

RESOURCEFULNESS

Essential Leadership Quality in an Environment of Change

If you had to choose one trait you want in the leader of your team?

Resourceful Leaders Think Differently

When team members are asked this question, their answer isn't physical ability, strategic intelligence or command presence. When it comes to the person whose leadership could mean the difference between success or failure, they prioritize resourcefulness, the ability to come up with quick, creative ways to solve problems and overcome difficulties.

This mental agility to 'adapt the plan' and maximize resources is critical in any sphere, whether business, sports, or science. If you can't adapt to a fast-changing environment, regardless of your brilliance and innovative ideas, if you can't come up with creative ways to execute.

For most people, not knowing "if this is going to work? How long do I have to deal with this uncertainty?" is extremely uncomfortable, psychologically speaking. Our brains love certainty, even if it's the certainty of giving up, or failing. We want to be able to predict what's going to happen.

So how do you develop the mental agility to override your brain's natural tendency? Here's what I've noticed with resourceful leaders:

1. They make a decision: "I am going to figure this out." Basically, resourceful people create their own certainty: the certainty of knowing that they're just going to keep trying. "The whole point of moving forward," says Jeff Bezos, "is you run into problems and failures, things don't always work out as expected. You have to back up and try again." After a decades of working on technology, "failure was not an option. "Never have a plan B. Simply have a plan A and, if and only if there is no way to execute plan A successfully, then I iterate, in real-time, an alternative plan A."

2. They're comfortable with 'not knowing.' Faced with the perceived threats of the unknown, our brain is going to default to replicating what's happened in the past. Most resourceful leaders are comfortable without structure at the beginning: they don't have to have all the answers before they start. They're able to sidestep the brain's survival mechanisms, which gives them access to creative ideas so they can "run on rails and then build the train as they run."

3. They focus relentlessly on the upside. Use constraints as a tool of creation, advises disruption expert Whitney Johnson. Resourceful leaders always find ways to downplay the downside. "The best leaders always surprise us by how quickly they learn and transform the way things are," By focusing on what's possible, they gain access to unexpected solutions.

