Embrace A Reset to Resilience

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> **People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time.**

C.S. Lewis
"The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe"

This line from the classic children's book, "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," has come to represent everything I know about life and how I now approach what it means to be a resilient human being. In the story, the main characters discover the entrance to another world through the back of a wardrobe. In that world, they become part of an epic story between good vs. evil. As they enter the adventure, they must become fully themselves, the princes and princesses, king and queen that they were always meant to be. Along the way they encounter amazing things and heartbreaking things. And just like all good stories, in the end, in order for good to prevail, a hero must fall. In that falling is the tension between the good and terrible.

It may seem that I am being a bit dramatic as I make the jump from Narnia to our time together at the Uncharted Conference. After all, aren't we all just a bunch of veterinary professionals trying to find a way to be successful in our jobs on the daily? You might be thinking to yourself, "Betsy has lost her mind a little, I think. She is talking about epic adventures and princesses and princes and fallen heroes. What could this possibly have to do with embracing a reset to resilience?" But, I believe that embedded within the epic adventure upon which Edward and Lucy have embarked, if we look hard enough and allow ourselves the opportunity to be creative, we can see a glimpse of our own stories.

Oxford defines resilience as 1. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness, and 2. the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity. When I think about resilience, I often combine these two definitions by considering not only our ability to bounce back after having had to face adversity but also how effectively we can deform our normal shape in the middle of said adversity without losing our hope and joy.

I recently listened to a message about joy in the midst of hard things and I love this quote by the speaker. He said, "Joy is the capacity for life as it actually happens. Joy is not happiness." As high performing individuals, we have a tendency to think things like, "When I am through with vet school, then I will be content," or "Once I am though this challenge or that challenge, then I will be happy." But my experience, as well as lots and lots of research, tell us a different story. Resilience doesn't come from if this, "...then I'll be joyful." Rather, resilience is born from utilizing very specific skill sets and tools that allow us to acknowledge the difficult and appreciate and honor the beauty ***in the midst of*** our challenges, ***in the midst of*** our lives. Or, as the speaker said, "as life actually happens."

At the core of resetting to resilience, though, is understanding who we are, what our true identity is and how that identity is meant to change the world for the positive. “Oh no,” you’re thinking. “There she goes again, being all dramatic talking about changing the world.” Yes, this time I will fully own the drama because I believe it is THAT important. We will not ever truly find joy or contentment if we don’t know who we are. It is critical to becoming a resilient person. Why? Because you will have situations in your life that strip everything away, absolutely everything. If you do not know who you are, what your values are, what your world view is, where your value as a person comes from, you will have a more difficult time bouncing back. However, if you know who you are, you can more easily live in the tension between the good and the terrible and choose to focus on the good.

Embracing a reset to resilience is all about becoming aware that life is hard and unfair and often involves incredible struggle and suffering. But, in the midst of heartache and pain, challenge and adversity, unbelievable beauty and joy also exist. We just need to know how to look for them. And when we can do that, when we know how to successfully navigate the tension between the good and the terrible, we can appreciate all that both have to offer.

Notes, Quotes, Reflections & Revisions

These are the things you need to remember