

LEARNED RESILIENCE

NEWSLETTER ∞ JULY 2020

Volume 1/Number 5

MISSION

Learned resilience focuses on building your adaptive capacity by developing strategies for life's changing seas. Our goal is to coach you through rough waters by building your confidence to face inevitable changes and transitions in your life. Through coaching and workshops, you will develop your inner resources and a network of support that will guide you through your journey.



Welcome to the July Newsletter devoted to all things about *learned resilience*! This month we focus on the theme of being *independent together*.¹

Each month, a new issue will arrive on your virtual doorstep packed with news and ideas to help you feel more confident as you navigate the uncharted waters of our world today. As you can surmise from the photo above, there is little in life that is a clear, straight course to happiness and success. There is turbulence in those waters. Rapidly changing events and emotions can seem overwhelming at times. Let's develop your personal plan and find the tools that help you overcome the obstacles that inevitably occur along your journey. You can find calm amidst the calamity.

¹ Independent together - a term used by the elf Hermey, aspiring dentist, in Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer (Rankin & Bass, 1964)



Inspiration for July

July is a celebratory month known for freedom and independence. Traditionally, it is a noisy month filled with the sounds of summer. Like this exuberant yet silent blossom that looks like the fireworks we are used to seeing and hearing on the 4th, this year our celebrations may be quieter than usual. This month presents us with an opportunity to listen to our world mindfully instead of adding to the cacophony. Before we focus on the joys of listening, take a moment to enjoy the epic noise of a flash-mob playing Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. Listen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NJRCCgK_AM

JULY'S POEM

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force.

The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward.

When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.

∞ Karl A. Menniger

Reflection: Menniger's (1893-1990) observation that those who listen more to others than talking themselves are naturally attractive is borne out every day in interpersonal relationships. Advice to introverts and socially shy to negotiate dreaded social events entails asking good questions and then listening carefully to follow-up. It is the key to surviving "small talk" by making it meaningful for all parties. Helping others blossom, we come into full bloom ourselves.

July's Resilience Practice

Seven Levels of Listening for Resilience

July is a month for commemorating the Declaration of Independence; yet, the words of the United States Constitution, "We, the People..." evoke E Pluribus Unum - "Out of many, one." Despite recent emphasis on individual rights, we truly are independent together. We have proven we are resilient when we join forces because a divided house falls. Two world wars are exemplars of unity, as have been our responses to numerous natural disasters. As in the past, we must unify against spreading the pandemic while driving for constructive social change. How do we make a "more perfect union?" Listening mindfully is a step toward mutual understanding that we need now.

"You don't listen to me!" How many times have we heard or uttered these words? It is a universal cry by those who want to *be heard*. Yet, what if we really need to say these words to ourselves? Not only do we often neglect to mindfully listen to others, but we overlook or minimize the messages our own bodies tell us. Our "busyness" shuts down the voices that say, "slow down, pay attention, something is out of balance." Listening is a skill we must master for our own well-being as well as the well-being of others and our world. Perhaps at no other time in our lifetimes, with a confluence of pandemic and protests for social justice, have conditions called for heightened listening - listening for precaution and listening for progress. This month, we will focus on listening for resilience beyond reaction and response.

Mindful listening is internally and externally dynamic and symbiotic. As we listen to our bodies and minds, our presence functions in relation to others and our environment. In practice, we listen through different filters (e.g. for self-interest, mutual interest, common interest, public interest) and levels (e.g. physical, relational, mental, emotional, spiritual) primarily to get our needs met. How can we listen well to create consciousness that enables us to make decisions in the best interests of our communities and ourselves? We can start by understanding seven levels of listening relative to both. In the following table (Table 1), you will see questions to ask yourself and others (one-on-one and in groups) that can enhance your listening and move your conversation to a deeper understanding.

Seven Levels of Listening for Resilience

Listen for Needs at this Level	Ask Yourself...	Ask Others/Environment...
Physical Grounding	What do I fear? What needs am I ignoring? How can I respond rather than react?	What do we resist? What issues are we undervaluing? How can we learn more about unknowns to accept change?
Generative Force	What are my boundaries? How do I design conditions for creativity?	What is our capacity for transformation? How are our attachments blocking us?
Power & Identity	Do I manage my energy in alignment with my values? Do I act with integrity?	Do we fulfill our mission according to our values and operating principles? Do we act with integrity?
Emotional/Relational Life	What resonates with my heart and mind? How do I nourish my soul?	How do we act in care and consideration? What cultivates the essence of our culture and its social contract?
Voice/Presence	Why do I remain silent? How can I be better heard? How do I express myself authentically?	What does silence tell us? How do we make decisions to build trust and communicate them effectively for consensus?
Vision/Purpose	What do I need to clarify and do to manifest my vision? Am I indulging in magical thinking? What lessons learned apply going forward?	What are the resources and actions needed to reach our objectives? What is blinding us to truth? How tethered are we to past processes that make us inflexible and fragile?
Spiritual Balance	What is my legacy? Do I know when to keep an open mind and when to be skeptical?	What is our legacy? Where are we too rigid or lax in our analysis of problems? Are we asking good questions?

Table 1. Seven Levels of Listening, Learned Resilience, 2020

Take some time for yourself this holiday to consider how these questions can help you improve your well-being as well as your relationships with others and in groups. Keep them in mind whenever conflict arises. Press them into service to overcome hurdles whenever you seem to be blocked or relationships seem stymied.

These questions are the basis for much more discussion and explanation. Be sure to check out the blog for future postings that will elaborate on the seven levels in a series of reflections. In the meantime, you might enjoy reading Jillian Pransky's book, [*Deep Listening*](#) (2017). Don't forget to journal your journey!

NOTE: use the embedded hyperlinks to access resources to prime your listening skills.

MANTRA FOR THE MONTH

*“Listening is an art that requires attention
over talent, spirit over ego, others over self.”*

∞ Dean Jackson



News and Events

In the midst of the pandemic and national unrest, Mary has been devoting time to providing articles to local resources in the Ithaca area. These articles are available to you in the [website blog](#). Many are available to you to share with others as you see fit.

Mary has begun working on two projects – writing a book and designing a workshop, both focusing on learned resilience. As these projects come into clearer view, stay tuned for the latest updates about publication and invitations to events through this newsletter and the website (maryedson.com).



Cornell Arboretum

Do you have questions? Do you want information about a coaching session or workshop?

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in *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems* (2002). Their model illustrates the cycle of adaptation as exploitation, conservation, release, and reorganization. My group development research drew parallels with this model extending it through principles of complexity - self-organization, hierarchy, emergence, and learning. This forms the foundation of learned resilience. Be sure to check out the blog and future newsletters for more details about how this cycle applies to you and your life.

Keeping you on course is the top priority, so Mary will continue to meet with you and her other coaching clients during this time. Please reach out whenever you feel the need.

CLOSING THOUGHT

"We have two ears and one tongue so that we would listen more and talk less."

∞ Diogenes

ABOUT THE ∞

You've likely seen the use of ∞ as a sign of infinity or eternity in mathematics, science, and elsewhere. The use of this symbol relative to resilience is evocative of the Adaptive Cycle researched and developed by Lance Gunderson and C.S. "Buzz" Holling, published