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## Becoming Unsinkable: 10 Habits That Build Resiliency in Our Personal and Professional Lives

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"Titanic." We've all seen it and enjoyed watching the ill-fated love affair between Rose and Jack develop during the course of an over-length movie. We watched Rose grapple with the tough decisions between living up to others' expectations and following her heart. We rooted Rose on as she decided to spurn her high-society fiancé and defy her mother to be with her true love. And, in a true Hollywood twist of fate (spoiler alert!), we watched in horror as Rose's happiness is shattered when Jack slowly sinks to the bottom of the ocean.

However, the most compelling scene of the movie takes place at the very end, when the camera pans Rose's room and we see that, after she survived the Titanic and lost the love of her life, Rose went on to live a full life. She married and had children, who gave her beautiful grandchildren. She learned to ride a horse even though Jack was not there to teach her. And Rose likely refined her spitting technique to be truly award worthy (and note, we did not say "like a man"). In other words, Rose experienced a number of highs and lows in her life. She faced many difficult decisions and things didn't always work out the way she expected or wanted, but she kept moving forward.



Recently, we gathered our firm's Women's Initiative Network to explore resiliency and how women can become unsinkable like Rose. The goal of our discussion was to help WIN members identify practices and habits that have a positive impact on their day-to-day lives as well as their longer-term goals and to decide how best to implement those practices and support others in doing so. We acknowledged that personal and professional setbacks will happen. But we also recognized that when we proactively and consistently engage in positive thinking and actively avoid negative thinking, we are better equipped to overcome

those setbacks and move forward.

We talked about positive habits that depend upon emotional intelligence, which is the concept that it's a good thing both professionally and personally to be able to understand and effectively express your emotions and empathize with the emotions of others. Our three-phase program started with a group brainstorming session and an interactive digital poll, transitioned into small group breakouts, and concluded with each group sharing its members' tips and takeaways. We then asked WIN members to reflect individually on the shared strategies for fostering resiliency and to make a

personal pledge to focus on a habit that resonated with them. We also agreed that while Rose's against-the-grain, let-go-of-expectations decisions were admirable, we simply could not get behind tossing a 56-carat diamond into the ocean!

Our discussion yielded a terrific "top 10" list that would make both Rose and David Letterman proud. Therefore, we've decided to share our list of habits that build resiliency with a wider audience. And because we thrive on continually expanding our learning on this topic, we look forward to receiving feedback from readers who have habits to add to, or thoughts on how to refine, our list.

Without further ado, here is the Lowenstein Sandler WIN list of 10 habits that build resiliency:

**1. Avoid Comparing Yourself to Others.** Comparing yourself to others (or more accurately, your perception of others) is tempting, but because things aren't always as they seem, it can lead to an unrealistically high bar. Set high expectations for yourself, but focus on achieving your own goals in the way that works best for you.

**2. Ditch Overuse of Qualifiers.** Understand and accept that most legal dilemmas don't come with a crystal ball. Advice often must be given with less than complete facts and circumstances. Do your best to consider the available information and then answer the question.

**3. Rely on Each Other.** When confronting a mistake/misstep, relying on a trusted colleague/friend as a sounding board can help you put things in perspective, validate your feelings, and move beyond it. Don't underestimate the value of your emotional support system.

**4. Think Positively and Keep Perspective.** When facing a mistake/misstep, take stock of your most successful accomplishments and your lowest personal/professional challenges. Then, put the mistake/misstep within that spectrum and realize that you will continue to grow and move forward.

**5. Own Successes and Mistakes.** Avoid the temptation to minimize positive contributions you have made to a case or a deal. Consciously accept and internalize compliments and expressions of gratitude. Conversely, get comfortable with acknowledging mistakes, with the goal of securing constructive feedback to learn from them.

**6. Don't Lose the Forest Through the Trees.** When a mistake/misstep occurs, it is not productive to become fixated on it. Oftentimes overthinking a mistake leads to distorting the importance of it in the grand scheme of things. Consider the mistake just long enough to decide what you will do different next time to learn from it, and then move forward.

**7. Responding to a Misstep Is as Important as Making It.** Since no one is perfect, there is no doubt you will confront missteps and obstacles in your life. Rather than expecting to be impervious to those challenges, remember that you can, and will, bounce back. Your past experience will guide you in, and make you better prepared for, the future. Don't forget, you fell off your bike as a kid, and, after dusting yourself off, you did get back on and ride again.

**8. Project Confidence, Not Apology.** Actively avoid minimizing your presence and contributions. Carefully consider your written and

oral communications to eliminate words that discredit the validity of the ask (e.g., "just checking in" or "just following up"), and do not include apologies when you are diligently following up because someone owes you an answer.

**9. Strive for Positivity in Your Environment.** Recognize that you and your team are impacted by those around you. You can choose to be positive and encouraging, even when others around you are not. Your presence and calm will likely become contagious and put you in a strong position to excel in achieving your goals.

**10. Make "Guilt-free" Time for Yourself.** Your time is valuable, so decide how you spend it with authority and intention. Allow yourself to take time away from work and family obligations to pursue an activity that gives you genuine pleasure or joy. More important, once you've decided to step away for that purpose, don't rethink (or overanalyze) the decision. Be in the moment and stay in the moment.

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