

# Building Resilient Leaders

Ossabow



I start with a formula for the scientist in you:

Event + Response = Outcome

Or as I like to think about it:

**Life is : 10% is what happens to you and 90% of how you react to it**

I knew pretty early on that my mission in life was to meet everyone in the world and have the freedom of choice as a woman to live my life to its fullest. I did know this growing up in the 1960s, as the movement was so public: Civil Rights and Womens Rights. It was a big decade to grow up. I was in a working class neighborhood of all little row houses from NE Philadelphia, and really I thought it was just a pipe dream, but I still dreamed about it.

Since I am more a practitioner than a theorist, I will give you in high frequency: the highlights of reacting to my life through the years and the most important practice developed to respond to them.

There was a movie by Billy Crystal way back called: City Slickers.. 3 city guys going to a dude ranch riding horses etc.. hysterical..and one moment they are riding and Billy Crystal character asks the life reflection question:

What was your best day of your life and what was your worst day? One of the guy responds:

worst day: my dad beat up my mom badly.... best day: SAME DAY.. she left him, it changed our lives

1.School years: At 11 years old, running for President of my Elementary school and Losing at 14 running for President of Jr High school and losing, at 16 running for President of High School and losing

Losing! I had lots of lessons in losing..

2. Sophomore in College.. home for Spring break and my father drops dead of a heart attack at age 47. My mother is penniless without a job and on March 9, 1972 Life changed in an instant. He was buried exactly on my 19th birthday.

Death!

3. Transfer to a closer college in NY Stony Brook in Fall 1972 to be closer to my Mother and my new roommate in the dorm turns out to have severe emotional problems that is schizophrenic putting me in vulnerable positions. It show up when she runs for VP of School and we get threatening letters and phone calls to the Uncle Tom and then to the Nword. Very conflicted and disturbing. I lived with this confused young African American girl..who turned out performed many of these stunts. Then my first boyfriend I had on that campus turns out to be a heroin addict. I absolutely was naive to those kinds of behaviors. Drugs were rampant.

**Chaos, Confusion in college dorms- total unpredictability of behaviors surrounding me at 19 and alone.**

4. While rising in my sales management career in my late twenties, having a passionate love affair and got married to a guy I trained and he continually worked under my sales management.. until his early thirties and left me for a younger less threatening student overnight.

Betrayal!

5. After developing \$10 million dollar territory in Houston TX for my first company from, the company was being bought by different owners, and the new owners from within.. offered the VP Sales job to my counterpart, a a guy with half of my sales experience and results and offered me 1/2 the salary to be an assitant and teach a lawyer friend of his the business. It was not a matter even of not liking me, the men ( A Texas born gentleman and a PhD scientist) just had no idea how to see me outside of a petite likeable woman who wasn't quite ready from their paradigm

**Being Overlooked and not seen**

6.1993: after Moving back East in 1989 with my husband of 8 years after being overlooked to take a new job, my husband dies right after my 40th birthday. I am alone in a one bedroom apartment in Philadelphia feeling all the losses of my first career, love and abandonment of all I worked for.

**Death and Abandonment**

Ok- these are the big fears..death, abandonment, betrayal,managing unpredictable behaviors, unfair treatment etc...When you look at it with just those basic facts of what happens in life. I don't say them or take them lightly and I do not judge. Everyone of you can fill in the blank of your own disappointment, betrayal, or violation of all kinds and they are yours so huge to you, not to ever be compared to someone elses. Non judgement is so important.

They were traumatic, earth shattering in each case to absorb and respond to.

Sure I was sad, vulnerable, scared, hurt and lost at times.. but I had an amazing tool of life that served me well out of each instance to lead a life I love and cherish.

**I met each challenge without Resentment. I can't say: immediately but in due time. Yes, I am blessed with a more positive nature and I recognize that. Not all have my nature, but all can learn how to get there.**

By meeting each challenge without resentment, every new door that opened was enormous and rich of a new opportunity I did not see before them and changed my life to be bigger and better.

The lessons:

My losing the elections in school did not leave me broken, but strong. I learned so early how important it was to try your best. I gained so many new friends while campaigning and the efforts opened up many new opportunities for me.. most importantly new friendships and what I really needed was to be noticed so I got scholarships to be able to afford going to college.

Then my older sister and I always talk about our Father's death (a man we adored) was the worst day and the best day of our young lives. The lessons for my mother, my sister and I were so complex and deep with outcomes we never could have imagined. We all grew up and all changed our lives overnight to be bigger and great lives.

After my Father died in the summer of 1972, I decided to take the month of August with my college friend and drive cross country and see the country ending up in California and visiting cousins in LA. One of my cousins, became my main mentor in life and introduced me to Synanon, an intentional community in Calif doing the most innovative work with Drug Addicts in the first ever therapeutic community. It was ground breaking.

So, when I came back to Stony Brook and was confronted with so many challenges in my junior year with my roommates emotional problems and my boyfriends addiction.. i had hope and solutions.

My boyfriend went out to Synanon.. and I presented to the College to allow me to do an independent study for the second half of my junior semester to live in Synanon towards my Psychology degree to have a real life experience. The Asst to President of the college was so apologetic and mortified by the situation I suffered in the dorm and my vulnerability, that he granted the credits if I got 2 professors to sponsor me at Stony Brook. **I did and headed West for the time of my life and the education of 10 lifetimes in that 6 month experience far overshadowing the classroom experiences I had had.**

That door of new opportunity opened only because of unforeseen challenges, that I wasted no time dwelling on and survival gave me new ideas of how to react to it differently. I had no money, except from my work/study jobs and scholarships and had to think on my own the best I could. My mother was still in shock and recovering at home and fortunately lived next door to her twin sister and my uncle who cared for until she got on her feet.

(By the way.. my mother got a great job and then remarried 5 years after my Dad died to her true soul mate. She never stopped working when married and now has a great pension. My mom is 91 and my stepdad is 93 and they are still love birds living independently in the same row house I grew up in NE Phila)

So, From my first major loss at 19- led to a cross country trip to Calif .. coming upon Synanon that would change my life forever.

This never would have happened

From dealing with my roommates mental issues and my boyfriends addiction, came an opportunity to go to

California and study Synanon and live the desired unconventional life I yearned for.

This never would have happened.

From being overlooked for the job as VP Sales that I thought I deserved, came a new opportunity to move back to Philadelphia and help build a new young Ad Agency. This move led me to the next passionate work I do now as a citizen diplomat volunteer hosting our international guests to the City. The Father of the owner of this new company was on the Board of Directors of the International Council and noticed me and nominated me to be on the Board, when he invited me to lunch and I just told him one of my goals was to meet everyone in the world.

Then, as I continued to participate in the National Conference of the Promo Products Assoc and seeing old colleagues.. 11 years ago, one of those colleagues searched me out to partner with him at his company, based in San Diego: JR Resources. The law of attraction was in process. I attracted forward thinking men who saw my talents of building account bases, coaching those in sales and young women in business and found me.

I accepted this position, and eventually became the Major owner of JR Resources to lead a womens business enterprise now. I frankly, use the same leadership principles I instinctively used in 1978 and 1979 in Houston TX, which was nurturing, cheerleading, leading by example and being unthreatening as a leader, instead of intimidatating those that worked for me, as the men at that time taught me and expected me to be. they saw me as a failure and I was weak.

My thing was to use my weakness that I was a petite young woman, so unthreatening and turn it into my strength that if I could do it, certainly YOU CAN DO IT.

The other beautiful unforeseen outcome on my path back east led me to my best marriage ever to Tommy Williams for over 22 years now. I had clarity after all my losses, that I just wanted to live with a man who knew how to be happy. Ironically, when we were introduced at a New Years Party back in 1995 and we had our first drink together.. here were the words that came out his mouth: I am in the pursuit of happiness!

Wow.. this was unbelievable but true.. and he became The One for me.

Frankly, I wasn't so consciously thinking about all this while I was responding to to each circumstance. I did have much love and support and love in my life rich with connections to

help allow all this to happen and create new outcomes. But what no one else could give me, was my own Attitude about everything I encountered. That was my own property and it is **your own property.**

I just share that adopting that attitude of letting go of resentment and whole heartedly experiencing gratitude and appreciation is the key to noticing all those new doors opening leading you to the best life has to offer you.

If I can do it, you can do it, has always been my mantra.

As one of my favorite Buddhist philosophies says:

“If we can change ourselves, we can change the world. We are not victims of the world we see, We are victims of the way we see the world.”

When life is difficult, this is your time to make choices and RECOGNIZE that your worst day can be your best day to look for that new door that opens new possibilities.

Meet life with a YES attitude discarding resentment and you will see the true Joy of life and the true opportunities that are available to you every day.