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Are You as Resilient as Hillary Clinton?

We all get discouraged at some point in our lives. We reach a point when we wonder if it wouldn't be easier to just give up. We begin to doubt our own abilities and lose faith in others. The "thrill of victory" is no longer so sweet, and the "agony of defeat" doesn't seem so bad. Our energy is drained, and we've stopped having fun. This is when you need to dig deep inside yourself and find that well of determination and inner strength that will help you face your fears, counter the ensuing complacency, and keep you committed to reaching your goals.

Having this sheer determination is one of Hillary's keys to success. Never being a quitter was wired into her DNA early on and was reinforced while she was still in college. When she first arrived at Wellesley, she struggled academically. She called her parents, hoping that they would tell her to come home. She told them that she didn't feel that she was bright enough or up for the academic challenge. Dorothy Rodham, her mother, told her that she had not raised a quitter and that dropping out of Wellesley would be a catastrophic mistake. Hillary stayed in school and, with her incredible work ethic, keen organizational skills, and sheer determination, stayed on top of her grades. In fact, she gained enough confidence in her scholastic abilities to take on political leadership roles and was elected president of the Young Republicans. Pretty impressive for someone who wanted to drop out of school!

And if you followed the 2008 presidential campaign, you know that Hillary stayed in the race to the very end. She never stopped trying to win votes and secure delegates until it was evident that she was not going to win the nomination. She never gave up on what she was truly committed to doing, even when the odds were against her and the effort to move forward must have been very difficult.

And yet this particular defeat is perhaps the greatest example of her being resilient. While Hillary failed to get the nomination, she showed up at the 2008 Democratic National Convention with a sense of inner confidence and strength and gave an inspirational speech in which she declared her support for the nomination of Barack Obama. She said, "I am here as a proud mother, as a proud Democrat, a proud Senator, a proud American, and a proud supporter of Barack Obama." She followed with, "Whether you voted for me or for Obama, the time is now to unite as a single party with a single purpose." Toward the end of her speech, she shared with the audience that even in the darkest moments, Americans are known for their ability to keep going. She said, "We're Americans, we're not big on quitting. . . . In America, there is no chasm too deep, no ceiling too high, for all who work hard, have faith in God and our country, and each other."

Those words soared through the convention hall, with people rising from their chairs and waving their hands, validating Hillary's words that evening. In some ways, I believe they were acknowledging her ability to come back, be resilient, and gracefully embrace the new reality that she would not be the next Democratic nominee for the president of the United States.

Hillary's words expressed her true intention, which was to serve the country she loved. She even mentioned to some people that she loved her job as a senator and that she could still make a difference by being a senator again, which told everyone that she was not going to just throw in the towel. She knew that her overall desire and purpose was to serve her country, and she made it known that she would do that in whatever capacity the president thought she could do best. Hillary's ability to be flexible and open to other possibilities was instrumental in her not only being resilient but also ending up having the secretary of state role offered to her. Those who can see beyond the horizon and do not stay in the valley and play the victim are those who not only are resilient but also open the door to other possibilities and sometimes great opportunities.

Hillary's resiliency -- her unique ability to face adversity and bounce back, as she did in this recent presidential campaign -- has won her the respect and admiration of people from all political parties in the United States. And her decision to continue to make a difference by taking on a global leadership role in lieu of being president has impressed people around the world. Truly there are many leadership lessons to be learned from this outstanding woman.

How Resilient Are You?

If you are wondering just how likely you are to be resilient at this point in your life, here are a few easy questions to ask yourself. The more times you answer yes, the more likely you are to tap into your resiliency factor.

1. ___ I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary, expect to overcome them, and believe that things will turn out well.
2. ___ I can tolerate high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity.
3. ___ I'm able to recover emotionally from setbacks. I can express my feelings to friends and ask them for help.
4. ___ I feel self-confident and have a healthy concept of who I am.
5. ___ I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.
6. ___ I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.
7. ___ I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

8. ___ I demonstrate the courage to stand up for what I believe in or feel is important, and I am not afraid of taking prudent risks.
9. ___ I don't give up easily. I stay the course even when I get discouraged.
10. ___ I am comfortable with change. I look for opportunities to learn new things and visibly support the change efforts.

The above is an excerpt from the book *Leadership Secrets of Hillary Clinton* by Rebecca Shambaugh.

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Author Bio

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