In this global context, resilience is emerging as the genuine competitive advantage; it has become a critical element in the face of adversity (Daydov et al., 2010). Resilience has multiple definitions, but a concise one is offered by Wu et al. (2013), who have defined it as “the capacity to adapt successfully in the face of stress and adversity”. The term "resilience" is becoming so persuasive and desired that millions of people are writing about it. A Google search in November 2022 yields 765,000,000 results. In the academic literature, it is used to describe a diverse variety of phenomena ranging from prevention of mental health illnesses to effective adaptation, and rapid retrieval after adverse life experiences. It is also used to explain psychological growth after traumatic life experiences (Rutten et al., 2013).

Resilience is not a static skill. On the contrary, it can be trained through specific cognitive and behavioural practices which can become habits, enhancing the capacity of the individual to face adverse and stressful experiences or environments, such as the current post-pandemic corporate world (Dolan 2023; Dolan & García, 2020; Tabibnia & Radecki, 2013).

Mental health problems, especially in the workplace, have become the current global pandemic that COVID-19 left behind. We are witnessing an increase of 25 per cent in general anxiety and depression worldwide, having an impact of about 12 billion working days lost annually, and costing the global economy approximately US$1 trillion (WHO, 2022). The global prevalence of anxiety and stress is estimated at about 50 per cent for the youngest working generation in the corporate world, the Gen-Z, and about 40 per cent among millennials (Deloitte, 2022). Lastly, 53 per cent of C-suite executives in 11 countries admitted having struggled with mental health problems, especially with anxiety and depression, during the pandemic (Oracle, 2020). Thus, mental wellness has become a priority for the leading global companies and executives in every sector, where real care is focused on the most valuable and strategic resource - their people.
In this global context, the corporate world faces a real challenge in overcoming this phenomenon. There is an urgency to equip resilience consultants and coaches with effective framework, models, methodologies, and tools to support companies and their executives in battling stress and mental illnesses in the workplace.

In this paper, we present an original framework that applies the latest research in neuroscience and psychology. We borrow and focus on the intersection of neurobiology and cognitive behavioural therapies in proposing an innovative angle to build resilience.

THE RESILIENCE CORE RINGS FRAMEWORK

The framework presented here is formed of six rings, each of which represents a stage and a process. Each ring is composed of three activities and is accompanied by several concrete tools that act in different neural or psychological sub-systems, but which enable the building of resilience. While resilience has been treated as an outcome, a trait, or a dynamic process, our framework is focused on the last of these – the process. It is argued that resilience is a dynamic process which combines skills and external resources to build the capacity to face life stressors or trauma, and recover from them rapidly (see also Happer et al., 2017). From a neurobiological focus, our framework relies on the acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) model and processes created by Professor Stephen C. Hayes and his colleagues from the University of Nevada (Hayes et al., 2012). The ACT model has six processes that are applied through behavioural therapy: • ACCEPTANCE • DIFFUSION • VALUES • BEING PRESENT • NOTICING SELF • COMMITTED ACTION.

Resilience is not a static skill. On the contrary, it can be trained through specific cognitive and behavioural practices which can become habits.

Emotional self-consciousness, or self-awareness, is a fundamental part of emotional intelligence, extremely necessary and determinant for the effective processing of emotions and their consequences for the individual. Research shows that self-awareness is an important element impacting leadership success (Goleman et al., 2007, 2013). More importantly, studies show that people with low emotional self-awareness are less likely to respond to rising levels of stress, until they succumb to a very high level of it, and disruptive emotional reaction occurs. But for many others, the rising emotional reaction is often manifested in severe signs and symptoms of stress, and emotional recovery takes significantly longer. All in all, this state negatively affects both physical and mental health and obviously impacts the capacity to show resilience (Armstrong et al., 2011). The main problem with self-awareness is that, generally, people are not educated in the recognition of emotion and the neural substrates that underlie emotional arousal, making it very difficult to identify and anticipate emotional stress and its consequences (Dalgleish et al., 2009). Therefore, the conscience process of our framework works on three levels (figure 2).
Cognitive consciousness: The first level of depth in the consciousness process for building resilience is to educate the client (i.e., executives or other employees) on how the thought processes around their daily experiences may become the origin of their emotions. To overcome it, Fox et al. (2018) argue that the most effective way is through affective neuroscience training. Through cognitive and emotional training, individuals get to clearly identify, in the first place, what kind of cognitive processes they experience, along with their thoughts and, secondly, differentiate what type of emotion they are experiencing, while they achieve a clear differentiation and understanding of the symptoms of each emotion. Right from the first level of conscience, we expose the genetic and epigenetic components of mental health and emotional problems, where we find, for example, that in the case of depression the genetic heritability for women is approximately 40 per cent, and for men 30 per cent (Kendler et al., 2001).

Epigenetics is a new emerging concept that explains the possible links between traumatic life experiences or acute life stressors, such as mistreatment in childhood, affect the genome in a permanent way, changing the DNA and its expression and, consequently, the emotions and behaviour of individuals (Park et al., 2019). The cognitive model of depression, for example, shows how the thoughts of an individual are affected by bias produced by previous traumatic experiences, genetic disposition, and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis reactivity, which, together with other variables, form the cognitive distortions that are the starting point of emotions (Disner et al., 2011). Thus, we argue that having a clear understanding of the different mental health problems that individuals can face, and a clear identification of them, together with the cognitive processes that start the emotional process, serves as a solid basis to establish emotional self-consciousness and offers the possibility for starting to build a robust self-awareness – a key element for anticipation and future regulation of any emotion that the individual can feel. The end result: boosting their resilience.

Neuroanatomical consciousness: The second level of consciousness is attained by educating people on each of these mental health problems and connecting it to a specific area of the brain, thus increasing neuroanatomical self-awareness (Amen et al., 2011). Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), PET, and SPECT scan studies revealed that even though our brain works with several areas interconnected most of the time, there are certain areas of the brain which have higher levels of activity, displayed by more blood and oxygen flow in the specific area when we are feeling specific emotions (i.e., due to certain mental health problems or other reasons). Stress has shown, through the technology of neuroimaging, that the blood oxygen level dependent (BOLD) activation in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) has higher blood flow when an individual faces stressors (Gianaros et al., 2005). In the context of states of depression and/or fear, the amygdala is the focal point. There was evidence of a concentration of blood and oxygen for depressed people, and a hyperactivity in the region was shown (Siegle et al., 2007). Finally, we wish to add the basal ganglia as an important group of subcortical structures that are directly involved in several psychiatric illnesses. Basal ganglia hyperactivity is also responsible for anxiety (Macpherson & Hikida, 2019). In line with these findings, structural magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) studies found that areas of the brain have inter-individual volume differences, affecting levels of activity and having a role in psychopathology, such as a bigger amygdala volume as a precursor of depression (Van Heijndhoven et al., 2009).

Neuroanatomical differences between volume areas of the brain of different individuals can also be explained, up to 80 per cent of the variability, by genetic heritability, meaning that each one of us has a unique brain, related to the different levels of activity and different volumes of the areas of our brain, with a significant contribution of genetics (Zhao et al., 2019). One can thus conclude that executives (and employees) who have an awareness of their unique brain and are able to locate the areas of the brain...
that are affected in every major mental health problem they suffer from can take corresponding conscious action, thereby increasing their level of resilience.

**Neurochemical consciousness:** The third level of depth in the conscience process is to elucidate what specific neurochemicals are related to each area of the brain through neurochemical pathways. Considering, for example, the monoamine neurotransmitter system, mainly formed by serotonin, dopamine, and noradrenaline, with different levels and interactions between them. Each has a critical role in the stress response, the generation and control of emotions and behaviours, and stress resilience (Feder et al., 2009).

We also know that neurotransmitter levels have a genetic component, too, and are heritable, besides the possibility of being disrupted in childhood due to traumatic life experiences, as in the case of serotonin (Booij et al., 2015). These three monoamine neurotransmitters are scarce in the brain, transmitted by a few neurons in specific neural pathways, having an enormous impact on mental health and, especially, resilience. A depletion in serotonin is believed to be linked to stress and anxiety, modulating the neural response to stress and mood regulation. A reduction in the level of dopamine is understood to play a significant role in depression, lowering the reward system and its impact on motivation (see also Dolan & Brykman, 2021). Finally, noradrenaline levels influence the fight-or-flight response of the amygdala, dramatically influencing emotion generation, especially stress and anxiety (Lövheim, 2012). Leaving aside the abstract nature of emotions and realising that they are a consequence of a neurochemical process in our brain sets the basis for future interventions focused on neurotransmitter generation, understanding exactly what they are, how they work in our brain, and how their level affects the emotions and, with that, the level of resilience of the individual increases.

When individuals have a clear understanding, through neuroscience education and awareness, of the cognitive and neurochemical processes, and the neuroanatomy that generates and sustains the emotions they are going through, it can dramatically increase emotional awareness and equip them with knowledge that will help them understand, and accept, their cognitive and chemical process in a holistic manner (Tabibnia & Radecki, 2018). Borrowing from ACT therapy, increasing the capacity of individuals, through neuroscience education, to accept their thoughts, emotions, and the bodily sensations that follow them makes it easier for them to face and accept what they are experiencing, and to stop avoiding the negative emotional experience, thus enhancing resilience with full consciousness. In sum, we propose that the first ring of the framework to build resilience is connected to the neuro-knowledge stage via the method of focusing on neuroscience education.

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**THE SECOND RING: CONSTRUCTION**

Neuroplasticity is the capacity of our brain to improve itself and make changes from a functional and structural point of view. Neuroplasticity can take place as morphological changes, changes in neuronal connectivity, or the creation of new neurons in the neurogenesis process (Fluchs & Függe, 2014). Once executives and / or employees know the thoughts they must battle and, especially, the neurochemistry that follows them, they can focus on the psychological flexibility process, which will act over neuroplasticity, creating new connections and new neural patterns. They also can focus on the practices and habits they must create in their lives to enhance neuroplasticity in the specific way they need, for the areas of the brain they have more active, and the neurotransmitters they lack. The construction process is created using three dimensions or levels of activity, where strong neural capabilities can be built for the brain through neuroplasticity:
**Physical dimension:** The first, and critical, dimension of the individual for creating neuronal capabilities through neuroplasticity is the bodily dimension, comprised of three main routines, which are nutrition, exercise, and sleep (Tabibnia & Radecki, 2018). A small change in nutritional habits offers significant changes in the number of amino acids, like tryptophan or tyrosine, that the brain has available to metabolise crucial neurotransmitters for emotional health and, therefore, for resilience, such as serotonin or dopamine (He & Wu, 2020). Secondly, physical exercise promotes the reception of new metabolised neurotransmitters, neuroanatomical changes, and neurogenesis in the hippocampus, enhancing neuroplasticity, improving cognition, resilience, and mental health (El-Sayes et al., 2019). Lastly, the most important routine an individual can take care of, not only to increase resilience but also to improve physical and psychological health, is sleep. Studies show that sleep has a direct impact on mood, the elimination of anxiety, purposeful drive, personal growth and the quality of relationships and emotional connection with others, essential factors for building resilience (APA 2013; Hamilton et al., 2007).

**Mental dimension:** After the stage of consciousness, when executives and employees have a clear identification of their destructive thinking patterns and have started the process of neuroplasticity through the physical dimension of the construction phase, the effort in the mental dimension is to overcome unhelpful thinking using tools, such as thought records or guided discovery, among others, to attain psychological flexibility by lowering the credibility of the thoughts and minimising their impact on emotion arousal, building neuroplasticity and resilience (Disner et al., 2011; Hayes et al., 2012).

**Spiritual dimension:** The last way of changing your brain that we present in our model is through several spiritual practices proved to lower reactivity to stressors and build higher resistance to negative emotions, increasing resilience. Meditation, for example, has the capacity to lower the physical volume of the amygdala and reduce its reactivity, even when meditators are out of the meditating state. Meditation proves to be an effective habit that promotes neuroplasticity and resilience in a time as short as eight weeks (Leung et al., 2018). Praying, which some people regard as a form of meditation, is proven to activate the reward system of the brain and its dopaminergic pathways, creating a protective effect against depression (Schjodt et al., 2008). Spirituality, understood as a connection to a higher power or as a connection with what is transcendent or sacred, has a direct effect on the quality of relationships, life values, personal meaning, and how individuals cope with stressful or traumatic situations, enhancing resilience (Smith et al., 2012). In addition, it is worth mentioning that spirituality in a work context and especially for leaders makes their leadership role more effective and thus less stressful, and indirectly contributes to higher levels of resilience (Dolan & Altman, 2012).

Individuals suffering from specific mental health problems and having a specific level of activity in their brain areas need specific nutritional and physical interventions for their brains to change in the direction that is needed, by metabolising more or different neurotransmitters and reducing the volume and, consequently, activity of their problematic brain areas. Building the specific neuronal capabilities they need will promote less reactivity to stressors, more emotional management capacity, and...
more resilience. Lastly, spirituality itself is a powerful source of resilience, especially over a neurochemically and neuroanatomically improved brain.

THE THIRD RING: COHERENCE

The third stage of our framework is coherence. From a clear understanding of the basic mechanisms and tendencies of their own brain, and already applying behavioural and nutritional interventions to improve their brain through neuroplasticity, individuals can find themselves and attain a powerful sense of purpose. In the process, they find the meaning of their lives, while enhancing their levels of resilience, preparing the ground for future quick recovery from stressful life experiences, or even maximising post-traumatic psychological growth, which is a distinctive characteristic of resilient individuals (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). In this stage, individuals are directed to dive into their belief system, through a review and re-evaluation of their life experiences, ending with a clear definition of their values, vision, and mission. Accordingly, this objective, the coherence definition stage, is accomplished through the application of three powerful tools that can be applied in personal and corporate settings:

- **Values**: The first and most important step in the search for meaningfulness in life is to understand our core value system. Values are the DNA of our behaviour and they lead to concrete action. When our values are not congruent with our behaviour or not aligned with our mission and vision, stress is manifested, and the probability of impaired physical and mental health is increased. (Dolan, 2023; Dolan, 2020; Dolan et al., 2006)

- There are many models and approaches to understand values. However, we propose the Dolan 3Es Triaxial model, since it seems to be the most concise and is based on years of research. In addition, the model is accompanied by a clear methodology and tools which render a high level of utility. The three groups of the 3Es Triaxial model encourage the development of values which will help build the capacity to cope with, adapt to, and shape change, and to learn to live in a more balanced way in a VUCA era.

Two important notes about Figure 5. 1) Notice the nature of the interaction between the axes. The interaction between the **Economic** axis and the **Ethical** axis leads to survival. The interaction between the **Economic** axis and the **Emotional** axis leads to innovation and entrepreneurship. The interaction between the **Ethical** axis and the **Emotional** axis leads to higher sensitivity. To learn more about this asymmetric configuration of values and the consequences of the interactions (interfaces), read in Kawamura and Dolan (2019), “MBSIV: A Framework for Creating a Sustainable Innovation Culture”; The European Business Review, May. 2) For each axis, we have provided an example of eight values. Our research-based tool designed for coaches, consultants, and managers includes many more values. See: “The Value of Values” in www.learningaboutvalues.com
The economic pragmatic group deals with values that direct behaviour in an effective manner, which is instrumental in achieving our goals in life or at work. This group includes values such as excellence, planning, diligence, efficiency, etc. Developing resilience means having transformability as an economic-pragmatic value. Walker and colleagues (2004) and Folke and colleagues (2010) emphasise the importance of transformability in building resilience. They argue that transformability is the capacity to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social (including political) conditions make the existing system untenable. This value should be the answer to our need for control and certainty. Instead of trying and failing, controlling, and predicting the VUCA life, which may lead to desperation and the development of “learned helplessness”, we should embrace the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the situation, be creative, and derive a new system. Instead of waiting for our life to “return to normal”, we must transform our way of thinking and see the VUCA world as the next normal.

The second axis in the 3Es Triaxial model is the ethical-social group of values. This group deals with relationships, values that direct behaviours of thoughtfulness, influence, loyalty, tolerance, etc. Developing resilience during a VUCA era means having engagement as one of the top ethical-social values. One main factor in this regard is the critical need for support systems. Research shows that effective support systems can play an important positive role, leading to fewer signs and symptoms of stress. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were attempts to replace social support virtually, but unfortunately, while it seems to be effective to some degree, it is not for everyone.

The third axis of values connects to the emotional-developmental area of an individual's life. Most people do not often consider this value group seriously; they are so busy in the struggle merely to survive that they block the constructive emotional development. The underlying values in this axis are oriented towards constructing a life filled with interest, passion, and creativity, even though this last is difficult to define. For example, creativity in the VUCA world can be viewed as a new sense of coping, adapting, and solving novel problems. In this environment, creativity needs to be viewed out of the box, since it needs to overcome inhibitions, supplant the traditional way of relying on experience, and break away from habitual assumptions and routines. Another value that is important for survival and connected to this axis is vitality. Vitality is one’s conscious experience of possessing energy, enthusiasm, spirit, and aliveness (Ryan and Frederick, 1997). Vitality will bring resilience, since vitality is our psychological survival ally. Through vitality, we intend to create the small pleasures daily and capture the corresponding fulfilling experiences. Vitality can be instrumental and enhance resilience only when it breaks away from yesterday’s world (which no longer exists) and tackles the new VUCA world positively, yet realistically (Garti & Dolan, 2021).

By adopting the behaviours and strategies of highly resilient people, we can create an entire workforce that will become better equipped to face adversity with a positive outlook, recover quickly and contribute in innovative and creative ways to driving value, even in volatile times.

In sum, an understanding of the configurations of the values on which this section focuses can lead to the
emergence of a targeted, resilience-based behaviour. We argue that we can move from the abstract theory of resilience to a concrete way of illustrating the value-driven compass. By adopting the behaviours and strategies of highly resilient people, we can create an entire workforce that will become better equipped to face adversity with a positive outlook, recover quickly and contribute in innovative and creative ways to driving value, even in volatile times.

**Vision:** The second tool we apply in the coherence process is the corporate or personal vision. A corporate or personal vision is a clear statement that encompasses where the company or the individual wants to be in the long term, in an ideal future where all the strategic objectives have been attained. A vision is fixed and does not change for any reason, and includes a purpose, ambitious long-term goals (Collins & Porras, 1996) and, most importantly, the more aspirational values of the Triaxial model. Audacious long-term goals give employees or the individual the motivation to continue to grow and learn, while catalysing the needed behavioural change, and the purpose gives a sense of transcendence that goes beyond personal or corporate interests and gives a powerful sense of realisation. Besides motivation and transcendence, having clear long-term goals stimulates the reticular activating system (RAS) in the brainstem, which is responsible for our selective attention. The activated RAS guides our brain through the exhausting process of attention, improving our filter of reality, by filtering the inputs we receive and considering what is important to achieve our goals (Garcia-Rill et al., 2013). Including the values in the vision offers the necessary sense of purpose that act as fuel, involving the neural substrates of motivational behaviour in the brain, which keeps the individuals moving ahead with determination and strong will (Berkman, 2018).

**Mission:** The last element of the coherence process is the mission statement. A clear mission statement is a short and concise summary of the corporate or personal strategy that is applied every day in the progression for attaining the future vision (Collins & Rukstad, 2008). The mission statement gives the key elements that will become the basis of the personal and organisational development plans, including investment and training. The mission is how the vision is accomplished through daily operations, and includes the more operational values of the Triaxial model, offering a sense of purpose fulfilment every day and, hence, an important sense of realisation, undeniably necessary, in daily routines and activities. To execute the mission in an effective way, individuals must use the neural pathways of the executive control of their brains, learning, acquiring new capabilities, and attaining behavioural change to become closer to their future vision every single day (Berkman, 2018).

Having clearly defined values, purpose, vision, and mission, either for the organisation or the individual, immediately gives a great sense of fulfilment and attention to the present moment. Besides that, while we guide the attention of our brain to present stimuli, it becomes more difficult to ruminate on past mistakes and be prone to stress and depression, or to project future fears, and be predisposed to anxiety. This also corresponds to the values stage of the ACT process, where the client does not change as a result of guilt or shame, but instead changes under a dynamic of intrinsic motivation produced by clearly identifying their values and practising them, building psychological flexibility (Hayes et al., 2012). Living under coherence, especially with our values, is critical. Values coherence reduces our level of stress, has a protective effect against potential mental health problems, and enhances our level of resilience (Dolan, 2020); Dolan, 2023). We call this stage of the model "neuro-strategy", because personal or corporate values, mission, and vision, are consequences of neural patterns created all through our lives. Being coherent with the experience that created those patterns and ultimately using them in our lives, while using them as energy to continue growing, makes us happier and more
resilient.

THE FOURTH RING: COMMAND

The fourth stage of our model is emotional command. The methodology applied via the model is a construction of capabilities that generates emotional anticipation and potential emotional equilibrium, before entering the emotional command domain, all for the purpose of making the process of emotional control easier. The first ring, consciousness, gives the individuals knowledge of the specific areas of the brain involved in their emotional tendency. Having a clear identification of the symptoms, the triggers that lead to emotional arousal, and the predictability that arises through the awareness of the symptoms and the tendency, offers the possibility of anticipating emotional reactions and potentially having more control over them. Counterproductive copying strategies like emotional suppression are, in many cases, the consequence of low emotional awareness and may lead to chronic stress and impaired physical health, especially after a traumatic experience (D’Andrea et al., 2011). The emotional control stage is composed of a process of three facets of emotional command.

**Emotional anticipation:** After time invested in the first ring, in being aware of the cognitive process, and the emotional arousal that follows, individuals are ready to anticipate their tendency to emotion and the specific emotions that are part of their daily life. Having the capacity of practising self-emotional observation prepares them to regulate the emotions, when they appear, minimising the negative outcome in terms of anxiety or stress or elevated heart rate. Being present in the moment, observing and accepting the emotion that is appearing, and practising mindfulness breathing techniques makes possible the successful anticipation and the further regulation of the emotion, reducing its negative impacts (Arch & Craske, 2006).

**Emotional control:** When individuals fail to anticipate emotion, losing the opportunity to successfully regulate its arousal, they get into the domain of emotional control. A useful emotion control technique is reinterpreting the stimulus that is causing the emotion to change the emotional response of the individual. The objective of the technique is to counterbalance the activity of the amygdala by activating the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and the prefrontal cortex (PFC), reducing the activity of the amygdala and, with it, the emotion (Ochner & Gross, 2005).

**Emotional management:** Once individuals learn how to anticipate and control their emotions, liberating themselves from adverse emotional reactions and their consequences, building resilience by establishing new neural connections that build resilience (Tabibnia & Radecki, 2018), they are ready to practise positive emotional induction techniques that will have long-lasting cognitive and emotional benefits, due to the recently acquired ability to control emotion. Two emotional management techniques that effectively generate positive emotions in individuals are gratitude and best-possible selves. Individuals start by writing a list of things they are grateful for, once a day for at least eight weeks and, secondly, they write a list of their best-possible future selves. Afterwards, they think vividly about them for at least the same eight weeks. We suggest transforming every value of the individuals into long-term objectives and imagining themselves attaining all of them, one imagination exercise with one value at a time (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Imagining themselves in a perfect future in which they achieve all their objectives and live according to their core values generates a profound sense of purpose fulfilment and induces a positive mood, while motivating the individuals to continue applying their values, every day, to attain this mental objective that has been established.

Having the capacity of anticipating and regulating emotions, controlling the impulses that emotion may provoke and, lastly, being able to self-induce positive emotions are great tools to protect mental health and develop resilience. Many different techniques are applied at this stage of the model, activating neural pathways between...
the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and strengthening neural patterns that promote psychological flexibility and self-control, lowering the potential negative effects of disruptive emotional expression and enhancing resilience. This stage corresponds to the “being present” stage of the ACT therapy, where individuals use attentional and cognitive control exercises to stay fully present in the here and now, where life happens and when actions can be taken to make the most of it, being present (Hayes et al., 2012). As emotional control is the key to self-leadership, this stage, which we call "neuro-leadership", represents the fundamentals for extraordinary leadership and personal results.

THE FIFTH RING: CONNECTION

The fifth stage of the framework is connection. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have numerous studies that prove how isolation worsened the mental health conditions of millions of people worldwide (Dolan and Garcia, 2019). Nevertheless, even before this global health problem, the impact of loneliness on physical and mental health had been widely studied, with clear results on its consequences for depression, anxiety, stress, and suicidal ideation (Leigh-Hunt et al., 2017). Social connection is a promoter of oxytocin, a very powerful hormone that works as a neurotransmitter in the brain. Oxytocin generates trust between individuals in social interactions, while it lowers stress levels, reduces the fight-or-flight response of the amygdala, makes people more generous, and generates positive emotions, among many other benefits associated with social bonding (MacDonald & MacDonald, 2010). Oxytocin, the affiliative human neurotransmitter in the brain, and a higher meaning generator, plays a significant role in building resilience (Feldman, 2020). Based on this knowledge and built upon a progressive construction through the stages of our methodology, we continue to the application of our framework. The intention is to benefit from the newly built resilience and recently acquired skills, such that the old self-image that individuals used to conceptualise, commonly representing a distorted self-conceptualisation created by long-term sustained cognitive biases, begins to disappear, along with the behavioural consequences of the unregulated emotions. A new self, authentic and noticed through the experience of the present moment and the constant practice of values, begins to flourish with a completely renewed perspective on the world and the self. The connection stage is very important, because the self-image is being transformed by authentically perceiving others through the same cognitive processes, which allows the individual to truly perceive who they really are, caring for others and contributing socially from the new authentically perceived self (Hayes et al., 2012). The connection stage is formed of three facets of social caring behaviour and compromise, where the self-image is newly constructed by putting values into practice and caring for others in the process:

Contribution: The first level of meaningful connection, including values in action, is contribution. Individuals, especially in corporations, should have the opportunity to identify a social cause that is aligned with their values, to which they can contribute economically. Studies show that pro-social behaviour, even when the giver never meets the recipient, significantly improves well-being (Martela & Ryan, 2006). When individuals act intentionally over their core values by identifying social causes aligned with their personal values, and with it cognitive focus, psychological flexibility, decisions (Mogg & Bradley, 2005). Emotional regulation, and with it cognitive focus, psychological flexibility, opportunity identification, and high self-image, is the key to pursuing a mission effectively daily. The level of quality in the cognitive focus anchored in the present moment, not future threats and past mistakes, is the most important competitive advantage for a successful mission-oriented leader.


The quality of cognitive focus depends on the quality of emotional regulation. Emotions are great behavioural promoters but also great cognitive bias creators. Stress generates cognitive impairment and causes individuals to suffer cognitive inflexibility. This is terrible where there is a clear goal to achieve, where an individual should be able to have a degree of flexibility because of the actual volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world we live in (Goldfarb et al., 2017). On the other hand, anxiety causes people to have an attentional orientation to threat cues, affecting the possibility of identifying opportunities, a critical element for accomplishing a mission and objectives. Finally, depression creates a biased self-image affecting the level of security with which a leader, or anyone, takes decisions (Mogg & Bradley, 2005). Emotional regulation, and with it cognitive focus, psychological flexibility, opportunity identification, and high self-image, is the key to pursuing a mission effectively daily. The level of quality in the cognitive focus anchored in the present moment, not future threats and past mistakes, is the most important competitive advantage for a successful mission-oriented leader.
with them and contributing economic resources to these causes, they undergo an immediate improvement in their well-being. This is the current strategy of some of the leading companies globally, focused on offering opportunities to their employees to give back, also aligned with their values, through a preselection performed by their employees, which enhances retention, loyalty, happiness, and well-being.

**Participation:** The second level of compromise in connection and meaningful giving back is participation. When the process of helping others takes place personally, especially when the cause in which individuals are participating is aligned with their core values, empathy is established and, with it, generosity is promoted, with the subsequent secretion of oxytocin, building resilience (Barraza & Zak, 2009). In this moment, individuals must be directed to participate personally and physically with their skills, time, and dedication, to a cause aligned with their values. When corporate mission, social cause, and employee values and skills are aligned, a powerful phenomenon takes place, enhancing employee retention, satisfaction, and loyalty towards the business (Bengston, 2020; Dolan, 2020).

**Co-creation:** The last level of meaningful compromise and social connection is to use creativity and values for the greater good. When individuals identify their shared values, applying the Dolan 3Es Triaxial model (Dolan, 2020), and create new and unique social programmes in complete alignment with their values, people thrive while adding real and differential value to society and bonding with others with the same higher ethical compass and beliefs, completely changing their physical and emotional states. Creativity and social interaction with a higher purpose, based on shared values applied to help people in need, have the power to help build resilience, elevate purpose, and offer the ultimate sense of transcendence.

Meaningful, and constructive connections, with the clear purpose of applying shared values to leave a pro-social legacy that helps other people with what is best inside us according to our core values, is one of the most powerful combinations to finally build and lock resilience in the dynamic construction process. Oxytocin, the main neurotransmitter involved in the whole process, has a direct effect in serotonin and dopamine systems, two of the monoamine neurotransmitters involved in mental health preservation and resilience. Oxytocin, as a hormone, is secreted by the pituitary gland, positively affecting the activation of the HPA axis in stress response and generating fast recovery from acute stress. Ultimately, oxytocin positively affects areas of the brain involved in fear, anger, and behavioural responses, such as the amygdala, nucleus accumbens (AC), reducing their reactivity and improving the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural reaction and recovery, from trauma (Sharma et al., 2020). Social meaningful connection, the neurotransmitter consequence of it, oxytocin, and the cascade of positive effects that it creates in the brain and in the central nervous system is the key neurotransmitter for building resilience and social connection with purpose, guided by values, is the final and ultimate practice in order to develop it. We call this stage of the model "neuro-creativity", in which executives or employees apply their enhanced cognitive focus and purposeful strategies to create social solutions that will create and guarantee sustainable resilience.
THE SIXTH RING: COMMITMENT

The sixth, and final, ring of the framework is commitment. Even the more groundbreaking and effective frameworks, models, methodologies, and tools are nothing without intentional action and commitment. This stage is completely focused on applying everything that was developed through the model and, more importantly, uses neuroscience principles to create and maintain motivation and drive in the application and repetition of every stage. To attain this objective, the commitment phase is divided into three activities that must be undertaken by the executives or employees:

Clarify the why: Having a clear reason why the individual wants to build resilience is crucial for the success of the applied model. Once the individuals have this reason why (e.g., be a better leader, become more productive at work, be a better husband or father, leave a legacy, etc.), they can start visualising how their life will be in a perfect future with the newly built resilience, creating what is called a positive emotional attractor (PEA). Imagining vividly how this perfect future will come to happen creates positive emotions that will also contribute to building resilience and generate a strong motivation to pursue that future. On the other hand, having a clear vision of what will happen if the future vision is not successfully achieved will create a negative emotional attractor (NEA), which will also contribute to behavioural change and motivation in order to avoid this future failure (Boyatzis et al., 2015).

Learn the how: During the whole educational or coaching process, the main objective of the resilience trainer or coach is to allow the individuals to understand, learn, and interiorise all the concepts that form the model. Deeply understanding sets the basis for the neuroplasticity that creates resilience, and we know through studies that learning changes our brains at the cellular, synaptic, and molecular levels, which is recognised to be needed for behavioural change (Sweatt, 2016). There is no sustainable change without the neuroplasticity of learning.

Apply the what: Once there is a clear why and a learnt how, we propose that action is induced through a clear individual action plan. The final objectives of the action plan are generating intrinsic motivation, by activating the dopaminergic pathways involved, and allowing the creation and maintenance of a growth mindset, due to the activation of overlapping neural pathways and brain areas related to intrinsic motivation. Having a clear action plan and being directed to constant action offers motivation and a growth mindset at the same time (Ng, 2018).

TRANSITION 5: The integrated brain, when co-creation meets neuroanatomy

An organisation can be a complete brain, formed by the complementary capacities of every unique brain that integrates the organisation. The last transition of the resilience six ring model takes place between the ring connection and the ring consciousness, uniting co-creation and neuroanatomy. As we presented, every brain has different levels of activity in different areas, giving the individual a specific emotional tendency. Together with the emotional tendency, levels of activity also relate to different capabilities, for example, a high reactivity of the amygdala comes together with a tendency to sadness and depression (Disner et al., 2011), but also, a high reactivity in the amygdala comes with the capability of being more empathetic that other people who don't have this neuroanatomical characteristic (Marsh, 2018). Consequently, every brain has unique features that are complementary and can complete, and integrate, the organisational brain. Once individuals go through the first five rings of the process, they become aware of how their brain can create synergies with other brains, combining capabilities that will make the organisation be more productive and stronger in terms of skills, spreading how resilience can be built and enhanced through neuroscience.
The commitment stage of the process places individuals in a constant state of learning and action that gives motivation and makes it possible for them to grow by experiential learning, facing challenges, and overcoming them, with a newly acquired or strengthened growth mindset. Committed action in ACT is also the final stage of the model and, in order to apply it, short-, medium- and long-term goals are established, with the objective of sustaining action and secure the transformation of the participant, and its results (Hayes et al., 2012).

The process described in figure 9 is continuous and must be interiorised as a lasting change in habits, lifestyle, and acquisition and improvement of permanent skills in order for neuroplasticity to continue to virtuously build and renew intrinsic motivation, growth mindset, and resilience. First, a clarification of why resilience needs to be built is undertaken. Then, in the second level, a learning route for the concepts that compose all the rings of the process is designed. Finally, specific actions for the application of every concept are developed and implemented at the third level.
CONCLUSION

Mental health, especially in corporate settings, is a global challenge that must be addressed. For this objective, effective frameworks, models, methodologies, and tools must be developed and applied. Resilience can act as a protective factor for avoiding issues of poor mental health. Neuroscience and psychology come in handy, as it shows what is happening during prolonged periods of stress and the corresponding potential mental health issues. The resilience core rings model is a process of six stages where some of the most relevant research in the areas of neurobiology and behavioural therapy are applied to build resilience and recover mental health, with no need for any pharmacological intervention. The educational nature of the model and its focus on such key areas as neuroanatomy, neuropasticity, values, emotional control, social connection, and motivation makes this model very effective. Indeed, it is a life-changing process that guarantees the building of resilience and the enhancement of mental health. We argue that our framework can be applied in every culture or setting, making it a scalable solution to battle the global mental health pandemic (i.e., at the individual level), through organisations, or even larger communities (i.e., urban zones).

The application of this educational framework can protect large chunk of a stress-inflicted population and transform the situation towards enhancing resilience and lowering the incidence of mental health issues.

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