

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THOSE  
WHO THRIVE THROUGH UNCERTAINTY,  
TURBULENCE AND ADVERSITY?

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# TENACIOUS MINDSET

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“Greatness is first and foremost a matter of  
conscious choice and discipline.”

Jim Collins & Morten T. Hansen, *Great by Choice*

# WHAT IS IT?

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Being utterly relentless

Stubbornly unyielding

Consistency over time

## Tenacious mindset

Having unbending focus

Self-disciplined



# WHO DID IT WELL?

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- The Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen
- His team marched 20 miles a day in the face of tiredness, extreme weather and uncomfortable conditions to push through and reach the South Pole
- Became the first successful expedition to the South Pole
- Even though he could have pushed further in easier conditions, he stuck to 20 miles a day
- They lived to tell the tale and showed extreme tenacity and motivation
- By comparison the explorer Robert Falcon Scott pushed too hard too soon, complained when the weather was too hard and made no progress on bad days, exhausting himself and failing to reach his objectives

# HOW CAN WE APPLY IT TO SCHOOLS?

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- Instil a culture of consistency and foster motivated and driven attitudes amongst all members of the school community
- Develop a growth mindset in staff and children alike
- Do not overreact to events, and remain disciplined in decision-making
- Commit to your cause as a school and allow this cause to become evident and purposeful throughout all endeavours
- Remain conscious to the possibility of turbulent times, but do not become reactionary
- Planning and adapting opportunities for outside the box learning

# TRIAL & ERROR

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“You may not find what you  
were looking for, but you find  
something else equally  
important.”

Robert Noyce



# WHAT IS IT?

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Making small calibrated changes

Test ideas regularly

## Trial & Error

Remaining motivated

Take calculated risks



# WHO DID IT WELL?

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- Peter Lewis of Progressive Insurance
- Had the idea of expanding into the safe-driver market
- Instead of moving in with one big swoop, he started with a number of trials in Texas and Florida
- He gradually added more experiments in other states
- After three years, when the concept was validated, he bet big on the new business
- His idea was rooted in trial and error, starting with small trials and calibrated changes, then going big once the opportunity presented itself

# HOW CAN WE APPLY IT TO SCHOOLS?

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- Understand that mistakes are a part of becoming successful
- Embrace mistakes and then make calculated changes accordingly
- Know that, should you face adversity as a school, your first attempt at overcoming this may not be successful
- Keep making small changes to your action plans
- Remain open and creative to what these changes may be and try, try again
- Do not make the mistake of making one huge change, which could negatively affect everything
- Always revert back to making those consistent, small tweaks (firing bullets) then take your big step (fire a cannonball) when you reach validation
- Instil a culture of learning from mistakes throughout staff and pupils
- Test out new ideas on a smaller scale before going school-wide, trying things out in one or two classrooms first and then fine-tuning

**EXPECT THE  
UNEXPECTED**

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They recognise that it's what you do before the storm comes that matters most... They put in place their extra oxygen canisters long before they're hit with a storm.

Jim Collins & Morten T. Hansen, *Great by Choice*

# WHAT IS IT?

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Planning ahead

Preparing for all possible eventualities

## Expect the unexpected

Being productive in your 'paranoia'



# WHO DID IT WELL?

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- Herb Kelleher at Southwest Airlines
- He was faced by economic catastrophe after the tragic events of 9/11
- Unlike the other major airlines who cut jobs and put a stop to all flights, Southwest did not cut a single job or flight, even on half-full planes
- Southwest turned a profit in 2001 and was the only airline to turn a profit in 2002
- They achieved all this despite the hammer-blow of 9/11
- They had a philosophy of managing in positive times so as to survive and prosper through bad times

# HOW CAN WE APPLY IT TO SCHOOLS?

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- Create action plans for future risk
- Create a 'toolkit' for dealing with possible worries
- Plan for unforeseen barriers
- Group meetings to plan for pre-empted threats
- Always utilise the strengths of your team (experts)
- The only mistakes you learn from are the ones you survive, place contingency plans for all eventualities