



The Power to Finish: The Fundamentals of Resilience and Endurance



Whenever we consider the process of completing a large or intimidating goal, we frequently hear the question, “How do you eat an elephant”? The quick and known response to this question is “One bite at a time”! This well-coined, ancient proverb makes the biggest achievements sound palatable and quickly provides the motivation needed to begin the journey.

The truth remains vastly different from bite number one to bite number 257! Bite number one comes with all of the vim and vigor linked with a new and exciting opportunity. That first bite consists of the anticipation of the awaiting accomplishment. Bite one entices with the satiating thoughts of completing the new undertaking and reveling with joy as we see ourselves finish!

Somewhere along this process, reality starts to settle in. Around bite number 257, you’re exhausted. Your jaws are tired of chewing, you have worn your knife and fork down to shards and just then you look up and realize you still have three-fourths of that elephant still left to consume!

It is at this point where you begin to have serious conversations with yourself. The questions begin to fill your head:

“Why in the world would I even try this”?

“Should I keep going”?

“Can I make it”?

“Will I ever finish”?

“Who did I think I was to even start this”?

Maybe you have decided to continue your education, start or expand a business, maybe make your health and wellness a priority. We have all taken the advice of the thought leader of the day and made the big, audacious step toward accomplishing a goal that will bring more joy, fulfillment, or more income. Then as the steps become more and more steep, we realize the weight of the undertaking. This is exactly where we need to implement tools and resources to gather the Resilience and Endurance necessary to see this mammoth to completion.

Resilience to Fight Resistance

Steven Pressfield, the author of *The War or Art* attributes the clear distinction between the person we desire to become and the person we are on the presence of Resistance. It is believed that during any effort to improve, strengthen, or elevate ourselves, we can expect the force of Resistance to appear from within our thoughts, beliefs, and actions (or lack of action). The only force stronger than Resistance is Resilience.

We know Resilience is our ability to bounce back from challenges, hardship, or disappointment. Most importantly, Resilience is the power to push past the most crippling opponents of negative self-talk and perceived opposition, rejection, and failure. Resilience begins

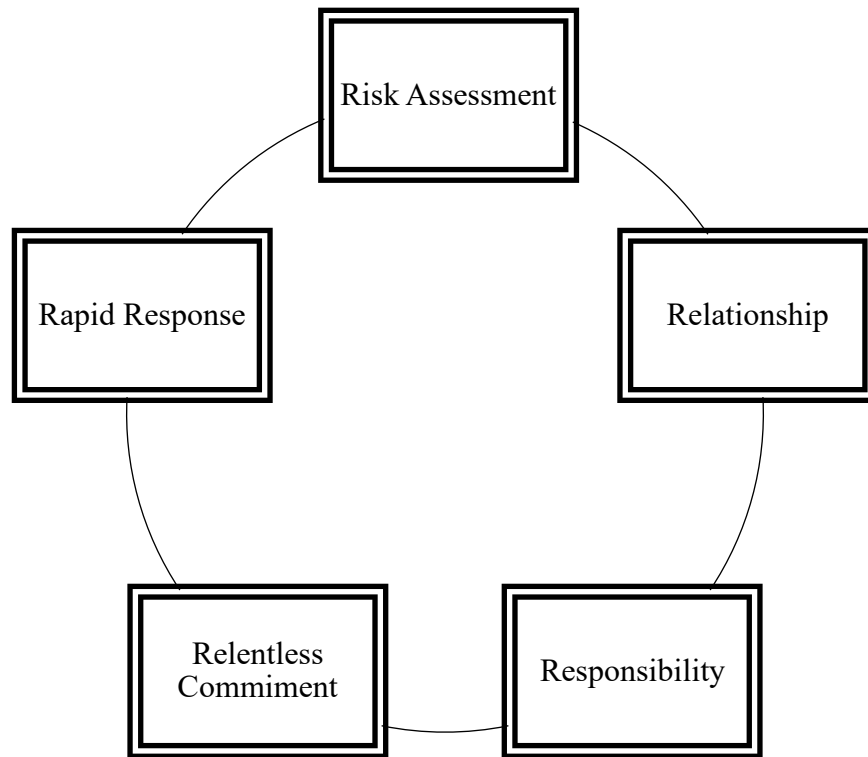
in the same place as Resistance, however, Resilience can overpower Resistance with a few strategic practices.

Strategy is always necessary when preparing for opposition. The time to prepare an effective strategy is not on the front lines of battle, but before the fight begins. Tactics to employ Resilience must be designed in advance. When the debilitating effects of Resistance approach, you can instantly reach for the tools already prepared to spring forth into action and continue pushing forward to the finish.

The R⁵ Process to Strengthen Personal Resilience

The R⁵ process provides a five-part systemic plan to provide tools and resources that eliminate the impact of moments of Resistance. Building a Resilience plan allows you to have a guide ready to assist as you move through the facets of accomplishing goals. The R⁵ process consists of: Risk Assessment, Relationships, Responsibility, Relentless Commitment, and Rapid Response.

Figure 1: R⁵ Process to Strengthen Resilience



1. Risk Assessment – Before beginning most ventures that have the ability to reshape and enhance your life, it is wise to assess the risks that are involved. Begin to ask yourself questions.

“How much money will this require?”

“How much time will I need to invest?”

“Will this cause me to have to sacrifice other things that are important to me?”

During this risk assessment, it is also a good time to do a Resistance Assessment. Ask yourself, how has Resistance shown itself in other attempts to complete goals?

“Am I an avid procrastinator?”

“Do I spend more time thinking about presumed negative responses rather than actually doing the work?”

“Am I constantly researching, but never putting the research into action?”

“Do I say negative things to myself (out loud or internally) about my ability to succeed?”

Assessing the risks and potential for resistance early in the process prepares you for the elements that typically cause us to go off course shortly after we start. We can be shocked at the reality of what is required. When we launch before taking a full inventory of how our decision to accomplish this goal causes impact on other areas of life, we set ourselves up for hardship that can be avoided or reduced.

Once these assessments are completed, begin to provide positive answers and solutions. Set yourself in agreement with the possibility of successful outcomes. This will be helpful when the anxious thoughts arise. Rather than focus on the presumed challenges, align yourself with the successes that have already occurred. Every single step toward the goal is a success.

2. Relationships – Many times when we seek to accomplish goals, we tend to work in a vacuum. At times, we think others are too occupied with their own lives to be concerned with our efforts. On the contrary, there people ready to encourage you and support you. This requires you step outside of your comfort zone and engage with others. Build or join a community of people who are working toward similar goals and allow them to be advocates and advisors for you.

Relationships are also helpful during the moments where time management may be a challenge. Find reliable people who can provide insight and information that will expedite your process. You may even consider sharing the load and delegating (or asking for help) certain

aspects of your process to others who may be able to work synergistically with you. It is never a weakness to acknowledge that we need help. In fact, a wise person knows their strengths and seeks to connect and engage with others whose strengths exist in other areas than theirs. The key in establishing and building these relationships is the reminder that you are not alone.

3. *Responsibility* – The understanding that you are responsible for the course your life takes is an empowering awareness. The ability to reshape and design your life lies within your hands, your thoughts, your decisions, and your actions. The best way to address the gnawing feeling of unfulfillment and general discomfort of the unlived life is to acknowledge that you have the power to change it and begin to act.

Once we start along this process, we will need to have systems of accountability. Most often, we easily fall into rote responses of procrastination and inactivity when we are the only person who knows what we are working toward. Whether it be a coach, a friend who believes in you and wants to see you succeed, or your spouse, it is critical to have someone to hold you accountable on the promises you make to yourself. Schedule time with that person to check-in and provide updates on your action plans. Allow that person to give you praise when you meet timelines and honest feedback when you don't meet them. Taking responsibility for your successful completion of your goals provides growth in one of the most powerful ways. It causes you to believe in yourself.

4. *Relentless Commitment* – Many people reflect on why the goal is so important to them. Even with the most valiant “why”, it does not always provide the fuel to move the questions of “how”. We know the endpoint and often are filled with enthusiasm until we encounter an

unexpected challenge and there may be times when we are not sure how to even start. Blending the relentless commitment with the passion of the “why” can be helpful in yielding results.

One of the most effective ways to activate relentless commitment is to begin creating systems. Systems eliminate the practice of having to think through the steps each time a process is engaged. For example, if it is your goal to complete an educational goal, you may consider allotting a certain time frame for studying and writing. During that timeframe, all distractions are removed and turned off. Inform family and friends of your goal and ask for their support during that timeframe by helping you stay focused.

Another benefit of systems is the list a series of actions that have to be completed for each portion of your process. This is helpful to guide you and serves as a checklist to ensure all critical steps are completed. Systems reduce feelings of being overwhelmed by placing each aspect in the appropriate sequence and category. Even more efficiencies can be achieved, in the cases where the series of actions can be automated. Often our commitment levels falter when we are not sure how to approach a task and when we gather more information, it seems intimidating. Preparing systems help you remain committed, especially when the unexpected challenges of life occur.

5. Rapid Response – Resilience requires us to remain aware of what is working for us and what is working against us. The tools of relationship and responsibility are helpful in maximizing this resource of rapid response. We must be willing to gather results and analyze them from an objective perspective. When the results do not represent what is necessary to get us to the expected endpoint, we must prepare to pivot.

In our world where there is constant change and what may have been a perfect solution two years ago, is obsolete today, it is important to be ready to pivot. When people think of the term pivot, often they think it means to drop, abandon the original idea and do something brand new. On the contrary. Pivoting still has the same endpoint. The mission is still the same. The means and the methods, however, is what demands the pivot. Think about the basketball player who is charging toward the basket to make the shot. There is constant opposition that tries to hinder the goal of making the shot. The player keeps one foot planted and shifts the approach and direction of movement. Sometimes the player can proceed forward with a minor shift in direction; other times, the player has to go backward to get a better view of the court and devise another approach strategy. Once the player pivots and sees a clear path, the approach toward making the shot continues.

This is true in our lives and requires a quick response time. Pivoting quickly requires an objective approach to the process. While we are working on personal and professional goals, we must remember that the goal itself does not define who we are. We are a compilation of so much more. The character that we develop and build during the process of completing the goals is much more of a statement of who we are, than the goal itself. Remaining objective allows us to look at each element of the goal as a part of a much bigger picture. We are not glued to the method, but we are willing to find sustainable ways to complete the goal.

Benefits of the R⁵ Process

Individually, each element of the R⁵ process provides an aspect of developing Resilience that are proven and time-tested. Combining these together creates a system that strengthens you to accomplish goals without yielding to the pressures of Resistance. One of the most powerful

benefits of this process is the preemptive and proactive approach. In the same way a great chef gathers all of the tools and ingredients needed to create a wonderful dish with ease, you have the elements necessary to build and bolster resilience. Taking the time to prepare allows you to step away from the emotions. At times, enthusiasm can be as blinding as the strongest of elixirs. Fear or rejection and anxiousness can be as debilitating as a millstone tied around your neck. Separating from the emotions creates the energy that moves you from motivation to willpower.

The next powerful benefit of the R⁵ process is that it creates collaboration. Many have heard the proverb that says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”. We are relational people and the power that exists in synergistic relationships is unmatched by any amount of individual effort. The truth is, we need each other in life. We need each other even more when we are working toward completing a life-changing goal.

The R⁵ process allows you to view the process of accomplishing your goal from a high vantage point. Being too close blurs the image and leaves room for blind spots and misinterpretations. Remaining capable of viewing the entire landscape lends endless advantages. All of these aspects prepare you to bounce back from the external and internal challenges that accompany growth and development. Resilience grants you the opportunity to see the finish line and reap the joys of being enduring through the process.

Resilience Leads to Endurance

Strengthening Resilience creates the force required to defeat Resistance and endure through completion of the goal. Endurance helps you understand that so much more is gained along the course of completing goals. While enduring, you learn about yourself. You learn that you have more creative ability than you imagined. You learned that you have tenacity to push

through the moments when it seems that progress is miles away. You learned that you have a team of people who care about you and are excited to see you advance along the way. You learned to trust your instincts and know that your judgement is sound. You learned to believe in yourself. You learned that success is possible for you.

Surprisingly enough, you find that endurance is a reward in itself. Yes, it will be great to publish that book, to finish that educational program, to get that promotion, or to lose the weight. All of that begins to shrink in comparison to the self-assured feelings you now have. You have gained the ability to last through the joys and pains; the challenges and the wins; the planned and expected obstacles. You have endured.

For many, this may be the first time after a series of starts and endless pauses. Allow yourself to appreciate who you have become by enduring. One of the best ways to celebrate this victory is to become a part of someone else's team of supporters. Share your compassionate insight and provide resources on the systems that worked for you. The reward of endurance yields the assurance that you can do it again and again.

The Power to Finish

The next time you begin the process of considering your next goal, whether it is an enormously intimidating goal or something that seem a lot less daunting begin with the R⁵ process in mind. Take a moment to assess just how large that elephant is and how many bites it may take.

Begin to prepare your system for success and gather a community to support your and provide accountability. The goal always is to complete what you start. The key is building Resilience to overpower Resistance and endure all the way to you have reached the finish.