

Successful Rebounding

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My nostalgic recollections of Sears dates back to the permeating smell of popcorn that lingered over rows and rows of lawn mowers neatly lined up for sale. There was also the weighty 1500-page Sears catalog that featured everything from tools to lingerie. During the holidays, children made crayon circles around the pictures of favorite toys - so that Santa knew exactly what was expected.

While I have not visited a Sears store for ages, I lament their passing. Some see their demise as a victim of Darwinian survival of the fittest, without acknowledging that the stores lasted for nearly 125 years. The situation made me ponder – why are some companies and people more resilient than others?

Companies like Best Buy, American Airlines, Marvel and Six Flags – all bounced back from bankruptcy. Because of their successful rebound, it's hard to believe that both Steve Jobs and Apple were ever on the ropes.

Jobs was fired from Apple due to missteps in product design and relationships. Rehired as their savior, he helped it become one of the most valuable companies in the world. That success was bolstered in 1997, when Apple found itself on the verge of bankruptcy. Under the leadership of Bill Gates, competitor Microsoft rescued the company with an investment of \$150 million.

So, what are some of the common traits of resiliency between companies and our own humble existence? Here are a few:

- 1) Friends: Resilient people have strong, supportive connections. Likewise, resilient companies have cooperative, collaborative teams that care enough to help each other to do the best for their customers and communities – even when times are tough.
- 2) Reputation: Consistency is key. If someone is known as an honest, outgoing person, then it is likely that individual will be given the benefit of the doubt when having a bad day. Ditto for companies that manage to retain shareholder confidence after a misstep.
- 3) Wisdom: Those who endure challenges learn from past mistakes and become better equipped. They are realistic and disciplined.
- 4) Movement: Even small accomplishments propel us forward. People with stamina avoid getting stuck in pessimism and inaction. Companies provide positive environments through encouragement and enthusiasm to achieve their goals.

We have choices as to how we view and overcome adversity. As poet Maya Angelou once said, *“I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.”*

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