

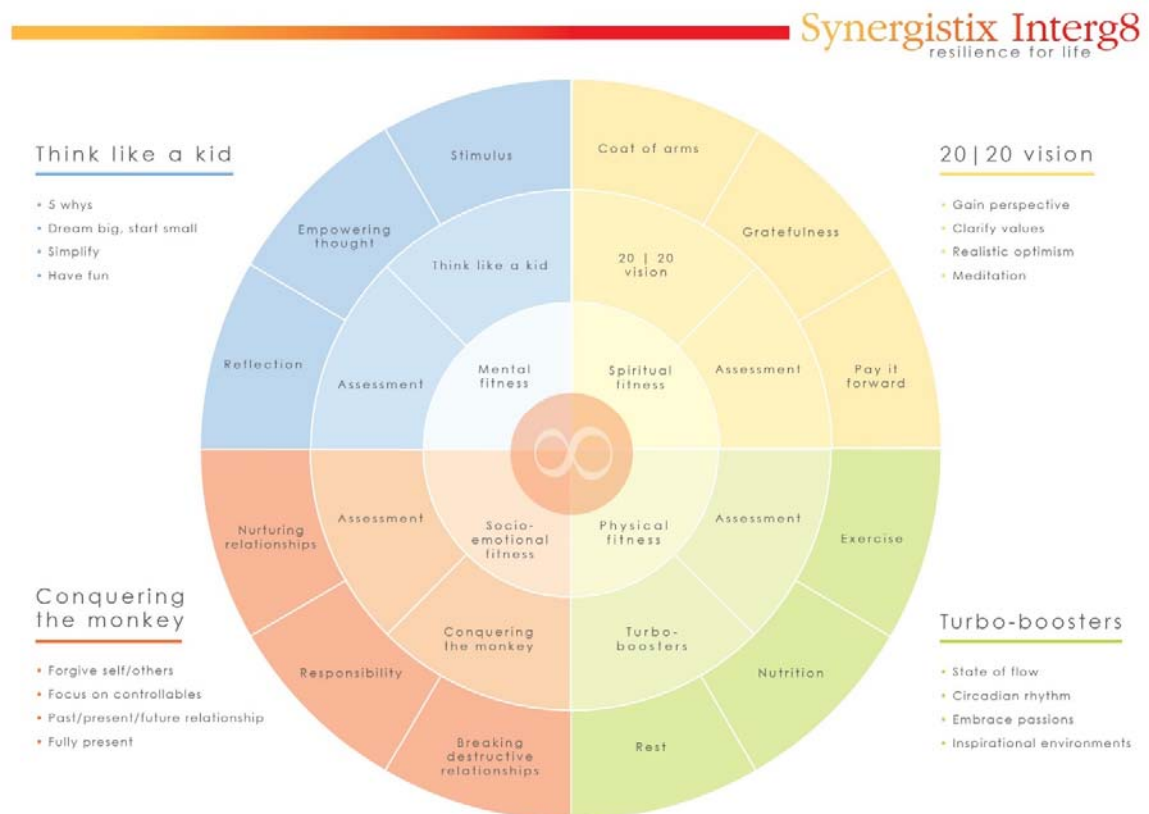
## BEDMATES: RESILIENCE AND SUCCESSFUL, HIGH QUALITY LIVES

Nelson Mandela, Muhammed Ali, Thomas Edison all had resilience in spades. Despite their different fields of endeavour, each built their foundation of success on resilience. Whilst some people are inherently more resilient than others, it is something that can be developed. Why do people invest so much time and energy in post-graduate studies and MBA's, or participate in endurance events? Part of it is driven by the desire to see if they have what it takes, whilst experiencing the sweet taste of achievement. Success and resilience are therefore intimately linked.

### 7 principles of resilience

So how do we build this desirable, resilient life? Below is my resilience model (which became a Ph.D), that aims to synthesise some of the best research on this topic. *What captures your attention ito design, language and content of the model?*

You probably will note that it is circular in design. There is no one part that is more significant than the other. It is best understood from the inside-out, with the 4 quadrants mentioned in point 1 below as the foundation; then the mindsets that need to be in place for sustainable change as the next circle; and then the outer circle of actions that we can implement in our daily lives.



1. A synergistic, multi-dimensional approach: the model relies on developing 4 resource pools (spiritual, mental, socio-emotional and physical fitness). Spiritual in this context implies sense of purpose, it is not linked to a specific religion which is a very personal choice. These 4 quadrants synergistically enhance each other, they do not function in silos.
2. Fitness: not quotient, is used as a descriptor. Resilience is something that requires sustained effort and can be learnt, it is not purely a fixed trait.
3. Integration over balance: integration accommodates reality better and supports excellence, more so than the illusionary allure of balance. See my previous LinkedIn article for a full explanation on the work-life balance myth.
4. Mindsets: it's an inside-out approach, where we start first with changing our mindsets (think like a kid, 20-20 vision, turbo-boosters and conquer the monkey), thereby embedding meaningful behaviour change. If we have the right mindset, it provides helpful lenses through which we interpret and embed our experiences.
5. Oscillation: this happens in each of the 4 outer circle quadrants e.g. rest-exercise in the physical fitness quadrant, stimulus – reflection in the mental fitness quadrant. It is important to “collect dots” i.e. stimulus experiences so we can be creative, but if you never take the time to reflect on them you end up trapped on a hedonistic treadmill, moving from one experience to the next, never gaining the deep wisdom that lies within these experiences. Stimulus needs to oscillate with reflection to extract its true value.
6. Reframing: reality depends very much on where you are standing. I find some people proclaim they are realists, but are often closet pessimists. They have not looked at BOTH the positive(s) and negative(s) of the situation. In reframing we do not adopt a rose-tinted view of life, but we do unpack what we learnt from these difficult times in our lives. This is fundamental to the power of post-traumatic growth, mentioned in the previous article.
7. Conscious choices: we often have more power to make choices than we give ourselves credit for, and by proactively taking control of the controllable's we become more resilient. This is not to say the choices are easy, but we do have options and trade-offs to be weighted.

### **Context driven resilience strategies**

Depending on your challenges the following can offer positive outcomes for challenges regarding:

*Being:* we need to truly understand who we are and what we stand for. Nietzsche said: “He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.” Write your own personal mission statement. Apply some of the lessons from the resilience model above into how you consciously live each day.

*Doing:* we have three portable assets that we take into every situation, and we need to perpetually cultivate them. These assets are our: health, education and learning capacity, and mindsets.

*Past:* build your reflection and reframing capabilities. Many MBA classes have journaling as a key component. Learn how to make sense of your experiences, to see both the positive experiences and the hardships for what they are. Jettison the baggage that holds you back, but don't naively forget the lessons learnt.

*Present:* mindfulness practice and appreciating the value of the moment in this frenetic world is a great tool for enhanced resilience and clarity of thought.

*Future:* when feeling anxious about an upcoming event/challenge put things in perspective. Write down the most extreme best case scenarios you can think of, then the worst case (we tend to do this part easily) and finally the most likely, whilst ensuring your ultimate solution mitigates the most likely of the worst-case scenario challenges. In writing it down we can see how we often catastrophise and become irrational about future events.

In conclusion, the wise words of Nelson Mandela best encapsulate resilience's importance:

**"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."**



If you are interested in the above resilience model and its application within your organisation, please contact me on [mark@synenergy.world](mailto:mark@synenergy.world) or 082 496 6079.

Mark has a Ph.D. in Organisational Psychology, with a dissertation on how to build resilience in individuals. He has spent the last 20 years practically applying his resilience learnings in highly demanding environments from tech start-ups, to asset managers to NGO's.