

## The 3C's – Challenge, Commitment, and Personal Control

For [\*additional resources\*](#) go to *this tool's landing page*

### Description

In 1979, research psychologist Suzanne Kobasa described a pattern of personality characteristics that distinguished managers and executives who remained healthy under stress. These three components – Commitment, Control, and Challenge – are essential to resilience.



Resilient people view a difficulty as a **challenge**, not as a paralyzing event. They look at their failures and mistakes as lessons to be learned from or as opportunities for growth. They don't view them as a negative reflection on their abilities or their self-worth.

Resilient people are committed to their lives and their goals, and they have a compelling reason to get out of bed each morning. **Commitment** isn't just restricted to their work – they commit to their relationships, their friendships, the causes they care about, and their religious or spiritual beliefs.

Resilient people spend their time and energy focusing on situations and events they can **personally control**. Because they put their efforts where they have the most impact, they feel empowered and confident. Those who spend time worrying about things or events they can't control can end up feeling lost, helpless, or powerless to act.

### Sources:

Kobasa, S. C. (1979). "Stressful life events, personality, and health – inquiry into hardiness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 37(1), 1-11

Adapted from: Negroni, D. (2020). Mastering the 3 Components of Resilience. *Launchbox*



## Mastering Commitment Worksheet

When things get tough, it's easy to step back from whatever is causing our stress and look for the path of least resistance. But when things get tough, we need to recommit ourselves - to our lives, to our relationships, and to our work. Resilience by its description means we are staging a comeback. That even though we got kicked in the teeth and we might be down, we're not out. To master the commitment component, you need to start with what you believe in and what provides you with purpose. Use these tips to start your journey towards mastering commitment:

| Tip   | What I Plan To Do To Improve In This Area |
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| <p><b>Context:</b> In crisis, it's easy to lose sight of the context of our work. But we can't lose sight of how we fit in the bigger picture. Whether as a member of a team or the Program Manager of a PMO, we must connect ourselves to the larger context to find engagement and meaning.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Engage:</b> With everything that's going on and the constant stream of news updates, it's hard to stay engaged. But if we want to increase resilience, we must be able to filter out distractions and stay engaged. Set limits for yourself when it comes to looking at the news and social media, so you don't go too far down the rabbit hole. Throughout the workday, pay attention to the peaks and valleys of energy and productivity that we all experience, what health psychologists call our ultradian (hourly) as opposed to our circadian (daily) rhythms. Mental focus, clarity, and energy cycles are typically 90-120 minutes long, so it is useful to step away from work for even a few minutes to reset energy and attention. At night, disconnect and park your devices away from your bed. Review the Tips for Focusing Your Attention from the Mastering the Strategic Moment course to help you get started.</p> |   |
| <p><b>Seek out what is meaningful:</b> To increase our commitment to ourselves and our own future success, we must seek out what is meaningful. We need to connect back to why what we do matters. What</p>   |   |



| Tip  | What I Plan To Do To Improve In This Area |
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| <p>does it mean to be an acquisition professional? What is the benefit to Defense Acquisition? The Warfighter? Who are we helping?</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Be authentic:</b> Adversity can bring out the worst in us or more troubling, cause us to show up inauthentically.</p> <p>Related to this are our assumptions about what might have caused something bad to happen. Did I cause the problem? Or did it originate somewhere or with someone else?</p> <p>Focusing on adversity is not what our co-workers, subordinates, or senior leaders need from us. Instead of giving up, focus on how you might affect the event's outcome by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can I step up to make an immediate and positive impact on this situation?</li><li>• What effect might this have on those around me?</li><li>• What do I want life to look like on the other side of this situation?</li><li>• What can I do to move in that direction?</li><li>• What should we Keep, Abandon, Invent, or Reinvent to see us through to the other side of this?</li><li>• How can I encourage others to help?</li></ul> |   |
| <p><b>Articulate your story:</b> Recommitting to our work and ourselves comes from doing the work to understand who we are by articulating our story and by owning it to demonstrate the value we can offer. Take time out to reflect. Write down your thoughts in a journal. Answer the following questions to guide your reflection about an activity or situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do I want to reflect on? (Just the facts)</li><li>• What did I notice before the situation occurred? (What thoughts feelings,</li></ul>   |   |



| Tip  | What I Plan To Do To Improve In This Area |
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| <p>or body sensations were you having – just notice, without judging)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What did I learn or remember from the situation?</li><li>• How am I going to apply what I learned?</li></ul> |   |