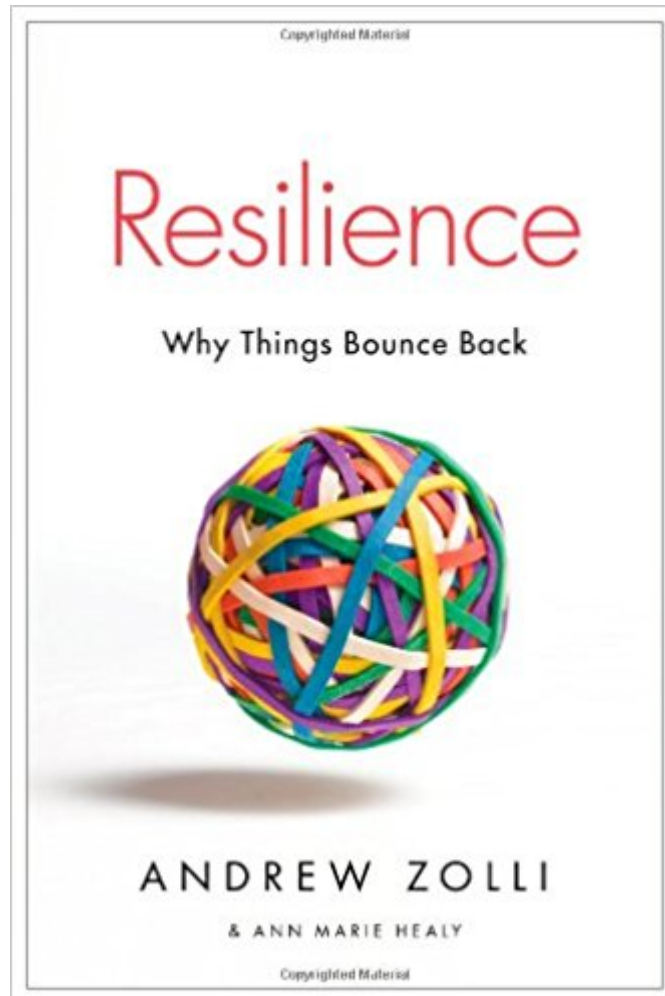




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Resilience: Why Things Bounce Back



Synopsis

Discover a powerful new lens for viewing the world with fascinating implications for our companies, economies, societies, and planet as a whole. What causes one system to break down and another to rebound? Are we merely subject to the whim of forces beyond our control? Or, in the face of constant disruption, can we build better shock absorbers—for ourselves, our communities, our economies, and for the planet as a whole? Reporting firsthand from the coral reefs of Palau to the back streets of Palestine, Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healy relate breakthrough scientific discoveries, pioneering social and ecological innovations, and important new approaches to constructing a more resilient world. Zolli and Healy show how this new concept of resilience is a powerful lens through which we can assess major issues afresh: from business planning to social development, from urban planning to national energy security—circumstances that affect us all. Provocative, optimistic, and eye-opening, *Resilience* sheds light on why some systems, people, and communities fall apart in the face of disruption and, ultimately, how they can learn to bounce back.

Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; Reprint edition (July 9, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451683812

ISBN-13: 978-1451683813

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 64 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #79,496 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Books > Science & Math > Physics > System Theory #408 in Books > Business & Money > Skills > Decision Making #459 in Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Decision-Making & Problem Solving

Customer Reviews

“In an increasingly complex world, we can’t avoid shocks—we can only build better shock absorbers. This is a brilliant exploration of how best to do that, told with compelling examples and stories.”—Chris Anderson, editor in chief of *Wired*, bestselling author of *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More* and *Free: The Future of a Radical Price*

“From biological systems to communities to businesses, Resilience teaches us that being strong is not about doing one thing very well. Instead, it is about utilizing flexibility, redundancy, and variety. In this important and useful book, Zolli and Healy help us all understand the importance of planning for the future, even when it means giving up some short-term gains.”

• Dan Ariely, James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics, Duke University, and author of Predictably Irrational, The Upside of Irrationality, and The Honest Truth About Dishonesty

“Smart and sophisticated, this is a landmark work in a new field. If you are part of a system that wants to avoid collapse, read this book.”

• David Eagleman, neuroscientist, author of Incognito and Why the Net Matters

“Resilience is mandatory reading for people of all disciplines that will transform how you approach daily global events. Part complexity theory, part psychology, it is a pivotal book for today and a necessity to strategically plan for tomorrow.”

• David Agus, MD, Professor of Medicine and Engineering, University of Southern California, and author of The End of Illness

“A whirlwind tour through an idea whose time has come. I suspect that the concepts in this book will define the next decade.”

• Jad Abumrad, host and creator of Radiolab and 2011 MacArthur Fellow

“Resilience is the most compelling book I’ve read in years about how to navigate the accelerating pace of change that characterizes our lives today. More than anything else it maps new territory for leaders whether they seek to impact business, science, national security, or social transformation. Making deeply original thinking both accessible and captivating, Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healy have produced a rare and necessary book. The minute I put it down I began rethinking everything I thought I knew about how to make a lasting difference in the world.”

• Bill Shore, founder and CEO of the antihunger organization Share Our Strength

“When the next disruption strikes, some will fall—and some, following the lessons of this book, will rise.”

• Juan Enriquez, author of As The Future Catches You and Homo Evolutis and managing director of Excel Venture Management

“Spending time with Andrew Zolli’s mind—that is what you will experience when reading Resilience—provides an understanding of the deep structures that will govern success in the coming century.”

• Bruce Mau, cofounder and director of Massive Change Network

“Resilience is the most important key to healing a planet that faces the most dangerous of times. More important and far more essential than either sustainability or corporate responsibility. Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healy’s new book has arrived at a time when we need their insight and wisdom most. Understanding resilience is imperative for our very health and survival.”

• Jeffrey Hollender, cofounder of Seventh Generation and founder of Jeffrey Hollender Partners

“Resilience is, quite simply, a terrific book—an

important sequel to Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody*. The property of resilience is the key to health, well-being, and opportunity in networked, inter-connected, self-organized systems. Andrew Zoll and Ann Marie Healy provide a roadmap to a more resilient world.

• Anne-Marie Slaughter, Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, Former Director of Policy Planning for the United States Department of State

Andrew Zoll directs the global innovation network PopTech and has served as a fellow of the National Geographic Society. His work and ideas have appeared in a wide array of media outlets, including PBS, The New York Times, National Public Radio, Vanity Fair, Fast Company, and many others. He lives in Brooklyn, New York. Ann Marie Healy is a playwright, screenwriter, and journalist. Her work has been produced in the United States as well as internationally, and her plays, essays, and stories have been published through Smith & Kraus, Samuel French, and The Kenyon Review. She lives in the Hudson River Valley.

I enjoy studying leaders and leadership. I recently read that among the most desirable traits in successful CEO's is the ability to bounce back from defeat: resilience. So, when I saw the title of Andrew Zoll's (with Ann Marie Healy) new book, I jumped at the chance to read it. I was not disappointed. The book is a tour de force of accounts of individuals and systems that are able to bounce back from unavoidable and unexpected shocks. The topics covered and the examples given range from biological and ecological systems to businesses to communications networks to individuals and communities. By the end of the book, the authors have addressed with great effectiveness the question: "What causes one system to break down and another to rebound?" The answers are necessarily complex, but can be summarized in the following way: "By encouraging adaptation, agility and cooperation, this new approach can not only help us weather disruptions, but also bring us to a different way of being in and engaging with the world." I find that the authors' conclusions fit well with the recently published "The Rainforest - Building the Next Silicon Valley" by Victor W. Hwang and Greg Horowitz. Using a different matrix, they uncover similar principles. This seminal work will help launch a new field of study into the broader ramifications of resilience across multiple disciplines.

But jumped around a lot. I liked the range of topics but wanted more depth and nuance rather than breadth.

Good read for those who think intuitively.....it meanders a bit and knits academics with storytelling. I liked it!

Two stars, one each for readability and for marginally bringing a useful notion to people new to it. Three stars off for inconsistency, conclusions not in evidence and the vague prescription. The value of this book depends more upon the reader than the writers. If this is your first exposure to any kind of "systems" view of the world, then there's a high probability you will find Resilience to be intriguing and frustrating. This is a book of anecdotes that are supposed to demonstrate resilience and offer lessons; sometimes the conclusions/lessons make sense though they're all offered ipso facto, occasionally though the anecdote may be intriguing, you have to wonder how the story even fits within the resilience topic. The frustrating part is there's nothing actionable. Resilience is certainly a useful notion and there are a lot of "systems" professionals in every field from biology to banking who practice it, some more successfully than others. Even if you're new to the topic, a better start is Gerald Weinberg's much shorter classic, "An Introduction to General Systems Thinking." And although it may not seem relevant, Peter Senge first pushed his "Fifth Discipline" systems thinking in 1990, revised in 2006; Senge's context is 'the learning organization' but he could have called it 'the resilient organization' as well. Resilience is defined as "the capacity of a system, enterprise, or a person to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances." The "system" term appears frequently (504 times) and is a fundamental part of resilience but gets no real attention. ("Resilience" or "resilient" occurs only 461 times) As one example, the authors argue that the 2008 financial collapse was obviously predictable because "At the core of the network, just sixty-six banks accounted for 75 percent of the daily value of transfers. Even more telling, the network topology revealed that twenty-five of the biggest banks were completely connected - so intertwined that a failure among any strongly suggested a failure for all, the very definition of 'too big to fail'." All that's within the quotes may well be true, but "completely connected" is not defined and that's an odd way to think about the 2008 financial collapse. Arguably whether the banks were "connected" was irrelevant with a system built upon the house-of-cards of widely suspect and in the end, faulty risk models. If the risk models had been accurate, then connectedness would have been irrelevant. As another reviewer wrote, the Ceasefire example is interesting, but that's clearly a case of straightforward "problem solving" not "resilience." There's nothing systemic about Ceasefire. Despite the final chapter's implications to the contrary, one of the problems with Resilience is that it's descriptive and not prescriptive. "...Resilience is often found in having just the 'right' amounts of these properties - being connected, but not too connected; being

diverse, but not too diverse; being able to couple with other systems when it helps, but also being able to decouple from them when it hurts. The picture that emerges is one of strategic looseness, an intentional stance of both fluidity (of strategies, structures, and actions) and fixedness (of values and purpose)." Seems like that's a little like teaching someone to cook by telling them to be sure to use the right amount of everything.

Incredibly well written by an excellent author. I learned a lot...about many things that I did not necessarily think had much to do with resilience. The author tries to relate the economy, ecological systems, personal/psychological resilience and other systems together but I had trouble making the connection. It's a worthwhile read, however, I felt the summary that led me to buy it was a little misleading.

This book offers a new perspective on what it takes for us to thrive. It takes a step beyond sustainability into some very practical ideas that can help us become more resilient as people, as companies and as communities.

This is a great introduction to the chaotic interconnection of all systems: natural, social, economic... It brings home the point that resilience is a journey, not a destination.

The book covers clearly the ingredients of what makes a community, company or person resilient, illustrated through string examples. An important book today.

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