

Resilience *and* Response-ability: Value-Added Change-making



I've heard of resilience, but what is "response-ability?"

These days, there's lots of talk about *resilience*, and calls to action to create "resilient communities." This is important. But, when we consider our capacity to navigate complexity and generate healthy change, resilience is not enough. *Response-ability* is another essential capacity claiming our attention in such complex and challenging times.

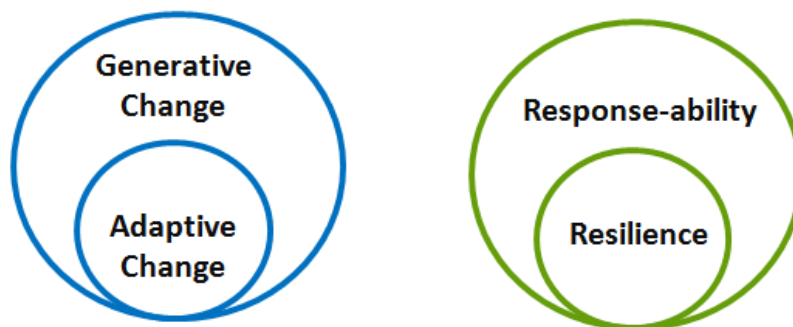
Resilience is often described this way: "the ability of an individual or a system to cope and adapt in the face of adversity, trauma and stress." Response-ability goes further; it's the capacity to respond, positively and proactively, not only to problems but to promising potentials ... now, and into the future.

Both are needed.

Response-ability and resilience aren't at odds with one another; taken together, they offer a more integrative approach to change-making. Another way to think of response-ability is as "resilience-plus." It's a value-added equation, one that includes the adaptive capacities inherent in resilience, even while stepping up to include the higher complexity of generative change.

Here's an example. With resilience, complex systems (which include people, organizations, and communities) are better able to adapt to life conditions, even in the face of adversity. With response-ability, these same complex systems respond to life conditions with adaptive resilience *and* purposeful generativity; the goal of is not merely to find equilibrium in times of trouble, but to focus on the potential of the system – to become healthier, for instance. So, where resilience is adaptive, response-ability is generative. With response-ability our change-making is less reactive, our actions more intentional and purposeful.

Healthy people, healthy organizations and healthy communities are both resilient *and* response-able.



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