DEVIANT THINKING PODCAST

Episode 16 - Being Resilient, Flexible, and Agile in Trying Times

Transcript

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Welcome back to The Deviant Thinking podcast. I'm your host, Jennifer Thompson today and always we'll explore career advice that breaks the rules. Today's podcast takes a little bit of a turn here. Today, we're in the midst of really a global pandemic that was unforeseen just a few weeks ago. And I would be remiss not to address this as part of our podcasts. So today, I promise you we will not spend hours talking about the pandemic, the CDC is your best source of news for all of that. But I do think there is something that we need to address in thinking about our careers and our work environment and how we move forward.

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For everyone things are really up in the air and we're being asked to do things in a very different way. You know, as this podcast is being recorded, The CDC has advised that we take eight weeks off from our normal lives and self isolate, change the ways that we work, the ways that we interact. And it really could mean long term implications for all of us, you know, the work environment and the economic environment is significantly different than it was a few weeks ago. You know, many of my podcasts have focused on the fabulous economy that we had going and the low unemployment rates, and now people are feeling much more unstable and much. You know, fear is fear is coming out. So I want to take some time today and help everyone get grounded. Get real about the situation and think about what they can do in their own careers, to help make a

difference in the world and also help stabilize your own personal situation. So that's what we'll be talking about today on the Deviant Thinking podcast. How to bring things together when there's chaos in the world.

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So where do we start when there feels like there's nothing stable around us? Well, I always say we have to start with ourselves and grounding things. I'm a big believer in acknowledgement of what's going on. Because until we can really grasp and acknowledge what's going on, we can't move forward. I often use a technique that was taught to me by one of my children's coaches, I have learned to take some time and acknowledge a frustration an anger, something that's upsetting you. It's okay to be mad if suddenly the job that you were in line for, and that promotion is being put on hold. It's okay to be mad that you lost your job last week, and you were planning to apply for a few new positions this week. And again, those things have been put on hold. Any of these things, they're really valid feelings and we all have them. You know, I'm frustrated myself, there's things I had planned to do that no longer in the cards and I'm gonna have to readjust. So it's okay to take that time and be frustrated. But, the technique that I was taught was while you allow yourself to be frustrated. also put a time limit on it. decide you're going to be mad for a day, decide you can be mad for 10 minutes, whatever it is, that helps you get over it. Take that time, get frustrated, be mad, pout, let the tears flow, whatever it is that you need to acknowledge the situation and acknowledge that maybe it sucks right now. Do that, but then figure out that time line and say, okay, when it when it hits this mark, I'm going to be done with it. And I'm going to move on to a more productive place.

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And that's what this episode is about is once you get yourself over it, what are some things that you can do? Well, in brainstorming for this episode, it really came down to three words. One is resilience. How do you become resilient in a situation like this? The second word is flexible. How are you flexible in the way that work will be going forward? And the third word is agile. How do you get yourself in shape so that you can respond to the changes that may or may not be permanent in our work environment going forward? So let's break that down a bit. What does it look like to be resilient in your career, how do you set yourself up for success when things go haywire? to truly be resilient, we need to have a great mindset. So I've looked to the school of positive psychology to see what adjustments Do we have to make in our own mindset to be resilient? Well, the first thing that we need to look at is how personal do we take this situation? And do we internalize it and make it about us? That doesn't help with resiliency. We need to understand that sometimes bad things happen. And they're not happening to us, they're happening around us. So instead of internalizing and making it about you, it's better to be able to say that yes, this circumstance happened, but it's definitely not your fault. So it helps you to

step back and see things from a little bit different perspective.

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The second component of resiliency is again, from a mindset standpoint, is this something that is pervasive or something that's temporary. And I very much would like to believe that this situation with the corona virus and all of the craziness that it's causing, is temporary. And it's not, again, something that we've done. It's something that's out there, it is a situation that is absolutely going to impact us, and it's going to cause changes. But we will come to a new normal at some point. And we can have that mindset out there that, hey, this is gonna be alright, we're going to figure out a way to deal with it.

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Which takes us to our third point of what's the permanence level of it? And again, I believe that we're very adaptable and very resilient as human beings. So while this is definitely an important thing right now, and it is definitely disruptive, we'll figure out that new normal and allow ourselves to be resilient and figure out how we can kind of overcome any of the situations that are out there. So that's really looking at the resiliency side. And resiliency really does reside in your mind set.

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The next component of how to really deal with these things is flexibility, and agility. These two sound really similar, but I do see a distinct difference. For flexibility. It's all about flexing, going with what's there again, maybe the way that we worked looks different this week than it did last week. But it doesn't mean it's bad. How can we be flexible in the way that we approach things? How can we step back with our own mindset and say, Hmm, yes, I've always done it this way. Yes, I'm comfortable doing it this way. But what good can come out of this? You know, one thing that I see is that some of the things that maybe we've been trying to do in this world and gain some flexibility on ways of teaching, right our school systems are now disrupted. So teachers are going to have to find a new way to deliver material to students. They have to be flexible in the way that they're working. Their old way of sitting in a classroom, face to face isn't going to work. So it's going to force them to try new things, and our work environment. Again, if we're used to sitting around a conference table with people to make decisions, suddenly we are going to have to be more flexible and figure out new ways of working. Maybe it's we up our usage of tools like Slack and Asana so that we can communicate and keep up with each other in new and different ways. Maybe we do more video conference calls. What's the impact on our business? And is there an opportunity here with this flexibility to really, actually elevate our businesses and become even more efficient and better at what we

do? So that's flexibility.

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And then the third thing, agility, how do we get even stronger, even better? So what are the things we need to learn as we go through this process? And I think this is a huge positive opportunity for us as we go into this time of self isolation and separation. It is opening up all kinds of time for us, right? I live here in the south, it's the basketball belt. And I know my husband's sad, my family is sad because March Madness has been canceled. And I also know that that now adds hours and hours and hours a week back into their schedule that they would have been watching TV, that they can use to sharpen their skills. Similarly with our kids and all of the activities that they do, you know, again, we're going to be forced to sit home and not be as busy as we are. So what are the things that we can do to sharpen our skills, sharpen our abilities, so that as we go back to our old way of doing things, when hopefully, all of this settles down a little bit more, that maybe we're better than we were before. I'm a big proponent of planning in the sense, we've got eight weeks that are being recommended currently by the CDC that we do self isolation. That seems like an amazing opportunity to, again, sharpen our skills. So what is it that you're going to do? So that you can be better on the backside of this? What skills do you want to learn? I think it's that perfect time to decide, what are those things that you've been saying, Oh, I'd love to do this, but I just never have the time for it. And it can be anything that can help enhance who you are as a human being from cleaning out your closet. Oh, how often do we say I wish my life wasn't so cluttered. And I wish I didn't have this to think of all the time but I don't have time to clean out my closet. Now's the time folks. Get in there. Clean out that closet. Maybe it's I wish I had time to read more, but I never have time to read, again, great opportunity. Or maybe I've been wanting to take a course on project management, and I haven't had time to do that. Now might be the perfect time to do that. There's great opportunities for learning that are out there. That don't mean you have to meet face to face. Everything from if you want to learn some new technologies that might be needed as we move forward using video conferencing or things like Slack and Asana, for communications, if you've not done that before, there's great YouTube videos out there that teach you the basics of using this. All of those programs also have great I'd say online learning opportunities right within their own sites, so that you can increase your ability to use those programs. If it's bigger picture than that it's more than just learning a technology say, data science is a big component that's kind of coming up more and more in many careers. How do you analyze the amount of data that we have in the world? Well, both edX and Coursera are offering courses on looking at big data and how to analyze things. Maybe you take a course in this. Again, it really depends on you and what you've been wanting to do. But there are some great opportunities out there for you to become more agile, expand what you know, and what you can contribute. And we can get rid of the excuse of time because that's being forced on us. It's being forced on us to take some time and look to reset.

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I mean, one of my favorite places, of course to look at is as things shift, and our way of working shifts. There may be some huge opportunities in the world. workforce, there may be new jobs that open up that we weren't aware of. So is your resume up to date? That is something that so many people always say, oh, I'll get to it when I have the time for it. So it might be the perfect time to take stock of your skill set. See what it is that that you've done in the past few years. Make sure you get that resume up today. Also notice, hey, if I want to move my career forward, when things settle down, what skill sets Do I need to have so that I can move forward? So again, building that agility.

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So while there's madness in the world, and the corona virus is a very real threat, I don't want to diminish that in any way and I'm absolutely not an expert. Definitely be checking and following what the CDC is suggesting, as activities, but do know that just because all of that craziness is going on. It doesn't mean that we as individuals have to shut down. There are plenty of things we can do to be productive during this timeframe.

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And I hope today's podcast helped you to see that helped you to learn that, yes, we have to work on building that resiliency, making sure that we're not personalizing this, that we're not getting ourselves down blaming ourselves that, you know, maybe we should have been more prepared or maybe something like that. I'm really understanding that it's beyond ourselves, that this is a temporary situation, that it is something that we will get over we will learn from we will do things in a different way going forward. And that things will finally settle down and that that permanence that we might feel like right now that oh my goodness, how bad is this going to be? How long is it going to go on? We're very adaptable as human beings in General and we are very resilient and knowing that we're going to figure this out, it might take a little bit of time. But if we can set our own mindset and allow ourselves to see opportunity, even in the craziness, we'll do a lot better than again, flexibility.

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Let it let's go with the flow. Let's see things in a different way. Let's flex and learn new ways of doing things. It really could help us out in the future. And then try to become agile, build those muscles build those skill sets you've been wanting to work on for a long time. And it can be really a time of personal growth and allowing you to have the time

that you may not have had in the past.

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So that wraps up today's podcast. I will be sure to add the links to some of the resources discussed in this episode in the show notes. I hope you enjoyed Today's episode, and I want everyone to stay safe. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean the world to me if you'd write us a quick review over on iTunes, it really does help other people understand what this podcast is about and hopefully encourage them to listen as well. Until next time again, please stay safe and be deviant.