



**World Changers podcast**  
**Ep2. Here we go again. Resilience 2.0**

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 00:08](#)

Welcome to World changes – the podcast exploring the trends make an enduring mark on our world of work, and how business leaders HR teams and internal communicators can stay one step ahead. It's time to dig deep – again. With a long and ugly recession predicted for 2023, employers and employees are going to have to tap into new wells of strength to survive and thrive.

In many cases that strength is depleted from a chaos and uncertainty of the last three years. So, now's the time to shore up our internal defences and come together as teammates to weather this latest storm.

So what do we actually mean by resilience? It sits in the business buzzword camp – along with wellness – and yet its formal definition is the ability to recognise adversity and access existing protective factors to overcome a difficult situation. What that really means is our previous experiences will affect how we respond to new challenges. In other words, what doesn't kill us makes us stronger.

Now, that may be an official definition, but we wanted to know what does resilience mean in organisations across different industries?

[Paul Diggins – 01:12](#)

Hi, I'm Paul Diggins, the head of internal communications at Santander UK.

Resilience in our organisation, particularly in relation to my team is about how we look after each other through the peaks and troughs of an inevitable comms cycle. Particularly when you have change programmes or other activities, some people will obviously be under more pressure than others. And so actually, the way we try and manage the resilience across the team is to allow people to deal with those peaks and troughs in a way that suits them best. So if they need to take their foot off the gas a bit, we can create the space for them to do that. But obviously, if they're under pressure, we rally around to help them and support them, to get them through the peak of that sort of activity.

[Speaker 3 – 01:54](#)

I work for a luxury retailer, and resilience in our organisation was living through last year's recruitment and retention crisis. We had to do this in a number of ways: be incredibly fleet of foot; think about employment strategy; think about channels such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor, careers website; the way we conducted interviews; how we attracted people towards the brand. It was a massive piece, and I think there was incredible amount of learning in that.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 02:20](#)

Resilience is about being flexible in the face of challenges. We asked some of the team, when have you had to bend and not break? And who helped you through?

Alastair Atkinson – 02:29

I'm Alastair, and I'm director of consultancy at scarlettabbott.

When Kate, our marketing manager, asked me to record this piece about resilience, she posed the question, when have I had to bend and not break? I reflected on it. And it felt disingenuous to start from that premise. Because the people who know me best know that there have been a couple of times over the years, when I have broken. Things have got a bit much, and I've ended up in a pickle mentally. So to me, resilience means a few things. Firstly, it means accepting that there have been those occasions when I've broken down. I'm not proud of it. And I certainly don't wear it as a badge of honour. But I've tried to learn not to carry it around as a source of shame.

Secondly, resilience means using the tough times as a learning experience to understand myself better and be better prepared to cope with tough times in the future. For me, that means being more honest with my friends and my family about how I'm feeling, reaching out for professional help, incorporating meditation into my day and making time for physical exercise.

Thirdly, resilience means giving myself a bit of credit for getting up again when I've fallen down.

None of this is to say I don't value toughness. I come from a family of pretty tough people who place a lot of stock in grit and determination. And those attributes are still ones that I respect, admire and aspire to. But as I've got older, I've also recognised the part that compassion – for others and for oneself – can play in resilience. The importance of keeping a sense of perspective, and the benefits of taking joy in other people's successes, as well as your own.

Lucy Clapham – 04:05

Hello, I'm Lucy Clapham, and I'm a senior writer at scarlettabbott.

The one time I can think that I've had to be resilient and flexible in the face of challenge may sound like an obvious one, but it was certainly the first lockdown.

It was a totally new environment that we were thrust into working from home. It's something I'd never done before and I had to get used to it very quickly. It was tough, because my job at the time, it took us down to four days – four-day weeks – but the workload didn't really match that so it was a difficult time.

But the one thing that got me through was definitely my colleagues. Knowing they're in the same position and facing the same difficulties we, sort of, helped each other. And, you know, we eventually did get through it and came out the other side like everyone else did. And I think that showed me just how important is to have a strong culture, a strong work culture, and to have strong team bonds with the people that you work with.

Richard Bibby – 04:56

Hi, I'm Richard Bibby, and I'm the print and procurement manager at scarlettabbott.

My job is about being resilient, really. Every job that I do has got a degree of resilience in it because things change all the time. And sometimes you have to be resilient in the fact that you need to stick to your guns and stick to the right way to do things. And sometimes I get a little bit of an impostor syndrome in the fact that I've done this so long that – and had so much experience in various things – that I tend not to get fazed by it. And sometimes I kind of, you know, can beat myself up by the fact that I don't, and I'm just thinking, like, you

know, this is really heavy stuff, why don't, I almost like do it without thinking. Because I've done it so often.

And sometimes when something will come out of left field, anybody's immediate reaction would be like, oh dear, what am I going to do? And it's like, but I don't – try not to let people kind of show that. And it's almost like, if I'm in the position of, you know, being under pressure, that if I show sort of signs of stress, then I think that kind of passes down the chain, if you know what I mean.

So I try and be the calming influence, really. It's probably an admission of guilt in some ways. But sometimes I'll do something completely different. When somebody comes in, I like just go on the internet for 5-10 minutes, and just clear my head. Do a bit of research and maybe look at BBC News or LinkedIn or something. And then that sort of 5-10 minutes can sometimes buy your time to sort of process what's gone on, and not help you do a knee jerk reaction to something.

So maybe I shouldn't be admitting that, really. But it's just my way of coping with it. And it's like, you know, sometimes that 5-10 minutes can make – make a difference, while you get your head around what's needed. The last thing you want to do is go off and like panic, everybody. So if you can take that time out just to – just to get your own head around it, and then you can help others do the same.

[Jo Stark – 06:54](#)

Hi, my name is Jo Stark, and I'm a senior consultant at scarlettabbott.

I think, for me, resilience is about, it's not just about surviving. It's about being able to grow once you've had an experience. And I think for me, in my working career, I've had, you know, there was one moment in time where I found it was, you know, I was having difficulties, you know, there was a lot going on, and it was quite a stressful point in time. And what I found really helpful was to talk to my manager.

So to have a really, really supportive manager there, who I could just talk to, and there was no judgement there. And between us, we were able to work out the best way forward. And I think that then helped me become a little bit more bendy and stretchy. So actually, when this happened again, I was able to think, right, okay, that's what I learned before. And actually, I know how to cope with it now. And so you become more resilient, so the more and more times those things happen to you a case of actually we get so much better. It's easier to deal with.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 08:10](#)

Jo made such a good point about the importance of managers – something that our cultural anthropologist Dr Alex Gapud 100 per cent agrees with.

[Dr Alex Gapud – 08:18](#)

Although individual resilience is important, it has its limits. Even the strongest can break under enough pressure. A supportive manager is therefore vital to alleviate some of that pressure. So managers that are aware, up to date and supportive when they see their people undergoing sustained pressure and workloads can make all the difference between whether people on their team bend or break.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 08:44](#)

When it comes to resilience you don't get more steadfast and senior project manager Lucy Stead.

With a million client projects and all of them urgent, Lucy is the scarlettabbott swan. And she's just been promoted in recognition of her mammoth multitasking. Congrats on the promotion, Lucy! Well done!

[Lucy Stead – 08:59](#)

Oh, thank you!

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 09:02](#)

I imagine turning that dream into reality has involved an awful lot of hard work and maybe even threats to your own resilience along the way. So do tell me a little bit about that as well as your world, like, what does being a project manager really look like?

[Lucy Stead – 09:14](#)

Yeah of course. So yeah, thank you. It's definitely been a lot of hard work, I suppose, and there have been some setbacks along the way to get where I am. But I'm really pleased with where I am today.

I've been project managing at scarlettabbott for the last kind of two and a half years. And sort of prior to this I've always project managed within the kind of creative agency space. I was actually made redundant a few years ago kind of following the pandemic slowdown, so that was obviously a bit of a setback. And searching for a new role in that kind of job market wasn't easy at the time, but I reached out to the team at scarlettabbott and never looked back, really. It's, yeah, it's been all good from there.

I think, as a project manager, it can be kind of quite tough at times. But personally, for me, it's quite a rewarding role because you're sort of involved in every stage of the projects, which I think is quite special, you see it from the beginning to the end.

So, what does my role look like, at scarlettabbott? I suppose, as a project manager, you're kind of there to bring a bit of structure to the delivery of the work and planning. But I think you're also there to kind of bring the team members together and make sure that everyone has the right things that they need to do in order to succeed. So that could be the right brief, it could be kind of the right information from client or it could just be understanding of what time they need to do that – do their, kind of, best work.

I also think as a project manager, you're kind of often the first one to spot some of those potential issues. And that problem solving element isn't for everyone, but it's something that really appeals to me as part of the role. I think it's interesting having to kind of balance being in the moment and delivering with maybe multiple requests that are kind of coming from lots of different places, but also having that bigger picture view. So not just thinking in the moment, thinking about what's coming up later in the week or in the month, and how do we plan for that? So, there's a lot going on, I guess. And that's why I love it.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 11:08](#)

It's funny, isn't it? I often find project managers are really, really humble people, because they're, they're there to kind of make sure that other people can do their very best work. I always think it's like they have to be the smoother-over but nobody ever really thinks about how bloody hard their job is actually.

So, like I said in the intro, I do think you're one of scarlettabbott's swans, and you definitely make space for everybody. And, actually thinking about, you know, redundancy – that's, that's a really tricky place to be in and I'm so glad you're part of the team.

Lucy Stead – 11:42

Yeah, I think I often find with, just your point about your project managers kind of being there to, I guess we ... On a project, I can see quite clearly where everyone's role fits in. So where the content team will work and where the studio, the creatives, kind of, the design or video will be and I bring a certain level, I guess, of expertise to my role in what I do. But it's really about making sure that everyone has what they need and feels comfortable and that they understand, I suppose what they're being asked to do. And I think, although, yeah, we're here to do timelines and budgeting and estimating, there's also that piece of we're the member in the team that will – that will kind of have that awareness, I guess, of all the different things that are happening and making sure that everyone is feeling good about what they're doing.

Elle Bradley-Cox – 12:29

Nice! So, it does sound like it needs a fair amount of resilience, right, in that job. And how do you be the rubber ball and bounce back and help lift everyone's spirits? Even if there is a setback?

Lucy Stead – 12:40

Yeah, so I've been thinking about this a lot, because I feel like resilience is a kind of word that – it's quite a tricky one, I guess. Because I don't think necessarily, there's like, maybe there's no kind of end goal, or like, I think it's about learning and building that resilience over time and dealing with setbacks. And it might be a different way that you approach those things each time because it's a unique situation.

So I think it's about taking those, I guess, sort of small steps and being able to acknowledge them, I guess, and feel as though you can feel that, again, a range of emotions potentially, in dealing with that setback, and then thinking about the steps that you can take to manage that situation.

So for me, I think it's really – and again, it's testament to the colleagues that we have at scarlettabbott – I think I find it really helpful to reach out to colleagues. So, there's obviously lots of people that I feel comfortable speaking to. There's a few key people in my team, obviously, from the work that I do that I will probably go to if I feel there's a setback, and I just, I'd like another opinion, or I'd like to speak to someone about it, just to make sure that it's not just me.

In my head, almost putting my head down and feeling like, well, I'll be seen as like, I'm not doing a particularly good job if I don't just you know, put my head down and get on with it. And I think sometimes resilience, maybe can be seen in a slightly wrong way. And that is someone who's just really tough and who will just carry on no matter what and that I don't think is particularly sustainable. I think that's where it can be quite risky and can potentially lead to burnout.

So I think, for me, it's kind of reaching out to the team. And being honest about again, I think I'm fortunate I've got a really lovely team of colleagues around me. That, for example, yesterday, I had a really horrible night's sleep, came into work, I didn't really feel 100 per cent. So that was almost a bit of a setback for me, like a personal setback for my day. And I think I could've obviously not said anything if that's how I chose to deal with it and just cracked on, but I thought actually I'd rather let the team know that that's how I'm feeling. And that, you know, I might need to lean on them a little bit more because actually, I'm just

not, I'm not quite 100 per cent myself today and that's actually what ended up happening. The team kind of came together and helped me through. So I think that's kind of a nice example of where I think I, the space that I like to, I guess, if there is a setback where I will turn to.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 15:03](#)

Nice. And I think you're right. I think it's very easy to think of resilience as a solo thing, and you've got to kind of do it all yourself. And I just think that can lead to spiralling because, and overthinking, because you can just get into, if you don't test your opinions out with someone else, you're probably very likely to go down a wrong path, really quite far, when you could have corrected it much earlier if you'd had – I don't know. I don't know if bravery is the right word, but had the courage to speak up and, and shout out. And I guess that's where, like, psychological safe environments at work come into play, right?

[Lucy Stead – 15:40](#)

Yeah. I think, I suppose, outside of work – because I was also thinking about it from a personal – yeah. Because resilience is I think important – or building resilience is important in work – but then also in my own personal life and thinking about how I would deal with things and I think for me, like there's taking time outside and time away from being in this little home office or in the office in York and working away at my laptop. I think that's kind of where I draw energy or kind of charge my battery, I suppose, is spending time outside. And I think there's some kind of learnings that I take from those experiences, like, I went to Nepal last year, and did a trek up at high altitudes. And it was an absolutely amazing experience, but again, it's one of those where, actually, in the moment, I've chosen to do it. I've chose to be there and pay all that money and go across the world to do that, but there were times that were really tough.

And it was bringing that kind of thought process, I suppose, of actually, if I break this day up into sort of small, manageable steps – or I remind myself of, you know, yesterday was really tough, but I managed it and kept going. And I think that's, again, learnings from like that side of things of how I draw my strength from these activities up is something that I think builds resilience as a whole and helps me in my role.

Because it is quite high paced, and can be high stress at times, but knowing that I have that space outside where I can go and draw my energy again so I can come back to work fully kind of ready to tackle the day does really help.

And I think that's obviously not for everyone, because everyone finds joy in different places and re-energises themselves in different ways. But I think if you can find something that does that for you, that's really special and you should keep that in mind, again, when you're struggling, maybe in a situation.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 17:31](#)

I love that you draw your energy from nature. So, so nice. It's really, really important. And the bite-sized chunk things really interesting. Because, you know, if I sat down and thought, right, well, I've got, I've got a book to write, you know, I would just never get started. Whereas if I think, you know, I've got an article to write today or you know, I've got 1000 words to get out, slightly more manageable than like 90,000 words of a book. And it's just – you can overwhelm yourself really easily, can't you?

So, speaking of other practicalities, I guess, is there anything that you think that communicators or HR people listening into this podcast, might be able to do any tactics to help their people build resilience?

[Lucy Stead – 18:15](#)

Yeah, so I suppose from my experience, and thinking about the team and the colleagues support that I get, I think, I feel as though I can reach out to people because that sort of space and environment has been built through the culture of scarlettabbott. And through the ways that we interact with each other as teammates. So I think if you can try and create those spaces or environments where people feel comfortable to have conversations and reach out, I think that's only going to be a positive thing.

And then I think the other side of it is again, for me, I like to see that there's an acknowledgment of not everything has to be positive, you can sometimes feel a bit down or you maybe feel not 100 per cent. But if you feel like you're working in a space where it's okay to say that, then that's brilliant, Because it's not saying that every day is going to be like that, but actually, if today feels a little bit rough then and you feel comfortable telling people then that can only help, I think.

So I think that's potentially something that might be really helpful. Also, I wonder about, you know, encouraging people to find that thing that brings them strength or that charges their battery. Because there could be some really nice stories to tell there. So there might be some real nice positives and some of that nice storytelling that could come out of people going and doing things that help them.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 19:35](#)

Love that! Maybe there's a series like what fills my cup?

[Lucy Stead – 19:38](#)

Yes, exactly. It would be lovely.

But I guess ultimately, I suppose it is quite tough at the moment. And, you know, everyone's hopefully pulling in the same direction and is there to support each other, so it's that empathy kind of peace of being, you know.

It all comes back to, I suppose creating that kind of environment where people feel like they don't just have to tackle things on their own and get their head down and almost have that. Because I think there's that kind of almost fake resilience where you might be outwardly showing that you're really tough, and you don't want anyone to think that anything at all, it's wrong, and you're just going to keep going. But actually, that's where it's a bit of maybe a dangerous space. So if people are aware that, you know, you don't always have to, you don't have to feel like that. There's no expectation that you'll be top of your game every single day and absolutely smashing it, then I think it creates, yes, a space where people can, can build the resilience truthfully, and to themselves.

[Elle Bradley-Cox – 20:36](#)

Yeah, and I like your idea of bringing in the specialists. Each person with their expertise, you know, convening the power of your team. Like that definitely seems to be what your job is about, and actually probably how you get the best work done, right, is using the best brains and just making sure that you've supplied them with the best information so that you can do the best project.



Lucy Stead – 20:56

Yes, yeah, definitely.

Elle Bradley-Cox – 20:58

Really nice. Well, Lucy, thank you so much for your time and your expertise. Love talking to you! Take care of you!

Lucy Stead – 21:04

You're very welcome. Thank you for having me.

Elle Bradley-Cox – 21:05

Cheers! Bye!

Elle Bradley-Cox – 21:12

If you want to explore resilience 2.0 a little more, do join us later this month for our webinar, where you can put your questions to our expert panel. We'll share the details in the show notes and on our social channels.

Want to continue the conversation in the meantime? Do come and chat to us over on Twitter @scarlettabbott or drop us an email at [hello@scarlettabbott.co.uk](mailto:hello@scarlettabbott.co.uk). We'll see you next time for another dive into World Changers 2023.

Elle Bradley-Cox – 21:36

World Changes as a podcast by employee engagement consultancy scarlettabbott hosted by Elle Bradley-Cox. Find out more at [scarlettabbott.co.uk](https://scarlettabbott.co.uk).