the future as a stronger and more resilient woman.

**2: Embrace Gratitude.** I begin every day from a place of gratitude. Regardless of what’s occurring in our lives, we all can find many things for which to be grateful. Everyone has a story. Everyone has had pain, loss, and difficulty, personally and professionally. Our challenges are a gift because they mold us into who

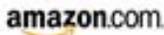


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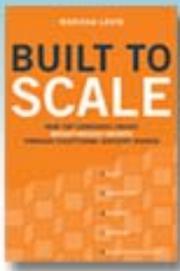
we are today, and prepare us for what's ahead. None of us really know what others have endured. We just wonder how they do what they do. Especially for people like entrepreneurs, who embrace and live life a bit more passionately than others, we're a target for both more of the good and more of the bad. But if you can adopt the habit of embracing your journey from a place of gratitude and appreciation for all that you have accomplished, for the blessings in your life, and for all that is yet to come, the challenges and difficulties become more manageable.

**3: Embrace future-focused patience.** By nature, I'm not patient. Most goal-directed, passionate people aren't. We see what we want, and we want to take it. Experience has taught me that rushing what's coming never turns out for the best. But I've also learned that I don't need to helplessly wait to get what I want. There are plenty of things I can do to help me strengthen my foundation, and obtain my goal. So while I wait, I plan. *I've come to appreciate the time between knowing what I want, and getting what I want.* I've reluctantly, painfully, and gracefully become more patient. But it's purposeful and future-focused patience. Not patience for the sake of patience.

**4: Embrace forgiveness.** Forgiveness is one of those things in life that is much easier said than done. The person that should be at the top of everyone's list of who to forgive should be themselves. Forgiveness of others can only come after one has found peace within themselves. We often hold ourselves accountable to standards and expectations that we would never impose on others.

Forgiveness of others is directly connected to acceptance of a new reality. I think of forgiveness as the reconstruction of a shattered mirror. When you put it back together, it provides a reflection, but it's cracked and broken. A person has to decide if they can live with that new reality. Either way, the situation before the transgression occurred is gone. It's dead. It will never exist again. And therein lies the acceptance of the new reality. The question is: Can you move past it? Can you accept the new reality?

Those are tough questions. To live a life free of bitterness, anger, and regret... a life where our past choices don't cause us to fear future choices... it's really hard. When someone has hurt us, it's natural to go to a place of anger. And I'm not saying there isn't a place for that. It's all a process. But embracing circumstances from a place of compassion & forgiveness is the optimal. We've all hurt others, and we've all been hurt. The question is, what do we do with the emotional fallout? Do we allow it to define us and define our choices? Or do we have the strength to move past it? Moving past it doesn't mean acceptance of the transgression. It means we are ready for our lives not to be defined by the transgression. Forgiveness of others frees you from anger.



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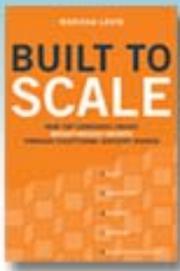


**5: Embrace self-renewal.** I've finally learned that burning the candle at both ends and going at 100 mph without a break for long stretches really doesn't do any good for anyone. I can't give my best to everyone else when I'm burned out. So I have learned to rest, especially when I'm experiencing a challenge. When things aren't going the way I want them to go, I've learned to step back and wait. I used to want to fix everything instantly. But I've learned that very few things in the course of a normal day truly require an immediate response, and that the ebbs in life that round out the flows are actually opportunities to rest, recharge, and renew. I'm an avid cyclist and spinning enthusiast. In our class which pushes us to the limit, our instructor reminds us to "take our breaks when we get them." She tells us that because we know that there are going to be a lot of hills around the corner, and our minds & bodies need to recharge. I look for the breaks – the ebbs – in my life, and I grasp hold of them. If they don't come to me naturally, I seek them out – through meditation, massage, exercise, time with a special friend, or simply through rest. They provide me with a much-needed time out from whatever chaos is around me, and allow me to gain perspective on what I should do next. It helps me to take hold of any negativity that may be creeping in, diffuse it, and learn from it.

**6: Embrace priority-balancing and a limit on self-sacrifice.** We must balance the need to care for ourselves with the need to care for others. When we put our priorities on the bottom of the list, we communicate that it is acceptable to be at the bottom; that our needs are secondary to the needs of others. It should not be acceptable to sacrifice our needs or our dreams so that another person can achieve theirs. How often have we truly reached the ends of our rope – the place where we just can't give anymore – and yet we continue to give and give? How many times have we felt guilty for taking time to ourselves – whether it is an hour, a day, or a weekend? We are so programmed to give and give and give, because we have taught the people in our life that it is OK to take and take and take. Especially as mothers, is that the lesson we want to teach our daughters and our sons? That it is acceptable to put ourselves at the bottom of the list?

Absolutely, there are times in our lives when we must make the needs of others our priority. But there are also times when we must make our own needs a priority, and these are equally important. Knowing the difference between these times is the first step in restoring our hearts and our spirit when they have been hurt or depleted. A meditation teacher taught me that we can be intimate, truthful, and whole with others only after we have achieved these things with ourselves. Restoring our emotional balance can only occur through self-focus and self awareness, and by moving us up to the number one spot on our list of priorities.

**7: Resist drama.** Life provides enough drama; why is it that we constantly go looking for more? Do you ever find yourself in situations with people that are drama magnets? Do you often believe that you are the silver



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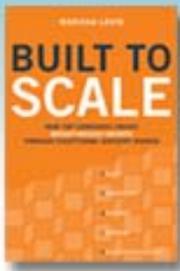
bullet for other people's challenges? Some people in our lives are perpetual tornadoes. They have emotional clutter and debris constantly swirling around them. Like an unsuspecting, innocent by-stander, we get caught up in their drama. Women by nature are fixers, nurturers, and saviors. Like a moth to a flame, we are drawn to people and situations that are simply not healthy for us. We see a mess, and we want to clean it up. We see a problem, and we want to fix it. We see an injury, and we want to heal it. The need to mend and repair subjects us to unnecessary drama. I'm slowly learning to say no to drama, and to situations that call for unhealthy co-dependencies and interactions. Healthy relationships and healthy outcomes require healthy people. Unnecessary drama compromises our focus and balance, and our health and happiness. Sometimes, we need to "devolve" our relationships. Just as our relationships evolve over time, some relationships should devolve over time, to the point of where they are not a strong presence in our lives.

**8: Create a healthy web of influence.** Research has proven that we are the average of the 10 people that most closely surround us. We become the people that are closest to us. People have a lot more control over their web of influence than they realize. They automatically put long-time friends, family members, and business colleagues into their web, even though they may not be the people that are most supportive, understanding, or happiest for their success. This is your life, and your web and you get to decide who is in it. It should be very difficult for someone to earn a spot on your A-team or in your inner circle.

One of my mentors has taught me how important it is to connect with compatible people that "catalyze our kismet." She identified truly compatible people as individuals that have both our fronts and our backs. Those that have our **fronts** stretch us beyond our comfort zones, expand our thinking & boundaries, introduce us to others that help us succeed, believe in our causes all the way, and cheer us on through all of it. Those that have our **backs** support our goals, share our values and our beliefs, and most importantly, are trustworthy and honest. They are genuinely invested in our happiness and success because they get pleasure in seeing us happy, they tell us the truth when we don't see it for ourselves, and they unconditionally support us without judgment.

It's rare to meet those people that have our fronts and backs, so we must seize those relationships when they come along. Your circle may be tighter because of these requirements, but the benefit is exponentially greater.

**9: Revisit your core values.** We lose balance when we unknowingly test or compromise our personal values. So from time to time, and especially when we feel out of balance, we need to re-establish personal



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values goals. We often talk about values in the context of business. But what are your personal values, and how do you keep yourself accountable?

A close friend of mine shared with me that she is feeling out of balance because she has not been true to two of her personal values... family and faith. She claims that her marriage and family are the most important things to her, yet her actions indicate otherwise. She realized she has been putting her marriage at the bottom of the priority list because she has been attending too many evening networking events that keep her away from home. This has caused stress in her marriage. In addition, faith has always been central in her life, and yet she has not been going to church. The value system hasn't changed; rather her decisions contradicted her value system.

When we can see the misalignment between our value system and our actions, we can readjust, which puts us back into balance. This balance strengthens us and enables us to have a clear line of sight on what is really important. You can try this too...to identify your core values that have nothing to do with your business or profession, but rather what comprises your core being. Then take stock of your decisions and actions, and assess how they align. It is a wonderful exercise to try at any time. Results will either validate that you are making the right decisions, and that your actions are in alignment with your values, or they will shed light on where you need to re-align.

So there are my nine strategies. Sometimes they are easy to apply; often they are not. We are all a work in progress. Kindness with ourselves brings out our best so that we may connect with others in a meaningful and lasting way.

Keep growing!

~Marissa