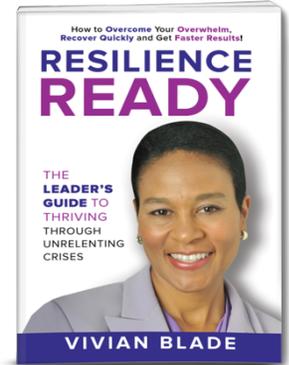


Resilience Ready™ Professional Development Series

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Career Resilience for Women – 5 Actions to Take Now

A crisis throws you many curve balls. The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. It's changed practically everything. You've had to adapt on a dime, including in your career.

Here are three significant trends women still need to watch out for...

A Tight Job Market

The impact of layoffs and furloughs is still being felt by many. I can't count the number of people in my network who have lost their jobs over the past year. Some have had to take on what employment they could find to make ends meet. Impacted by the economic downturn from the pandemic, these once rising professionals and leaders are finding it extremely difficult to rejuvenate their careers.

Even if you've been able to hang on to your job, you're likely to have experienced pay cuts and compensation freezes. In many industries, companies had to put their talent management processes on hold, delaying promotions and hiring. Whether you're looking to advance or are in the job market, you realize how this crisis has certainly slowed things down. Companies have had to put their energy toward the most immediate challenges... transitioning to a remote workforce, workforce reductions, stimulus regulations, and following CDC guidelines for how to return to work.

Need for Flexibility

A second big trend I'm hearing about is the need for greater flexibility – on everyone's part.

The workplace will be different – your office environment, work arrangements – remote work is likely to continue on a large scale into the future. Demand for talent has shifted to different industries and fields. Skill requirements are shifting. And companies will shift their focus from primarily regulatory compliance to looking at their talent pool and reassessing the alignment of the skills they need to return to growth.

Impact on Women

A third significant trend is the impact that the pandemic has especially had on women. Many of you are living this right now. Though certainly there are many dual parent households where both parents are pitching in, by and large, women are the primary caretakers for her family and household. Right now, women are also juggling being their children's teacher and work responsibilities. Have you been there? McKinsey reports that women's jobs are nearly twice more vulnerable to this crisis than men. All of these challenges may not be fully taken into consideration when setting expectations or evaluating employees during this time.

A Lasting Impact

People are hopeful that things will return to normal soon. But, these trends have made lasting change in how you work, how you lead, and how you navigate moving your career forward.

The COVID-19 crisis is not unlike many of the challenges and crises you face. There's usually an abundance of fear and worry because of the impact experienced and ongoing uncertainty around factors you can't control. There is a way to move past all that.

Resilience is a term we hear all the time now. But, what does it really mean to be resilient, and how can you apply resilience to your career? According to the American Psychological Association resilience is a process of adapting.

People and organizations that exhibit resilience demonstrate an ability to manage, albeit not always perfectly, to the changing conditions during a crisis. Resilience begins with a mindset, or perspective, that getting through the crisis is possible. You find the courage to step out of your safe zone to move forward.

5 Actions to Take Now

The Resilience Ready principles – *Perspective, Purpose, Perseverance, Partnership, and Praise* – give you a framework for rebuilding your reservoir of resilience so that you can adjust to and purposefully deal with the challenges as they present themselves both in your life and in your career.

What actions can you take right now to bring greater resilience to managing in your life personally and professionally?

Perspective – Put on your ‘glass half-full’ spectacles, so that you see the crisis you’re facing with more opportunity than lack of opportunity. You have to work to discover it (and have some patience.) You’ll remain stuck as a victim or continue to settle for your current state if your head is not in a positive, hopeful space. A better, yet different, future is ahead for you!

Purpose – Know your value, and don’t be shy about it! Losing your job or being thrown into a different work arrangement can make you feel less-than. You question your self-worth. What are you passionate about? What are you good at? Where do you have experience? How you use your value may look different now. Remember that you can still be highly relevant and purposeful.

Perseverance – The workload and pressure can be almost unbearable in a crisis. Stress is a real problem right now. Both physical and mental health are real concerns. A stress assessment can give you an indication of your stress level, possible contributors, and help you improve those areas. To be able to persevere means you have to take care of yourself. Sometimes just taking 60 seconds to breathe deeply can help you feel refresh. Turn off your camera during virtual meetings to give yourself a mental break.

Partnership – You’re not in this alone. “We’ll get through this together” couldn’t be more important than when you’re going through challenging times. Stay in touch with your personal and professional network on an ongoing basis with a genuine interest in their wellbeing. Ask for help if you’re personally struggling. Staying in touch and offering your support also helps you build social capital for times when you may need a favor.

Praise – While you see so many of the problems and struggles during a crisis, there’s also so much to be grateful for. What can you be grateful for in others and in the environment around you? Keep your eyes open and share your gratitude with others. Don’t forget to show yourself some love for both the effort you’re putting in to get through this and even the smallest progress along the way. Praise raises possibilities.

Resilience is crucial to move through this and other crises in your career. The time to begin building yours is *now*.

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About the Author

Vivian Blade, MBA, MBB, PMP is a recognized leadership expert and thought leader. She works with the world’s top brands, equipping leaders with the resilience that inspires teams to recover quickly in the face of ongoing disruption and thrive in spite of insurmountable odds. Her impact is felt as a frequent speaker for association conferences, and in delivering transformative leadership development programs, executive coaching and consulting for corporations. She is the author of Resilience Ready: The Leader’s Guide to Thriving Through Unrelenting Crises, which reveals the key to living and leading with resilience.

