

International Women's day will be celebrated on March 8 with the theme of 'Make it Happen.'

How resilient we are - our ability to bounce back, have courage, foster creativity and build connection has a direct impact on our level of performance and reaching our potential.

At the Resilience Institute we believe we have a powerful angle to explore. As part of our analysis of 16,261 Resilience Diagnostic Assessments from our clients we uncovered:

1. Disturbing differences in resilience between women and men that are perhaps hindering women from 'making it happen'
2. The priorities for development if women want to increase their resilience.

So what is stopping women from making it happen? The results from analysing our client's resilience assessments gives us a pretty clear answer: "Women experience significantly more "suffering" than men." Could it be that these resilience liabilities hold women back?

From the full sample, women score significantly worse than men in the resilience categories of depression, distress and confused. Specifically when looking at individual factors of resilience, women score significantly worse (answer "often" or "consistently") on the following:

Factor	Female score	Male score	Difference
Distress symptoms	32.2%	15.7%	205%
Self doubt	11%	6.3%	175%
Confusion	15%	8.9%	169%
Comfort eating	30.2%	21.5%	140%
Depression	4.3%	3.1%	139%

We know that all five of these liability factors can compound to reduce motivation and confidence and inhibit the ability to bounce back and thrive.

On the positive side women are less moody, greater social contributors, better tuned to emotions of others, and more positive.

Evidence shows resilience is learnable

Women are very capable of improving the situation. The big changes women make during our training as measured by pre and post assessments are as follows on a five-point scale:

- 1 - Never
- 2 - Rarely
- 3 - Sometimes
- 4 - Often
- 5 - Consistently

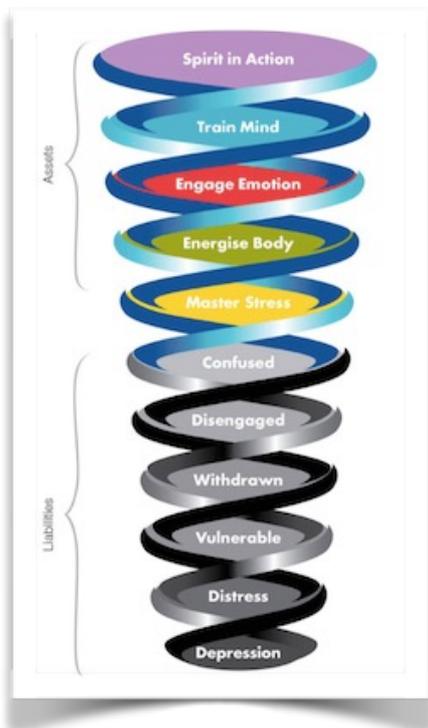
Resilience factor	Female	Male
Relaxation: 10 minute/day	+0.37	+0.21
Rumination: active mind at night	+0.36	+0.31
Annual health risk assessment	+0.35	+0.35
Deep sleep of 7 hours	+0.33	+0.21
Exercise five days a week	+0.33	+0.44
Excessive hours/working late	-0.33	-0.30
Worry about future	-0.28	-0.25
Self-doubt/low self confidence	-0.26	-0.19
Exhaustion/fatigue at end of day	-0.24	-0.19

Our hypothesis is that regardless of the reasons and justifications, women front up differently to men and it interferes with their potential to “make it happen”. Women experience themselves differently. Distress, self-doubt and confusion are significantly more prevalent amongst other factors. Combined, these factors are getting in the way of the impact women can have.

Liberating the impact women can have

We know that these resilience factors can be brought into our awareness and that we can all improve these aspects of our being. We recommend that women who want to make it happen in their lives take action:

1. Understand which factors of resilience you are strong and weak in (refer to Resilience Model below)
2. Specifically target your development to reduce liability factors (assets are fine)
3. Measure the impact and continue the journey



Clearly, the data does not speak for all women but it clearly defines opportunities to stimulate leadership and professional success.

We analysed the impact of resilience training for women based on the impact each factor has on higher levels of resilience. There was a clear priority list for women to work on (the factors that will help make it happen). Men have a different priority for their self-development:

Resilience factors for women	Resilience factors for men
1. Worry	1. Fitness
2. Rumination	2. Worry
3. Self doubt	3. Rumination
4. Fitness	4. Self doubt
5. Distress	5. Exhaustion
6. Sleep	6. Insomnia
7. Exhaustion	7. Distress
8. Relaxation	8. Physical insight
9. Physical insight	9. Quick calming
10. Impulsivity/comfort eating	10. Positivity

Women trump men in building resilience

In conclusion, if women want to make it happen, there is a clear priority for self-development. Perhaps resilience training should be specifically targeted to the needs of women. Thinking skills, self-confidence, stress mastery and sleep are critical elements we recommend for women to enhance their resilience and be successful.

Women may be more challenged on some factors underpinning resilience but our data shows clearly that women respond very positively to resilience training. In fact, women are getting better results than men.

Make it happen.

Useful links:

[Measure your resilience factors - Resilience Diagnostic](#)

[Books on resilience](#)

[Resilience Training](#)