

Rising as a Phoenix

Phoenix's transcendence

How about we scrutinize humans as fictional birds?

A Phoenix is a fire bird from Greek mythology that, when it died, would self-combust and, after some time, would rise from its ashes. A further feature of the phoenix is its strength, which allows it to carry hefty loads while it flies.

The main point is even when difficult times come, humanity is (by force or nature) endowed with unique characteristics that mobilize them to face and overcome these difficulties, which leads to their resilience at the proof!

Shall we observe it this way: It took 20 centuries for women's fight for gender equality to take considerable force; in addition to it, the feminine gender has been demoted for almost all of history along. Nowadays, even though women still have a long way to go in conquering gender equality, they were capable of overcoming darker times and, just like the mythological bird, could rise from their ashes (be demoted for so long) and be reborn (conquest justice) an even better fire being.

Moreover, the similarity to the Greek bird can be seen between pandemic historical times; the bubonic pest was responsible for slaughtering over 1/3 of Europe's population at the time. The continent still very submitted to Catholicism, believed it was a heaven punishment! Apart from all the traumas and death caused, humans have passed it through, emerged from that difficult situation and kept time flowing.

A curious way how to approach resilience

Resilience is acting in the most strategic way possible to face challenges and adversities through flexible thoughts and behaviors, seeking less negative impact.

This ability to act resilient is built through more profound personal beliefs, which make it possible to organize ways to transcend life's obstacles and have a prosperous look for a future with overcoming.

Curiosity is the spark that keeps people going and alive!

Curiosity drives people to gain more knowledge and information about themselves, families, colleagues, the world, and humanity. Asking questions about everything and anything allows humans to be more compassionate, more aware, and more engaged with one another and our individuality. Asking questions and searching for answers give us the resilience and self-

confidence to live more purposefully and foster our core values; it connects us with our deepest selves and surroundings.

Being curious and exploring new things is also one of the best stresses reducing strategies for dealing with the complexities of life. Curiosity builds connections in people's brains and increases the brain's plasticity, which makes the cerebrum more resistant to disease or age-related damage.

A brief look at the past

Resilience has been in human history for as long as it can be told. At the course of World War II, one of the worst humanity periods, Viktor Frankl discovered the true colors of despair!

However, he quotes: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's way." Along these lines, when his family was murdered in gas chambers during Holocaust, he still managed to find the self-strength to face his battle!

Still, on a trip down memory lane, a Japanese soldier named Chiune Sugihara went against his country's beliefs during the war. Even more, he made his own decision of what was worth fighting for in the worst history conflict! While Japan was among The Axis powers, this soldier chose to give his alliance to the Jews! The quiet hero, stationed in Lithuania and defied Tokyo's orders to issue thousands of visas to Jews, later being dubbed the "Japanese Schindler".

While looking through the past and analyzing how simple it would be to choose the easier way to go and allow themselves to be embraced by anger and rebellion, yet, these historical symbols went for the more complex decision! The choice that we must find ourselves looking to achieve every single day! They decided to learn from their surroundings: Giving them a chance to overcome difficulties!

While reflecting on this situation, a paradoxical conclusion hit me: As I look to the past, I can clearly picture a future where we are able to make good decisions. Choices that not only impact facing future setbacks but also allow us to come out stronger.

The contrast in facing adversities

Humans were able to move past endless situations, and I dare say it is poetic to realize how adversity can even bring people together!

However, like not everything can be perfect, the capacity to master difficulties is not the same for all countries! A clear demonstration of this can be seen in an earthquake example: One of them hit Tokyo in 2011, and 95% of the damage was gone in about a year. On the other side is Haiti, the American country was hit by an earthquake in 2010 and still suffers to restructure itself.

The earthquake consequences are only one case involving the nature of how uneven human relations can be presented. But how about the ones that don't entail nature? How are we able to handle the persistent racist minds in the 21st century? Health systems that can't support all citizens? Or even the fact that besides being in a better social position, women still have to fight every single day to be respected the same way as men.

Overcoming deeper situations

During the COVID-19 pandemic, health systems all around the world made it very clear that there's not enough support capacity. The need for integration between different areas of action on health, such as social assistance, education, employment, migration and the environment, was evident. In many countries, it resulted in heavy state investments.

In this sense, the role of States in the design, implementation and maintenance of resilient systems of social and health policies is reinforced. Dealing with adverse events depends more, not less, on active state participation. Integrated, universal and public systems are confirmed not only by the known more significant equity and better health outcomes but also in building the capacities of societies to deal with uncertainties.

The ability to adapt is related to overcoming difficulties. Arising from the point that even the human body can adapt, independent of its own will. One example is the body's ability to increase blood flow when exposed to cold temperatures, causing vasodilation (opening of blood vessels). The crux is we can't talk about overcoming difficulties when they are naturally present in all human evolution.

"My daily struggle is to be recognized as a subject, to impose my existence on a society that insists on denying it." - the quote from Djamila Ribeiro, philosopher and black feminist reveals the reality where racial inequalities are specifically harder on black women. This way, they needed to develop a resilience stake quite a long time ago. The ingenious ability to overcome adversity is a characteristic of many afro-descendants. Just take a look at the music, cuisine, dance, and different ways of living and express this living to the world so strongly observed in the distinct profiles of afro-descendant women.

Brazilian soccer star, Marta Vieira da Silva, shows a way of how women are capable of persisting in the face of challenges and insists on building a better future: By fighting discrimination. She started playing at the age of 7 and was constantly told soccer was a boy's sport as well as she wasn't good enough. Despite all the criticism she received, Marta is now the Best FIFA Woman's Player and was named six times! Besides that, a program called "One Win Leads to Another" provides empowerment conditions for women in vulnerable communities across Brazil through weekly sports practice and life skills training.

Well, one thing is for sure, as much as humankind has problems, many of them extremely backward for the current time, society's subjects are also capable and have proven by more than one means that overcoming adversity is possible. Whether through solidarity between peoples, mutual respect, or even through individualization when seeking the common good!

Building a brighter future

Irish political theorist Edmund Burke said, "You can never plan the future by the past". However, it was declared by himself that "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it."

What I mean to say, based on his own quotes, is: We, humans, must master the past to be able to create a future where no past mistakes will be repeated! Not to plan every single second of our lives, being afraid of what is yet to come, or even worse, not undertaking wishes and aspirations because past actions didn't lead to what was expected. The future can't be anticipated!

The objective of being prepared for future adversities, and develop the ability to anticipate and pre-solve possible setbacks is excellent. However, it can't be done without the immediate problems being well resolved. Precisely for this reason, deciding now is as important as moving forward to tomorrow.

Nevertheless, what can be done is to associate ourselves with that powerful Greek bird, learning from the past so that future setbacks can be faced and, when rising from the ashes, emerge stronger from them.

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