



LEADERSHIP RESILIENCE

PRAGMATIC DESIGN

Q1: RESILIENT SECURITY





Leadership Resilience

Dave Gilmore

President and CEO, DesignIntelligence

Dave Gilmore offers advice on resilience and recovery, purpose, vision, strategy, resident magnetism – and being amazing.

Editor's note:

The following essays were excerpted from podcasts originally published in This Is DesignIntelligence in Fall 2022, on DI-media-group.com. To hear them, follow these links.

The Resilient Way

Purpose-Vision-Strategy

Resident Magnetism

Hope for 2023

Resilience

Through the past few decades, much has been written regarding resilience. From medical science to agriculture to societal events to economics to geopolitical dynamics, the topic of resilience has become a regular theme across myriad communication channels. One especially encounters the theme when a newsworthy traumatic event has occurred, such as an attack on human life or a major environmental episode. This popular topic in recent years now crosses many knowledge and discipline domains. The many biological and behavioral sciences and art and design disciplines regularly bring up the term as essential to sustainability.

I'm not sure I have anything new to add to this growing body of knowledge, but I want to speak to the topic as a concerned business thinker whose career has been focused on sustainability and fulfillment. The resilience definition I've come to adopt is Dr. Joseph Fiksel's. He says, "Resilience is the ability to recover, adapt and flourish." This threefold definition makes the most sense because it holds out hope through the third element, flourish.

Perhaps like no time before, resilience is required in the new economic reality as a basic business sustainability quality. The end of globalism as the status quo is fast approaching. Ubiquitous connectivity is a given. Instantaneous access to deep, wide knowledge is expected, and the established inventory of reliable economic indicators has become irrelevant. Everything has changed and will continue to, faster and faster, until what we dream of is a current reality — on the cusp of changing again.

Frankly, we must ask ourselves, "To what end?" The increase in information and the possibilities of knowledge at such rates act as a two-edged sword. On one edge, this phenomenon evokes God-like possibilities, breakthroughs in science and creativity that could possibly address the most instinctual of human drives: the drive to survive and rid the world of mortal diseases, plagues, famines and death itself.

On the other edge, we are cut to the quick by how such knowledge might be used, manipulated, expressed and executed. We are often obtuse to the "other side of the same coin" when focused on achievement, leaving us exposed to risk, known and unknown, acknowledged and un contemplated.

Yet, regardless of this reality, one thing among many remains true: Along the way, we will be faced with challenges, troubles, losses and sometimes traumas. So, the question of how to keep going becomes front-of-mind.

Resilience is the fundamental idea of recovery. Knock me down and in my resilient form I'll recover and get back on my feet. The time it takes to recover is a matter of fitness. In the language of physical fitness, it's the time to recover from exertive exercise that determines the fit from the unfit. In other words, fitness related to resilience is a matter of time. And so it is with business. Resilience is a matter of time in the recovery and functional fitness of an organization.

Building a new model for the profession and the business of the profession is critical. A new resilience must be introduced as opposed to that of hopeful endurance. Resilient organizations are quick to recover from setback, rapidly yet intelligently adapting to the altered context of business dynamics and striding forward with exemplary confidence to flourish where others are languishing. But all of this requires a new leadership way.

What kind of leader are you?



Resilience is the ability to recover,
adapt and flourish.

- Dr. Joseph Fiksel





Purpose, Vision and Strategy

Central to the success of organizations are the twins of purpose and vision. I offer them in that order because I hold that one's purpose, known and established, sets the parameters for articulating fulfillable vision. Purpose is the reason for existence. Purpose is what ensures sustainable effort and action. Said another way, without purpose organizations flounder, absent the energy to get up and get going every day.

General apathy marks such organizations. People show up, move through the processes of their individual work, usually unaware of how their work is related to that of the others in the organization. They're there to do their work and collect a paycheck. Along the way, they make friends with others with whom they work, criticize the bosses, complain about the company, lament not having moved on, hope they get an annual raise or bonus and put in the hours required of them to keep working there. Their work isn't bad, but it's not anywhere near exceptional either. "Just enough" might best describe most of the workers in a purposeless organization.

Are you acquainted with a firm like that? Perhaps your firm bears some of these purposeless attributes.

I'm often asked about mission statements. These became popular in the 1990s and generated tremendous work for marketing folks and word weavers as organizations worked tirelessly to develop their pithy sentences, maybe two, to focus their companies and impress their customers and clients. Unfortunately, such efforts usually boil down to tag lines or slogans. Mission statements can be powerful when they serve to voice the purpose of an organization. As such, they're usually not confined to a sentence or two. Effective mission statements are more mission charters or manifestos that capture the why and what of the organization's purpose. Don't compromise the value of taking the

time to explain the why and what of your organization's purpose and don't shortcut it with cute one-liners.

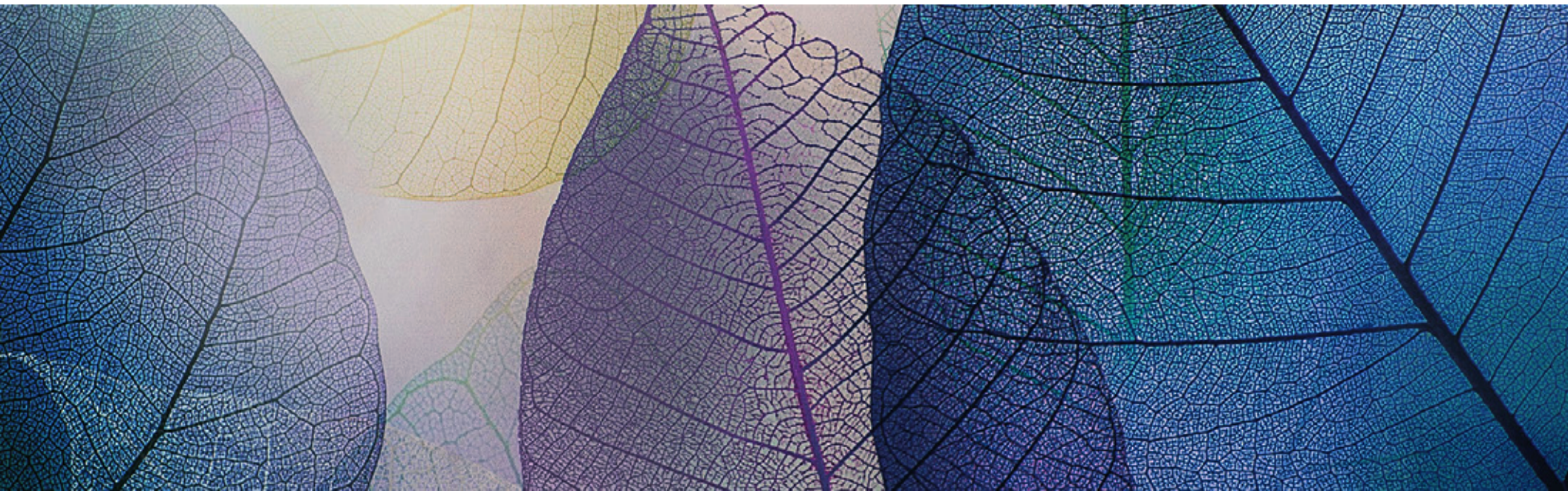
When an organization knows why it exists, it energizes and focuses, it inspires and prioritizes the doing of each day. Coupled with — but an extension of — purpose is vision. Purposeful organizations envision where they desire to be. They look into the future with purpose as their foundation and hope as their fuel. They think about what's possible. Vision is always marked by three inalterable attributes: aspiration, inspiration and direction. All three mark the authenticity of purpose-based vision. Aspiration speaks to the possibilities of the future. Inspiration draws out new dimensions of energy. And direction points to where the organization will be, should it fulfill the vision.

At DesignIntelligence, we believe vision establishes strategy. This means when organizations articulate vision — the hopeful future ahead — the vision sets the parameters on which a functional

strategy can be authored. Strategy unmoored from vision usually gets diminished to being an aspirational checklist, and that's not strategy. Strategy is the direct plan to fulfill the vision. It states the who and where and when and how. It assigns and measures and adjusts and demands the best from all. It makes room for celebration, communication, collaboration and accountability.

Most organizations don't operate from an authentic strategy. It takes time, serious brainpower, discipline, applied intelligence and investment to derive the kind of strategy that will transform an organization through the journey of purpose and vision to reality. It requires that leadership operate into the future rather than live in the moment, playing daily whack-a-mole. Are you the kind of leader who demands the best of yourself to inspire the best from your organization? If so, let's get to work developing the power of purpose, vision and strategy.

What kind of leader are you?



Resident Magnetism

Having worked with many organizations, large and small, over the past 25 years, I've discovered the dramatic impact of "resident magnetism" and its influence on an industry and marketplace. It's an energy that emanates from the center and pulses outward, touching everyone who interacts with it. It has the power to alter perspectives and change lives.

"Resident magnetism" is the organizational energy born out of purpose. Knowing who you are as an organization and what you stand for finds voice in the day-to-day passion of doing business. Dispassionate organizations are strangers to resident magnetism. They have no soul, no unifying drive to focus their hearts, minds and bodies each day. They exist but are not living. The organization possessing resident magnetism is alive with creativity, leading-edge perspectives and first-to-market game changers.

The open and unencumbered decision to choose interdependence as a core operational ethic is where resident magnetism finds its start. It begins with each business leader conducting an intentional conversation with themselves, posing questions to the figure in the mirror and allowing for the awkwardness of a response. Sound crazy? Not really. Each of us conducts an ongoing conversation with ourselves every day. You don't think so? Then stop what you're doing right now and listen only to what's passing through your mind. Empty and silent? On the contrary, our minds are active and conversational, processing images, sounds and senses 24 hours a day. These internal conversations set the context for how we see the world, our work and our interactions.

So, what shall we discuss with this figure in the mirror? How about the pros and cons of maintaining interdependence versus independence? Let's begin with independence.

Independence has a few pros we can identify:

- Autonomy to do your own thing.
- Efficiency in running your own business by your own rules.
- Streamlined decisioning — nobody in the way to inhibit decision-making.
- Self-accountability — "the buck stops here!"
- Are there more?

How about some cons? Perhaps ...

- Limited perspective and self-interest regarding the profession — like a mule with blinders on.
- Myopic approach to daily business often devoid of "best practices" — "we've always done it this way!"
- Limited challenges to the rights and wrongs of conducting business — need we add anything here?
- Limited leverage in contract negotiations, team management and regulatory influence.
- Are there more?

Don't get me wrong! I love being American, self-determinant and independent. But when my love for these things threatens to undermine the whole system, I have to ask myself: What is the healthier choice? How do I exercise the very best of independence in the greater context of interdependence?

As a leader in the built environment industry, what does this mean to you, now, in this time, when the very independence you have celebrated threatens to undermine it all?

What kind of leader are you?

It's "Amazing"

When we think of the term “amazing” we’re somewhat befuddled. Like most overused terms, amazing has lost its core meaning. Let’s remind ourselves of just how amazing the word amazing is:

Dazed, astounded, stupefied, stunned, bewildered ... my guess is that, like me, you probably don’t use the word with these descriptors in mind. We say things like, “I had an amazing day” or “that was an amazing meal.” But when I use the word amazing in those contexts, I’m certainly not describing the day or the meal as dazing, astounding, stupefying, stunning or bewildering.

We owe it to ourselves and those coming behind us to use language as it’s intended to be used. This being the case, there have been some things I’ve been amazed by in this passing year.

I’ve been astounded by the way we have forgotten ourselves. We have become so deluded that we think one another the enemy. We vilify those who don’t hold our opinion and commit libel daily against those we deem to be of the opposition. The civil idea of agreeing to disagree without attacking one another has been lost somewhere along the way.

I’m dazed by the utter absence of sound judgment and common sense operating far and wide across our society. We’ve become a dull people with little discernment and even less wisdom. We watch a documentary and believe it all — hook, line and sinker. We read articles on the internet and embrace them as absolute truths. I’m stunned by the utter lack of functional sanity when it comes to proper decision-making. Anecdotes prevail over ageless truths and the loudest voices, usually baseless in their claims, dominate over sound reason and consistent integrity.



Yes, it's been an amazing year and all that the word amazing means. But God forbid we carry such foolishness into 2023. Shame on us if we embrace absentmindedness as our way of thinking, speaking and behaving. We know better ... don't we?

Enemies far and wide seek our country's demise. After all, we have dominated the world economy for decades, had the most powerful and frightful military ever assembled, given away in help and aid more than most nations' GDPs combined and offered the world freedom without conditions. Yet no enemy will destroy us. No military force will overcome us. We are our own greatest enemy. We are steadily forgetting who we are, and in that confusion, we hurt and harm, kill and destroy all that made us good.

My hope for 2023 is that we will wake up, set aside the foolishness, forgive offenses and reconcile differences. My hope is that we will rediscover the commonsense realization that we are better together than divided and that every problem we face is resolvable when we do so together.

It takes leadership to make this all happen. Leadership at every level of society to light the way, speak truth and extend hands of mercy and forgiveness. It is what you've accepted as a leader. This is the responsibility you as a leader must now own.

What kind of leader are you?



When an organization knows why it exists, it energizes and focuses, it inspires and prioritizes the doing of each day. Coupled with – but an extension of – purpose is vision.



Dave Gilmore is the president and CEO of DesignIntelligence.