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# Resilience in the face of constant change

You support drive the continuous improvement and evolution of your business, by enabling successful change. Here's how to get through it



## THE EXPERT

Karen Gately is a leadership and people-management specialist, plus a founder of HR consultancy Ryan Gately. She works with leaders and HR teams to drive business results through the talent and energy of people. She has authored two books – *The People Manager's Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Getting the Best from People* and *The Corporate Dojo: Driving Extraordinary Results through Spirited People*.

**Coordinating** demanding schedules, influencing key stakeholders and staff engagement and overseeing policy and process redesign are common roles EAs play in the change process. More and more often, EAs are being asked to step into a change leadership role and guide the effort and performance of other members of the team. There is a growing focus on the role EAs need to play in not only identifying but implementing new and improved ways of doing things.

It's common for people to experience change fatigue brought about by a seemingly never-ending array of obstacles and challenges that inevitably present. The reality is that constant change is the new norm. Maintaining resilience is essential for any professional striving to be successful in their role. Working through change with optimism, focus and creativity, having the energy to keep striving through tough periods, and dealing effectively with other people who are struggling with change, all depend on it.

The most important steps successful EAs take to maintain the strength of resilience they need to manage change include these:

### Acknowledge emotion

Building mental strength is greatly benefited by first acknowledging and accepting the negative

emotions you feel when they arise. There's no point denying, for example, frustration or even anger. Acknowledge that's how you feel and turn your mind to the way forward. The ability to recognise an emotion and the likelihood that it will pass will allow you to move on quickly, minimizing the stress you endure.

### Practice optimism

You have the power to choose what thoughts and emotions you entertain and invest in. Be careful of what you allow your thinking to dictate; what beliefs you hold, emotions you experience or actions you choose to take. Recognise when your mind is drifting to unhelpful places and change your thoughts.

### Leverage support

Don't be afraid to put your hand up and ask for the support you need. While it may be your role, and in your nature, to be the one doing the supporting, if you're struggling with change it makes no sense to keep going it alone.

Just spending time with colleagues you work well with can make a positive difference to maintaining the energy levels you need to be resilient.

### Set realistic goals

Being ambitious and driven to achieve optimal outcomes is unquestionably important, but not at the expense of your sanity and health. Perfectionism rarely leads to the best outcomes so check the expectations you have of yourself, and the people you work with. Strive to be successful but appreciate also the limits of your capacity.

### Celebrate small wins

Pay attention to the milestones you achieve along the way and benefit from the energizing influence even small steps in the right direction can have, if you choose to let them. Don't wait until the final delivery of a change objective to celebrate. Hold realistic expectations of what's possible and appreciate your successes in getting there.

### Be nice to yourself

If you're inclined to beat yourself up when things don't go exactly to plan, stop that. While it's important to hold yourself accountable, so too is being fair in the judgements you make about your own performance and potential.

Choose to have belief in your strengths and see your weaknesses as opportunities to learn and grow. Understand that you are unlikely to master everything in life, so cut yourself some slack if some things are harder than others to learn or overcome. ☺

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