

Resilience, Inc.
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Resilience Inc. Newsletter: Jan. 10, 2018 (Volume 29)

This month's newsletter includes:

A Message from Lori Ashcraft, Ask Emily and a Resilience Inc. Update.

A Message from Lori Ashcraft.

Hello Friends, and welcome to the new year!

I've been thinking about what I could write this month that would inspire us to begin the new year with new enthusiasm and a new willingness to learn and grow. My thoughts took me back to the early days of the recovery movement when our group often talked about the difference between *change* and *transformation*.

Change, we said, was rearranging things that we already knew about.

Transformation was about experiencing something new, something that we



hadn't known about before. The recovery movement, we thought, was not just rearranging the known, but inviting a new way of knowing and being.

I found some great quotes from one of my favorite authors, Richard Rohr where he says, "Transformation happens not when something new begins but when something old falls apart. The pain of something old falling apart—disruption and chaos—invites the soul to listen at a deeper level. It invites and sometimes forces the soul to go to a new place because the old place is not working anymore."

Wow! I love the way he says things! He goes on to say that "Mystics use many words to describe this chaos.... Whatever it is, it does not feel good... We will do anything to keep the old thing from falling apart". I can't tell you how much energy I have put into holding things together before I finally surrender and let them fall apart. Even though many of you have heard me say, "breakdown before breakthrough" I am trying to avoid the pain and discomfort of chaos – the necessary breaking down to let the new emerge. In the end, I usually realize that I wasted a lot of energy that could have been put toward transformation.



Richard says, "This is when we need patience, guidance, and the freedom to let go instead of tightening our controls and certitudes. Transformation usually includes a disconcerting reorientation. It can either help people to find a new meaning, or it can cause people to close down and turn bitter. The difference is determined by the quality of our inner life, or what we call "spirituality." Change of itself just happens; spiritual transformation is an active process of letting go, living in the confusing dark space for a while."

I don't know about you, but I hate that dark space. I get lost in it. I clamor for superficial identities (degrees after my name, letters of adoration I've

received, consolation from friends who try to remind me how wonderful I am) that make me feel safe for a few minutes. But at some level I know that if I don't accept the darkness, I will not be able to move back into the light with a level of transformation. So, into that space I go, kicking and screaming for mercy; not graceful and appreciative. I sometimes have to go in several times before the transformation takes place and I return with a renewed level of insight and joy and perspective that "Makes all things new."

So, as we venture into this new year, with all it's problems and uncertainties and fears about the future of our beloved nation, let's be brave together. Let's have the courage to let go of what's not working, face the pain of breaking down, and then break through to the transformation that awaits us.

Much love to all of you as we accept the challenges that are waiting for us.

Lori

Reference: Adapted from Richard Rohr with John Feister, Hope Against Darkness: The Transforming Vision of Saint Francis in an Age of Anxiety (Franciscan Media: 2002), 69.

Ask Emily.

Hello Folks,

Well here we are at the beginning of the new year. I'm a little tired of writing since I sent you those three email blasts over the past three weeks to help keep you safe during the Holidays. I hope they helped. I've been wanting to tell you about a new dog insight I've had. The insight is about how important



it is to just be yourself. To make this point, I am not dressing up this time, just being myself in the nude. Don't worry, I already have my February outfit picked out. I think I told you about my dog friend named Donut. He was found near a Dunkin Donut shop, so that's why someone named him that. Personally, I think they should have named him "Dunkin" but that wasn't my call. How do you live with a name like "Donut"? I have personally witnessed many humans asking, "Donut? He doesn't look like a donut." And he doesn't. Anyway, the point of all this is that I realized I have been comparing myself to him and feeling inadequate. He has all these cute things he does, and the humans just rave about how clever he is.



He can open all the doors to our house by jumping up and pushing the door lever down; He does "hi fives" with both paws upon command, he's way beyond "sit, stay, roll over, and so on". Well I don't do any of those things. Then I realized that my family loves me much more than they do Donut, even though I don't do all those things. I don't even need to do them to be loved. So, if you are tempted to compare yourself to

others, forget it. Just be yourself, your best self, and get all the love you can just by being you.

Our guest this month is Bella who has also learned how crazy-making it is to compare yourself to others. Bella is the guardian of Peter Ashenden. Peter is the Vice President of Consumer Affairs for Optum's Behavioral Solutions Business. He is responsible for developing and implementing behavioral health programs that support people with mental illness achieve long-term recovery and resilience. He is also a mental health consumer. Peter is a member of the Board of iNAPS (interNational Association of Peer Supporters, The Mental Health Empowerment Project, and is a former member of the Consumer Advisory Board for the Center for Mental Health Services a division

of SAMHSA. Peter is a tireless advocate assuring the rights of those of us that have a psychiatric diagnosis.

Let's hear what's on Bella's mind.

Dear Emily,

Bella here. I have asked for advice before and it turned out OK, so I'm back with another question for you. As you know, I have a reputation for being somewhat of a "prim donna." Underneath, I am quite down to earth. I take my job of taking care of Peter quite seriously, and consider myself to be a career girl. I would like to be respected for the work I do as a professional guardian and not dismissed as a "princess." Any ideas on how I can make this shift in how I am perceived?

Bella

Dear Bella,

I don't know of any other guardian dog that does a better job than you, and yes, you should be appreciated for the stellar work you do with Peter. The only thing I can tell you is to just be yourself and don't worry too much about what others think of you or call you. Let's give up "people pleasing" – it really gets in the way of being our true selves. You go girl! You've got what it takes to be the best! Don't accept the labels other put on you and don't be limited by them.

Emily





Resilience Inc. Update.

As you may know,

Resilience Inc. has had the honor of providing Peer Personnel Training and Placement Program services throughout California under a grant from the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). We started providing services in July of 2016 and have provided an array of services to two major community-based organizations to recruit, train, place and support peer personnel placement/employment in the public mental health system. Resilience Inc. is pleased to announce that we were awarded another grant from OSHPD to continue to provide these services through June 2019. For this second grant, Resilience has expanded to support eight counties/community-based organizations to have an even larger impact on peer personnel placement/employment in California.

In addition, Resilience recently responded to an OSHPD RFA to provide Local Organizational Support and Development Networks for Public Mental Health System Workforce with Lived Experience. The focus of this grant is to provide training and technical assistance to organizations to increase, retain and support the employment of individuals with lived experience in the public mental health system. Resilience is delighted to report that we were awarded this grant opportunity. Resilience will be working with nine counties/community-based organizations throughout California to support their efforts in employing and retaining peer personnel.

A Request From Emily.

If you have a question that you would like to send me – I would love the opportunity to respond!! Send your question to mail@resilience4u.us and I will respond in an upcoming Newsletter. And – feel free to send me picture of your cuddly self!!

Don't forget to check out Lori Ashcraft's Blog!!

To read and contribute to Lori's blog, click on the link below:

www.resilience4u.us



For more information on our Consulting and Training Services or information on our Peer Support Learning for the 21st Century - Building Resilience on a Foundation of Recovery and Whole Health Workbook and Training Program,

call 530-362-7070.

Visit our website at www.resilience4u.us

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