

POST  
COVID 19  
LESSONS

# NEXT IS NOW

## 5 STEPS FOR EMBRACING CHANGE

Develop Change Resilience to face with Courage The Unprecedented Challenges of Business and Life

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**LIOR** / **ARUSSY**

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one

## **STOP! LEVERAGE YOUR CHANGE RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19 FOR A STRONGER FUTURE**

What distinguishes companies that thrived during the pandemic from those that merely survived? Leaving aside external factors such as being in the airline business where your customers disappeared overnight, when two companies were facing the same crisis and opportunities, there were two distinguishing factors between the thrivers and the mere survivors. The thrivers were far more ready with their digital transformation and they demonstrated significant compassion and a strong overall human approach to their customer engagement. As a result, they were able to adapt faster to different ways of engagement, to provide online sales and services, and to connect in relevant and agile ways.

From the Four Seasons New York that opened its rooms to medical staff, to Medtronic that made its respirators' specs available to all manufacturers, to the landlord in Brooklyn who cut the rent by 50% to

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acknowledge his tenants' hardships, we've seen an outpour of humanity. This humanity, although somewhat typical during tragedies (e.g., hurricanes or earthquakes), has far exceeded the usual response of giving a donation and moving on. We've seen more support and long-lasting commitments.

For those businesses that overnight lost in-person public engagement, the ability to engage and deliver online was critical. Those who were set up with a digital alternative to their services were clearly the winners over those who were not set up for it. What do both digital transformation and human approach to business have in common? Why were certain companies more ready than others to deliver?

The answer is change resilience. In the past several years, digital transformation has been touted as an important step in an organization's evolution. The writing was already on the wall and the case to fuse digital and physical experiences was made for several years. Some companies adopted it faster than others. For the last two decades, the customer experience revolution delivered a decisive message for the need to engage emotionally with customers, understand their journey and design products, services and experiences with a strong humanity at its center. Again, the message was there. Some organizations heeded the advice and would adapt to the change faster than others. Those who adapted faster and more broadly thrived while their less-willing competitors struggled and some even went bankrupt.

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### **Resilience was Not by Chance**

In 2018, I published my latest book, *Next Is Now!*, where my core argument was that the future of competitive advantage will not be products, services or technology, but rather, an organization's change resilience. Change resilience was defined as the scope and speed at which an organization adapts to change. The faster you move and the broader you implement, the more competitively relevant you will be. The essence of change resilience is that you are not driven by change; you are driving it. You do not wait for change to dictate your next steps; you create your next steps in advance.

COVID-19 was a test on a massive scale to examine the change resilience of organizations. It proved, beyond a doubt, that those who treat change resilience as a core competence and develop the required agile mindset and flexible operation, are more likely to face the unknown and uncertainty with bravery, courage and actual creative, new solutions. And even in a case like COVID-19, where you could not create the change before it confronted you, your ability and speed of response were dramatically different if you possessed a high degree of change resilience.

As change resilience is an organizational muscle, those who practiced it before COVID-19 were more likely to respond more effectively during COVID-19 and most likely will handle other unknowns with the same level of preparedness. Those who failed to practice it (and were delaying the inevitable change due to complacency, legacy systems, cost, resources, time and other excuses) found themselves without the power to respond to the uncertainty delivered by COVID-

19. Living with uncertainty and the need to respond creatively to it is not unique to extreme events such as the pandemic. In fact, it's an integral part of every organization's journey through life, be it a new technological advancement or creative disruption that deems your product obsolete or a desperate competitor that starts a price war to obtain market share or a leader critical to your success and unfortunately left to your competitors. Any event that was unplanned brings with it the need to adapt in a fast and unexpected way. That is where change resilience is so critical. Practice the muscle, and the next unforeseen uncertainty will be easier to manage and may even be an opportunity to thrive. Ignore the muscle, and you're doing so at your own risk.

### **Leverage the lessons for stronger change resilience**

Thrivers or mere survivors? You ought to capture the lessons from COVID-19 and develop a stronger change resilience. The well-rehearsed Winston Churchill quote, "Never let a good crisis go to waste," needs to be put into practice not just in terms of an immediate response but in terms of developing a stronger organization moving forward. To counter with another saying, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," COVID-19 ought to turn your organization into a stronger version of what it was pre-COVID-19.

This goes beyond superficial acts, such as allowing every employee to work from home moving forward, as announced by Twitter's CEO. (I am not sure how effective it is or if it is suitable for everyone. The decision seems to have been made too fast to be fully examined.)

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Creating a stronger, change-resilient organization requires a thorough reflection of your decisions and behaviors during COVID-19. Yes, you will discover that you made mistakes and that is okay. It was unprecedented and you had no textbook. Your reflection should examine decisions, actions, execution and behaviors, and reflect on how they represent your vision and mission as an organization. Were you true to your mission? Did you demonstrate humanity? Did you live up to your values?

Like most organizations, the answer is likely to be some and some. Sometimes, you did; with others, you missed the mark. That is where the reflection becomes more interesting. In analyzing the hits and misses, you can get to the core of the issue: how well your change resilience is understood and practiced in your organization. It is from these conclusions and identification of the areas of weakness that you can develop a plan for amplifying your change resilience. This plan should include:

- ◆ Sharing the key decisions made during COVID-19
- ◆ Explaining the hits and misses and how you lived up to your vision (including when you didn't)
- ◆ Developing a set of behaviors and decision guidelines for the future (as uncertain as it might be)
- ◆ Practicing decision-making with incomplete information and limited visibility
- ◆ Documenting for the future the COVID-19 lessons and actions

By turning the reflections and lessons into a concrete plan to develop change resilience, you can emerge a stronger organization, enhanced by its experience. Otherwise, the experience will be wasted, and you will resort to old behaviors and a low degree of change resilience. You will be less prepared for the next unprecedented uncertainty.

### **How did COVID-19 create a new version of you?**

Uncertainty, loneliness, and fear were introduced into our lives at an existential level we have never experienced before. These new emotions and realities required us to adapt and fast. This was not a change we asked for. It was a change forced upon us, and with no preparation. It was the worst kind of change.

In addition, unlike other change, we didn't see the upside. There was only downside to this change. It's a change required to merely exist but not necessarily grow. Or at least that is how we experienced it. And to survive through this change, we needed to reevaluate our lives and reprioritize many aspects of our everyday routines and experiences.

However, with every change - existential, survival or growth - there are development opportunities. We only need to choose to reflect on the change and understand how it is reshaping our lives and what are the new powers we can gain from this change. Take a few minutes to reflect on these questions:

- ✦ What was your emotional experience during COVID-19?
- ✦ What are the aspects of your life you had to forgo?

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- ✦ What new aspects of your life did you discover?
- ✦ What new skills did you develop?
- ✦ What daily rituals did you have to live without?
- ✦ How did you surprise yourself during the pandemic?
- ✦ How many of those changes do you think will stay beyond the pandemic impact sphere?

Like everyone else, your change resilience muscle was stretched to the max during the pandemic. Like many others, you had to give up daily routines, like your Starbucks coffee or annual vacation. Places that are a few hours' drive were suddenly closed to your leisure, making those locations feel like galaxies away. The world has shrunk to the personal space of your home, with few options beyond it.

Personally, the pandemic put a sharp halt on my travel schedule. After living in airplanes and hotels for over 150 days a year, I found myself at home. I had to clean my own house without outside help. I could do none of the keynote presentations and workshops I enjoy doing and I could not see some of my kids. I had to adapt, and I explored my change resilience in different ways.

I knew that my power was with words. So, aside from delivering messages via Zoom, I started a blog – something I postponed for quite some time. And I learned how to graphically design my messages using Canva. Lastly, I shifted from just Zoom presentations to full-fledged workshops, not a simple shift for someone used to face-to-face interactions. I needed to learn new ways to read the audience and

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interact with them. It differs greatly from speaking live and seeing an audience's complete body language.

## two

# THE NEW EVOLVING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The CleanPlus program is the response United Airlines crafted for the COVID-19 challenges. The airline partnered with Clorox and the Cleveland Clinic to ensure that the flight and airport experiences adhere to the highest level of cleanliness, hospital-grade cleaning. As I flew United during the pandemic, I was impressed by both the physical cleanliness and the quality of communication of the cleanliness deployed on the aircrafts. As I experienced that hospital-grade cleanliness, one thing was clear: I do not want it to change. Now that I know that aircrafts can be so clean, I expect United to maintain that level of commitment to cleanliness even in the days of post-pandemic. I do not plan to lower my standards.

High digital engagement and the expectation for greater humanity and compassion will become the new standards post-COVID-19. Customers got used to them and are seeing them as table stakes. What used to be a differentiator before COVID-19, has become an

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expectation. It has become the new normal for customers. If you were prepared with both compassion and digital tools, you need to elevate your game and identify a new differentiator. If you were one of the mere survivors, you have major catching up to do. Customers are not waiting for you and with greater online savviness, they will jump to your competitors faster than ever before.

These new expectations are setting the stage for you to proactively explore changes and evolutions to your value proposition and the way you deliver it. It's a new reality in which you ought to lead change faster than your customers expect. That is the ultimate outcome of change resilience. The ability to create change before it is expected. At its core, change resilience is about creating the “next,” not responding to it.

That is the reason we can no longer treat change resilience as a tool in our toolbox we take out only when we see change on the horizon. It must be incorporated as part of our core competence. It is the new guiding light for the future. That is one lesson we can immediately take from COVID-19 and apply to every decision and behavior in our organization: are our decisions driving the “next” or are they responding to it?

To thrive, you need to drive the “next” before it will drive you.

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### **The Innovation Accelerator**

Where there is a will, there is a way.

Many of us grew up on this mantra as our parents or teachers encouraged us to identify creative ways to solve our problems. In the airline industry, there is an interesting innovation concept: doom's innovation. This is the name experts have given innovation that results from tragedies. Those unfortunate situations often lead to new discoveries, for without the tragedies, the need for that innovation was unknown. Difficult situations lead to thriving innovations. Not because there is a will, but because there is a need. And the more acute the need, the greater the innovation.

COVID-19 has created the most optimal conditions for innovation. A threat on a global level, clear sense of urgency, and people dying every day; it does not get more optimal than that to mobilize people. Powered by a sense of purpose to tap into their creativity and collaboration, people started to create solutions they didn't know were needed.

Pfizer, Moderna and over 50 companies around the world were racing to find a vaccine and essentially, save the world. They shortened what is otherwise a multi-year process into less than 10 months. But innovation didn't stop at the predictable suspects. SodaStream, the global company of soda makers, applied its technology to the creation of lightweight respirators and collaborated with Israeli hospitals to introduce it to the market within only a few weeks. The market necessity created new ways of thinking and new products. It is not a product line likely to develop beyond COVID-19. It's a simple response

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to an emerging need using a toolbox of existing knowledge and expertise. And SodaStream was not alone in exploring these new ideas through existing technologies.

Ford, General Electric, and 3M partnered together to convert their manufacturing facilities and produce protective medical equipment, face masks, and ventilators. Ford and GE Healthcare manufactured a 'simplified version of GE Healthcare's existing ventilator design' to aid COVID-19 patients who may experience trouble breathing. Alcoholic drink manufacturers and breweries converted their distilleries to manufacture hand sanitizer, partnering with mega players such as L'Oréal and Moët Hennessy, all responding to an acute global shortage.

Similar fast adoption was experienced by consumers as well. The immense usage of Zoom, which became a household name and a new verb in a matter of weeks, is one example of the vast adoption of digital services to supplement the missing physical ones. As consumers, we shifted from using digital as a tool to living digital as an integral part of our lives. Some experts are estimating that the innovation, adoption, and implementation process that would typically average 5 years is taking place in the span of 3 months during this pandemic. Reality simply forced us to find new methods, adapt to change faster and innovate the way we live. We were forced to develop our change resilience.

E-commerce adoption has been accelerated and according to some sources, the rate of e-commerce adoption in the last 6 months is equal to the rate of adoption in the last 10 years. Necessity created innovation. We were forced to develop change resilience. Those with preexisting change resilience, were probably adapting faster and reconfiguring their

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life routines. Others were caught like deer in the headlights and needed other ways to deal with change before it could settle in and a new routine could be formed. A possible indication that some didn't fare so well might be the increase of over 20% in anti-depression and anti-anxiety prescriptions in the USA. While the correlation was not studied, those who didn't adapt as well needed alternatives to cope. With the absence of change resilience, some people became more vulnerable. (It is fair to assume that anxiety and depression affected a vast scope of society. However, my argument is that those who adapted faster were less likely to be affected as badly.)

### **Late Majority have arrived**

Some chores you needed to go back to during this pandemic, like cleaning your house, you are likely to send back to the cleaning help you hire, as soon as you can. Still, many others will stay with you, at least for a while. Your newly acquired sense of resilience, self-sufficiency and creativity is most likely to have the biggest impact on you.

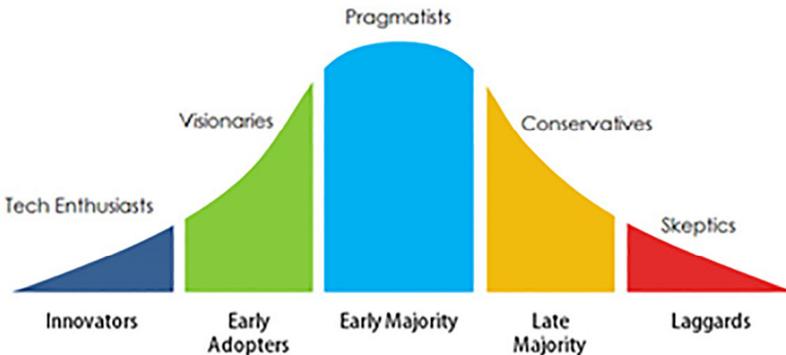
You know you can.

You did things you didn't believe you would be able to. You survived conditions that were unimaginable. You are invincible in a way. That spirit of "yes, I can" will be part of your life for the foreseeable future. It will fuel the change resilience you will need to adapt to the next phases of the pandemic, to the aftermath impact of it, or to any other change you will need to implement.

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Welcome to the new era of late adaptors. In any new product or technology introduction, we divide the adoption to several stages: (1) The innovators or the tech enthusiasts, those who adopt first and get excited before it has clear commercial value. (2) The visionaries willing to believe in new technology even before it has wide acceptance. (3) The early majority, the next wave of adaptors waiting for more proof before they try it. (4) The late majority who waited patiently for others to fine-tune the technology to a greater level of readiness. They are the late adopters. (5) Finally, there are the skeptics who you will need to drag to use new technologies and they will always do so reluctantly. In the adoption curve, we always mark the late adaptors as a group that will take a long time to experience innovation. By the time they will accept it, it will no longer be an innovation, but rather, the new normal. Well, the new normal is here. The late majority has joined the crowd.

### Product Adoption Curve



The new late majority customers will require you to examine both how to serve them differently *and* how to create new innovations for the

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visionaries, or early adaptors, seeking the next excitements. The fusion of digital and human experience will be the new frontier requiring us to find new ways to engage with customers where they want it and how they want it. Keeping our core cause clear, we should be able to adopt the tools and technologies faster to engage better and not get stuck in old ways. Our need to examine old ways and explore new technology has been accelerated with the innovation acceleration and we need our change resilience to be at its peak and empower us to introduce new capabilities and engagement models faster, in order to stay relevant.

The innovation acceleration came with significant rewards of mass adoption but brings with it new challenges or opportunities, depending on your change resilience strength.

### **Agile, Adaptable, Personal – The Normal**

As companies demonstrated compassion, humanity, and flexibility during COVID-19, these new behaviors created new expectations. Now consumers know you can. They learned, as you did, that you can be agile and demonstrate one-to-one personalization to their needs. Customers will not forget the humanity you demonstrated during their time of need. This will become their new expectation. You cannot go back and say, “Well, we were human and compassionate during your time of tragedy, but now we are no longer those people.” You are those people if you choose to be. You demonstrated you can, and it is now expected that those new behaviors manifest themselves into the new normal of your relationships with the people around you and your customers.

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The way you innovated your organization's operations and customer experience to be human-centric and compassionate during difficult times should be applied to the way you conduct yourself during "normal" times. What you should consider is there are no more normal times. Every customer is different and would like to be treated as such. The innovation acceleration, courtesy of change resilience, is now creating new expectations to adapt constantly. To achieve that, change resilience will become even more critical. The need for change resilience is no longer temporary; it is the new permanent.

As COVID-19 accelerated innovation, by choice or by force, it has required us to examine how next time we will prepare for the "next." We will examine the "Future-Ready" approach in the next section to explore its relevance, within the context of COVID-19.

## three

# **FUTURE-READY REVISITED**

When *Next is Now!* was originally written, the focus was on changes that ultimately, when adopted, would promote your core cause. The link between adapting your tools and promoting your core cause was clear. It did not address unforeseen tragedies and severe events in which you would feel utter helplessness and feel like a victim. Well, COVID-19 is such an event on a global scale. Can one be future-ready for an unprecedented event such as COVID-19? Can one develop skills to cope with it? Is there any growth upside or is it merely change to survive and maintaining the status quo?

Many of my clients asked the same question. They sought guidance as to how to deal with a situation where no tool kit, textbook or precedent is available to shed light and guide them. It required me to revisit the “Future-Ready” approach and examine these questions, given the 5 steps I outlined. The good news is they fit well, even in unforeseen,

unprecedented events. As I stated before, those who were change resilient outperformed those who were not.

### **The punch in the face**

“Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face.” This famous quote by Mike Tyson would be the best description for organizations in 2020. Every company had a plan for this year. A strategy well-crafted and in the midst of execution. Then COVID-19 hit. Like a punch in the face, it sucked the air out of your plan. It reduced your strategy to rubble and demanded a *very* different strategy, and fast.

As expected, the change response varied, some organizations froze and did nothing, waiting for the world to get better. This is a classic flight approach. Run away from the problem until you can't see it and it will eventually disappear. Others fought it by confronting the problem and minimizing its real impact. The stock prices during this period demonstrate well the different forces. On one side, the Dow Jones dropped 6400 points in four days in March, amounting to a 26% drop in its value. It later recovered much faster than expected, reflecting a heightened level of hope for faster recovery.

People didn't know what to make of it. And a few (there are always a few stronger, more change-resilient organizations) decided that they would not fight or run away. They were here to conquer. They saw opportunities in the darkness of the unknown and were determined to turn them into their new competitive advantage.

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We all got punched in the face, one way or another. Even those companies who benefitted from COVID-19 were punched in the face in the sense that they needed to overhaul their plans and prepare for high demand fast. It was a disruptive force that required a response.

### **The Nature of Unprecedented**

- ✦ World War I
- ✦ The Great Depression
- ✦ World War II
- ✦ 9/11
- ✦ Hurricane Katrina
- ✦ The 2008 financial crisis

What do these events have in common?

They were all unprecedented.

History is a collection of unprecedented events.

What else do they have in common? Humanity prevailed in those situations. Not without scars, but prevailed, nonetheless. And what allowed humanity to handle these unprecedented events? It started by no longer thinking of them as unprecedented.

COVID-19 is unprecedented in scope and reach. But whenever we think of something in these terms, we activate the helplessness part of our being. We treat unprecedented with a paralyzing approach. Yes, it is

unprecedented. But the best way to move forward is to tap into humanity's toolbox for unprecedented events and act.

The first thing we need to do in an unprecedented event is to get out of the unprecedented mindset.

### **Face it! Revisited**

The first step of Future-Readiness is facing the facts. The facts ought to be viewed objectively and with no colored glasses. This rule could not have been more relevant than during COVID-19. More information was available than ever before, broadcast by anyone from government agencies and international authorities such as the World Health Organization, to individual doctors and Tik Tok video creators. There was a diverse and excessive amount of data out there. What was missing was credibility. You had to carefully select the real facts and sift them from the fake news or any other stream of misinformation. You needed to recognize who were the credible sources and who may be guessing and providing less-founded information. Within the chaos of trying to understand what the correct facts are, facing the facts was critical.

COVID-19 accentuated two important rules in the "Face It!" phase. First, examine who your credible sources are and on whom you can rely to base your assessment and response. Second, view facts as dynamic and always changing, as opposed to, static and readily available for decisions. However, your decisions are always subject to change due to new facts and assessments that evolve as we learn the situation better. This is not a one and done decision about the facts. It's an evolving decision founded on the best facts at the moment.

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### **Analyze it! Revisited**

Emotions were always an integral part of the change resilience process. We need to recognize them, not deny them, and through that process learn to conquer the fear associated with them and move on despite their existence. During COVID-19, we were forced to encounter and develop an approach to a new emotion. The emotion of utter helplessness. The magnitude and the speed of the impact of COVID-19 on such a global scale left us speechless and therefore paralyzed to act.

We know how to handle a disaster in one city or even one country. We know how to rally the troops to manage a hurricane in Florida or Puerto Rico or a tsunami in Thailand. We've written textbooks on those mega-events. But how do you respond to a global, unprecedented event. This word created a sense of enormity that resulted with paralysis.

The size and global nature of the pandemic and the lack of clear authority to guide us through created a level of helplessness we have never experienced before. Everyone from the presidents and prime ministers to doctors and pandemic experts, the only voice of reason was, "We don't know." And saying so while thousands of people are dying every day. There is nothing more helplessness-inducing than that statement.

COVID-19 further accentuated the need to recognize the role of emotions and the possibility of their paralyzing our actions, thereby deteriorating our change resilience and our timely response.

## **Reinvent it! Revisited**

Like many others, I had to adjust during COVID-19. As a person that travels 250,000 miles a year, I experienced major life-altering changes during this period. My speaking tours around the world were gone and I had to learn to do things at home. I got to know my children better and learned to live in a smaller space than what I was used to – that being, the whole world. It was a shocking blow to my system. It felt like I lost my purpose and my impact.

Then, following the “Analyze It!” phase, I asked myself, “What is my core cause?” I concluded that it is inspiring words. I want to inspire people through words that will encourage them to become better. And I focused on that purpose rather than focus on the means and tools I was accustomed to, such as speeches on stages at conferences. I explored new ways to bring my words to people that were not my traditional tools. That is when I started a blog (yes, I know for many, it is an old format) and wrote and shared my words freely. I received a call from a friend who asked me to craft an inspiring message to doctors and nurses at nursing homes in New York. I did it and was happy I shared a few words with those medical heroes. Eventually, I discovered Canva, a tool for graphic designers and posted some of my words in a beautifully designed format. It wasn’t a tool I had known and, therefore, needed to practice it. But it was a new tool to channel an existing core cause, my words.

COVID-19 required all of us to reevaluate what matters most to us. It exposed our true selves and our real value systems. We can evaluate our decisions and actions during COVID-19 to further explore what is our true core cause; what we refuse to give up on and what we let go of

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quickly because it isn't truly us. Such an experience can help us further refine our purpose-driven life and develop our definition of our core cause.

### **Grow it! Revisited**

The "Grow It!" phase was always about applying your new tools, in service of your new purpose, before you go live. It was about creating a safe space for you to explore and adapt them to your unique needs. COVID-19 didn't provide us with that opportunity. We needed to grow as we went. We reinvented ourselves live in front of the whole world. From learning with Zoom in our bedrooms while the dog was doing his stuff, to finding food through delivery services, "Grow It!" was done live and was a sharp reminder that sometimes (ok, many times) life does not give us space to practice.

Considering all this, it is even more critical that we practice change resilience and develop this muscle BEFORE we need it. Reduce the impact of the helplessness by being ready for the "next" before it comes. Keep experiencing the uncomfortable new ways and get used to the discomfort of failing and trying again. As you do so, over time, your embarrassment of trying new things, and failing in the first few tries, will dissipate and you will be far more comfortable in this new state.

Some of the "next," we can foresee or plan or embrace. Others will be a total shock. We need to expand our abilities to absorb the "next" by growing our change resilience and focusing on our core cause. This way,

when the “Grow It!” phase comes, we will not just survive it but thrive through it.

### **Own it! Revisited**

As we go through COVID-19, it is easy to be swept by the pandemic and its impact on your ecosystem: your healthy emotions, finances and more. While in many of these aspects you may feel helpless, there is one aspect of the pandemic in which you are in control. No, it is not the response you choose. Although this is correct. I am referring to another choice.

“Own It!” is about turning the experience and tests into a lifelong lesson and, more importantly, into growth and new, better ways of living. I can’t think of a better platform for growth than COVID-19 and its implications on our personal and organizational lives.

### **The Ultimate Test to Who You are and what you stand for**

If there is one thing I learned in life, it is this: one cannot speak about values until they actually went through a true test and let the value prevail over the temptation to behave in a way not consistent with that value. Many organizations and individuals rush to declare a core cause and values while failing to demonstrate how they actually live by them. That is why I always approached the Purpose movement with a healthy dosage of skepticism. While I believe in starting with the “why,” I believe it to be not a statement on the wall, but rather the actions of the soul.

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You start with “why” in the choices you make and the way you execute them, not the declaration you utter.

Being purposeful is not the one-day self-reflection workshop of what drives your actions and what impact you want to make on the world. It is about the ACTUAL impact you make on the world and how you live by your purpose in your everyday decisions.

Which brings me to the biggest opportunity during COVID-19: the opportunity to test your core cause and value system. To know what you and your organization are really made of, it's time to inspect your decisions and actions and determine what are your REAL values. Time to look in the mirror and ask yourself:

- ◆ Did I really demonstrate courage?
- ◆ What evidence do I have for my resilience?
- ◆ How does creativity come to life during my current challenges?
- ◆ Did I care for others while going through my own pains?
- ◆ What other values did I declare that I possess and how did they come to life during the last few months?

And the answer to all these questions is not yes or no - it is stories. Write down specific examples that substantiate your claimed values.

## **Five steps to discover your true purpose and values**

### **Step 1: Document the story**

Instead of writing down the answers to the above questions, allow me to propose a different, more honest approach. Write a journal of your last few months. List all the meaningful moments you have experienced – both small and big. Don't forget your down and depressing moments. What did you do during those moments? Who was around you? How did you relate to those people?

### **Step 2: Color your actions**

After documenting your COVID-19 experience, go back to the list and identify what values drove your decisions, behaviors and actions. Use a simple way to start deciphering your COVID-19 story:

- ♦ Mark in red all the moments in which you were taking from others.
- ♦ Mark in blue all the moments in which you were giving to others.
- ♦ What does the story look like now - is it mostly red or blue?

### **Step 3: Catalogue your actions**

List your core cause and set of values, and/or your organization's values. Number each one of them. For example:

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- ◆ Courage
- ◆ Creativity
- ◆ Empathy
- ◆ Resilience
- ◆ Self-sufficiency

Now score your actions based on your values. For example, if your organization safely and successfully responded to the lockdown by transitioning your staff to remote working, it may count as "resilience" and should be marked +5. If you feel certain actions represent the opposite of your value, give it a negative mark.

Your score can range from 1-5 on values that you believe you brought to life during COVID-19, to 0 for no value impact, and all the way to negative 1-5 for actions that actually were in conflict with your stated values. When you add them up, you will discover if you lived up to your values or actually betrayed them.

<b>Decisions, actions and behaviors</b>	<b>Values represented</b>	<b>Scores</b>

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Now average the results: add up the total score per value, divided by the number of actions per value. The final number will illustrate your true commitment to that value.

If your final number is negative, then you, most likely, either don't understand the value, are not committed to bringing it to life or do not know how to do so.

If your final number is positive but between 1-2, you are most likely to demonstrate partial commitment to the value, only when it is convenient to you.

Any result of 3 or above will illustrate a high commitment level to the value.

Now the picture is getting clearer.

- ◆ How do you like your scores?
- ◆ What does it tell you about yourself and/or your organization?
- ◆ How do you like the person/organization you see through the values reflected?

### **Step 4: Analyze the full picture**

At this step, look at your successes (the pluses) and the failures (the minuses) and reflect on the root causes.

## NEST IS NOW - POST COVID 19 LESSONS

- ✦ Why did you behave in a certain way in those moments?
- ✦ What gave you the strength to rise in the plus moments?
- ✦ Why did you fail to rise in the minus moments?

Don't just focus on the minus moments. There is plenty to learn from the plus moments. The plus moments are probably more reflective of who you truly are than the minus moments.

Are there actions that represent new values you didn't originally consider? Do you wish to include them?

This exercise is about self-discovery. True values come to life only through tests and I think we can agree, COVID-19 is a form of a test. COVID-19 presented us with that opportunity to rediscover ourselves.

### **Step 5: Reaffirm your core cause**

One conclusion from Step 4 might be that some of your stated values, are not reflective of who you are. Facing the challenge of real life, they didn't stand the test.

Through your newly documented COVID-19 narrative, you can develop a true set of values. These values are most likely to be a true reflection of who you are. These values, combined with the new stories of success (the plus moments), can recharge you and ready you to live a more purposeful life moving forward.

**Be the core cause – Be ready for the next**

As the pandemic is challenging us all – as a world, a nation, a community and an individual – on so many levels, it is bringing out the best (and sometimes the worst) in us. It tests us to limits we didn't know we could stand up to and in doing so, it has provided us with a new image of who we are, what we stand for, and what we are capable of. It is this new, true reflection that should be the foundation of our purpose.

Let us not miss the biggest opportunity to find out who we are because of the unprecedented phenomena we are all living through. This is the ultimate choice we have: to live our true self through a core cause tested in real life. This is our true us, ready for the next, strengthened by change, and with a high degree of change resilience. Welcome to the next unprecedented. We are more ready than ever before.

# NEXT IS NOW

## About Lior Arussy

One of the world's leading authorities on customer strategies and strategy execution, Lior Arussy is an experienced change practitioner, success accelerator, corporate culture expert, and founder of design and transformation firm *Strativity Group*. Called "a triple threat of transformation" by co-founder and founding editor of *Fast Company* William Taylor, Arussy is a unique, critical, global voice helping people worldwide achieve ultimate success.

Throughout his career, Arussy had the privilege to work the world's top brands, including Mercedes-Benz, Royal Caribbean Cruises, Thomson Reuters, HSBC, BMW, Delta Airlines, The Met, Biogen, Novo Nordisk, Atlanta Falcons, E.ON, FedEx, SAP, University of Pennsylvania, and Johnson & Johnson, among others.



Arussy is the author of seven books including *Next is Now: 5 Steps for Embracing Change – Building a Business that Thrives into the Future* (May 2018) and has written over 250 articles for publications around the world, including the *Harvard Business Review*, and a multitude of magazines and media outlets have cited his work, including *MSNBC*, *CNBC*, *Bloomberg TV*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, *CRM Magazine*, *Smart CEO Magazine*, and *Inc.* magazine.

He enjoys life with his wife and five children. When he's not sampling fine chocolates or collecting Swiss watches, he enjoys exploring new cultures—3 million miles on United Airlines so far.

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