

Being Resilient and Being Anti-Fragile* or Infrangible.

With this essay I want to highlight the fine, but firm, difference between being Resilient and Anti-Fragile* or Infrangible

There are certain values that have been taught to us by our ancestors. These values are very deep and solid. They have become part of our culture. Cultures, not only ours but all cultures, take a long time to form. Once formed, they cannot be removed easily, no matter what outside attempts are being made, or have been made, to remove or dissolve them. They will persist for centuries, reinforced through new generations. The reason for this is based on both these two qualities: resilience and infrangible, which are the focus of this essay.

First: Let us look at the quality of resilience.

Of all the qualities we have learned which become the essence of our nature, Resilience is of prime importance. The other qualities, along with resilience are forthrightness, honesty, courage, focus, strength, call to service and the ability to adapt while keeping the goal in sight: never losing sight of the goal.

These values we have learned from our ancestors and our Spiritual Gurus. These values we teach to our young. And we teach these qualities as we have learned them: with endurance and optimism.

What is the purpose of teaching these values? There may be other answers to this question. The reader is encouraged to seek their own answers. However, in my view the main reason is to preserve Ancestral History with the imbedded culture into which we are born. The allied purpose is to teach the Dignity of Freedom AND to teach the responsibility that goes with Freedom, both to achieve Freedom and nurture Freedom.

Our ancestors have done most of the hard work, leaving behind a legacy for us to maintain, nurture and uphold. Our Spiritual Gurus have shown us the path, throwing a light onto the values we need to nurture and maintain. They are the anchor as well as the touchstone.

To maintain and to nurture are not the same thing, though allied. To maintain is to hold status quo, to keep matters and situations as we found them. Growth is not required in the act of maintaining. With the act of nurturing, we allow for growth and create the opportunity for growth to occur. This is done while we maintain status quo.

In the value of resilience maintenance is inclusive, with the additional quality of being supple, bending, but not breaking.

There are certain hard facts and methods used to achieve this value of resilience. I will list those I know of at this time. If more methods come to my attention, I will follow up with subsequent writings. At this time, these following facts and methods I have identified:

First: People who are resilient do not blame others. Their instructions to self are clear: Stop blaming the government, stop expecting them to do what is beyond their capacity, job description and nature. After all, what is a government? It is nothing more than a bunch of buildings, beautiful and stately buildings, no doubt, but mere buildings. Within, they are peopled by elected officials who are governed by Laws made by the people. Should those Laws not be upheld, the people, or elected officials are removed from office. Certainly, tradition is part of the mechanism that connect the people, but beyond these mechanisms there is nothing else. Certainly, there are internal complications, however, which are created by people because of the very nature of the Human. The very laws, made to give order and perimeters, are used to manipulate through power and intrigue for various reasons. This is similar to corporate entities and organizations. Stop blaming perceived leaders. The resilient knows it is futile to blame a flimsy government, or a corporate held up, like a house of cards, by the known demands of its very nature. The resilient know the fabric of what they are working with in their daily lives.

Second: take the responsibility for yourself and your community.

The fate of us, jointly, is NOT in the hands of the few. We all know this.

Let us spend a few moments examining this fact.

Look at the shape of The Human form: the broad base of perfect balance: the feet, the legs, and the posture is based on an erect spine. The spine is what carries us, as humans. Because of its significance, the spine has come to mean more than the physical spine. It is Strength and Character. The qualities we were taught when we were little. And yet the spine is resilient. It can bend and swerve and move and yet hold us strong. The spine is a very complex aspect of the Human form. Within this complexity, it shows us that it takes strength to be human.

This is a fact we come to realize: It takes strength to be resilient.

There is an additional fact, humans cannot live in isolation. We are social beings, depending on each other. And individual human beings are messy, delightfully varied, no two the same, and constantly in movement. Yet the Human is one, which similar values and thought, in common. Living with people teaches us to be resilient. Without this quality, we would find it impossible to survive in a community. With this quality of resilience comes a dependency on each other. This is the quality which makes us Human. For we all share this quality.

Each piece must be strong. Without a fitting piece the jigsaw picture is not complete. In a jigsaw puzzle, each piece matters.

The jigsaw picture is like a community. Each component matters. Our job is simple: take care of each piece. Maintain its value for what it contributes to the whole. But prime, and foremost, make sure each piece is not draining from the whole. Each piece takes care of itself. This is vital for building the resilience of the collective social group. Building the resilience of the collective social group will increase National Security as well as the necessary balance required to make progress at all fronts. This is vital. This we all know. But how do we achieve this?

The answer, in my view, is in three structured steps:

A) Make sure we are individually secure and safe.

Let's break this up into two aspects:

1) Social support and network: **'to gun or not to gun'** that is a personal question. The fact that, at this time in our history, gun shows are sold out is revealing. People are buying guns.

But more than guns: who is your social network? I do not mean the online variety of social media. This online variety actually fosters more loneliness and isolation for the many who do not know how to use online connections correctly. By social network I mean people in living proximity not restricted to online presence. Who is your support group? Do you have a network personally? Commute and volunteerism are essential to modern society. If you do not have it, you need to get it, to seek it out. People HAVE to re-strengthen and re-awaken their essential spirit of volunteerism and community. Without this our basic structure will disintegrate, and the larger group community will weaken.

Here I would like to mention the Sikh values of volunteerism and community. Their service of community is unprecedented. Their presence does much to keep the cohesive center of a community together in its strength and pragmatic resilience. They are alert, giving and heroic. And alert, giving and heroic people are what protect our country and community. Always

Further: The People and Citizenry need to be trained as first responders in each section of the community. Do we even have a contingency plan active in our city? Or are we leaving this plan only to the law enforcement forces, already stretched thin? Have the people in your local individual community ever disregarded a call to service? Will our individual community disregard a call to service in a network of safety?

Conversely, does the city you live in ALLOW its businesses to take responsibility? Or do your city governments tell the businesses who to do business with,

and what business they are to do? Are our cities attempting to do what is impossible: which is to attempt to control all the businesses in their jurisdiction? If so, for some it's a time bomb about to explode.

As individuals must be allowed to take responsibility for their own selves so it is with businesses. This must be made clear to both individuals making up a business as well as clear to the local city governments. Any excessive control from the city side, or government, can easily slip into a totalitarian state psychology. We have seen totalitarian state are always weak. Simply because their essential components, The People, have become weak. As a result, their community has become weak.

Of all the enemies of Resilience and Strength, Totalitarian state government and psychology is the worst. It will suck the blood out of people. Totalitarian mind sets create hatred and weakness. Cities that use Totalitarian psychology will wind up with an absent or a limp, helpless, weak citizenry and people who are a dead weight on all and any resources the community has to offer.

The warning sign is a growing level of passive people around in the community, sometimes cynical, sometimes disgusted, moving between fear and loss of initiative. If we see this in our community then we know our enemies are winning and we are losing ground.

Every single community that survived huge trauma has done so on the strengths of their individual components: The Germans, The Japanese, The Americans, The Indians. The Germans after the 2nd World War, the Japanese after Hiroshima and now, Fukushima, The Americans after 9/11 attack in recent history, The Indians after Independence. Every other country in the world only survived after great trauma because of this strength of its individual components. Ever leader gives elaborate speeches to activate and motivate individuals with those values taught by each communities Ancestral History. There are no exceptions to this method of teaching and activating people.

2) Who are the community's reliable resources? Who is your trusted source? Who will answer your questions? Let's go beyond the questions....who will answer the phone?!!! What is a number you can call that is not linked to an answering machine? More importantly, who will give you accurate information? Information that is not sensational or propaganda. This person must neither be hysterical nor an ostrich-in-the-sand. It must be someone you can rely on for a balanced accurate analysis. In other words, who are the Wise Ones in your immediate circle? Find them now when you can. Before you need them desperately. This is probably a most difficult, yet most important and necessary step. For each of us MUST contain our own personal climate of fear, yet not be sucked into denial like frightened fools.

Our near-term goal is clear. Dissolve the fear dividend. One drop at a time. Those who wish to attack us cannot get us if there is no fear dividend.

Fear is a technique used to govern as well as to overthrow elected governing administration. Let us not be a puppet in the hands of Rambo like creatures, some home-grown in our land, who want to get in their 15-minutes of fame, and force us to spend HUGE amounts of ill-advised and over-arching measures at Federal level to contain something that the shield of the proverbial pitchfork and guns or 'laathis' can handle easily by the N.I.M.B. (Not In My Backyard) Method.

This can only be done if we dissolve our fear, and its toxic effect, systematically.

A very effective way to dissolve fear is to work at the micro-level internal security. It is a series of a micro-item connections. Tiny. Like a honeycomb. Make EACH micro-unit strong, resourceful, and resilient

At this point in our social structure, we have a big weakness. We have closed the doors to our homes. We have learned to wear blinders, bury our head in the sand, like ostriches, and we have, consequently, developed all kinds of problems because humans cannot live without community and society. We are social beings. Shutting the doors have created problems that are weakening the very micro-unit of community which needs to be strengthened. The rates of experiencing loneliness have grown, so has the result of loneliness: obesity, depression, anxiety, perversities, and great rage, among others. The consequence of these are acts such as suicide, alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, broken families, quasi-broken families resulting in deep fissures in the structure of society, leading to the very damaging withdrawal from society.

Remember: society has the ills it tolerates.

To keep our community and its vital components, the people resilient and strong: let us go one step further: connect with the communities which have already developed their internal security system and their resilience or are more developed. Stay in the loop.

It is an effort. Most certainly. Take the effort. Share with them the developments and progress of your community, as well as the learnings from your own society. No two communities are the same. Share the strengths and weaknesses. It is part of the solidarity. Remember, we are human. Not machines.

There are structured ways of getting this sense of purpose. We all, individually and jointly, need to examine this individually and jointly. This is timeless. These values are not specific to our times alone. Human societies and their people have had to deal with social and individual trauma over the years.

Consider the words of Archilochus, from 700 BCE still valid today:

"Will, lost in a sea of trouble: rise.

Save yourself from the enemies of the whirlpool of willing,

Courage exposes ambushes.

Steadfastness destroyed enemies.

Keep your victories hidden.

Do not sulk over defeat.

Accept good.

Bend before evil.

Know the rhythm that binds all men"

B) Carefully structured contingency plans.

Another aspect of resilience is to have carefully structured contingency plans. There are simple contingency plans. Have enough supplies and provisions to last between 1 month if not more.

Plus learn to barter.

Barter makes the dollar/ local currency go further. Use it ONLY on what you value and believe in. We cannot blame companies who feed us inferior products when we are endorsing them with our purchasing power.

The key word is RESORUCEFULNESS. It is People who are resourceful. Not technology. Or organizations. People learn from People. Any social group of people has the capacity of Resourcefulness which they display repeatedly.

Sister of resourcefulness is recovery. Rapid Recovery. The distance between realization and action to rectify must be very short. This must be short BOTH in mental capacity and in time. It is important to understand this concept. It is not impulsive, ungoverned infantile, unstructured action. It is very goal oriented, focused thinking to bring this rapid recovery.

Of interest: In June 2007 the report by the Council on Competitiveness, a Washington-based group with its mission "committed to ensuring the future prosperity of all Americans," concluded: "The ability to manage emerging risks, anticipating the interactions between different types of risk, and bounce back from disruption will be a competitive differentiation for companies and countries alike in the 21st Century."

C) Draw from all sources. Learn from all sources.

This is New society, a New country, a New world post Cyberspace. Familiarize yourself with the intellectual thinking that is around us. We are in a war of ideas. We are in a war of attrition. Those who do not like our way of life will slowly wear us down. Idea by idea. And you will not know, or realize, the hemorrhage. It is a calculated way. One can even say it is calculated assault. Understand there are abusive societies, not just abusive people. Understand how they work. Understand their mindset. Do not allow yourself to get into the slide of ignorance.

Take this challenge: come to a place, mentally, where you can recognize the source of a concept. For instance, if the source of a thought being mentioned is Buddhist, know it for what it is. Recognize it. If a thought is based on Sikh concepts, recognize it. Similarly, if a thought being mentioned is sourced in Muslim or Christian concepts, know it and recognize it. If a thought is based on Judaism, know it. If it is atheist, know it. This ability to recognize thought is, actually, a lot of fun to do.

If the thought is sourced in disruption, insurrection, or other values foreign to your social community, recognize it. At this point it becomes quite dangerous. How to handle such values is not the scope of this essay. It is a very difficult area and must be examined further.

It behooves us, as well-educated sophisticated people, to know the concepts of Human communities across the world, as clearly as we know what to accept and what not accept.

Remember: the purest thought is the one that cannot fade under examination. Do not doubt the integrity of your beliefs. Yet, arrogance is weakness. It is unnecessary to let yourself go to that level. It is unnecessary to go from ignorance to arrogance. Integrity, by the way, is not part of arrogance. Those are disparate qualities. Arrogance is not a quality sought for by the resilient.

In the '**Art of War**' **Sun Tsu** talks clearly of knowing the nature of the enemy. It is a very strong factor in his text and instructions. Tzu's book was translated into several languages, reviewed and examined by many writers, taught in various business schools and studied by industrialists, political scientist, and government officials alike. This same concept of knowing the nature of your enemy is repeated in all the other texts of instructions in the art of governance.

Keeping in mind that the young tree bends, the old snaps being brittle and without any resilience, being supple is not an option. It is a requirement. It is a vital component of Resilience.

As part of our structured goal of achieving and maintaining our society and community, the ignorance of people is not an option. Companies and countries are

made up of people. Without people there are no countries and companies. And no community and no society. It is the strength of the individual that makes up the Strength of the whole.

WE as people, have to demand our leaders of our community put in place programs that help build those qualities of the tradition of self-reliance and volunteerism, endurance and optimism, resourcefulness and steely strength and recovery. Most civilized communities already have such programs in place. We must not allow the cities and state governments to keep us at arm's length.

WE are the people. WE have been empowered by our land and its organizations which WE built. WE maintain the work done by our Ancestors and Spiritual Gurus. These are decisions WE must take.

Who is going to be dependable? This is our only way to build and keep a stable community. Those people and companies and organizations, including Government, who are dependable will draw people.

The official term: Operational Risk needs to be familiar to us all. It is the term meant to be used for pre-empting a crisis.

On a more personal, social and intimate note I have a suggestion: Keeping in mind that the very Rambo-land of Hollywood, Bollywood, other movie makers can be very effective since humans are always influenced by Story.

Movies have been used for decades to sway and manipulate public opinion for purposes of social engineering or to omit certain scenarios from historic events altogether. any historic movie with overt events is riddled with propaganda and historic inaccuracies. The movies media does a wonderful job in telling the tales of dramas, sensation, killings, gangsters, struggle, success and failure, of laughter and comedy.

Hollywood, Bollywood, and all the movies' media **can** also do a wonderful job of telling the tales of resilience: resourcefulness, speedy recovery and strength, endurance and optimism. Especially at a time of national crisis.

With resilience, the other pattern in Nature is of transformation. Transformation is interwoven with change. The Vedic concept "Change is the only constant" is true and has been true always. In Sanskrit the concept is shown by these words " Paraivaartan Sansaar ka Neeyam hai" Parivartan means change, transformation. Sansaar is the world or existence. Neeyam means rule, system or discipline.

Those who do not change will be left behind. Hardliners of this concept go as far as to say: those who do not change will perish.

With the quality of transformation, we come to the aspect of society, which is both awe inspiring and quizzical, almost mythical and mystical. Yet it is pervasive. It is the quality of growth, characterized as anti-fragile * or infrangible.

ANTI-FRAGILE * or INFRANGIBLE or 'X'

Carrying this thought of resilience and transformation further: those who BENEFIT from the change are ANTI- Fragile* or infrangible. I have marked the word anti-fragile with the * because the word is unacceptable, yet we have no word to replace it with more accuracy. The word infrangible is far more superior, yet insufficient. *Infrangible* comes to us via Middle French from the Late Latin *infrangibilis* and is ultimately derived from the prefix *in-* and the Latin verb *frangere*, meaning "to break." "Infrangible" first appeared in print in English in the 16th century with the literal meaning "impossible to break"; it was later extended metaphorically to things that cannot or should not be broken. Anti-fragile assumes fragility, which is a negative connotation. Infrangible is a better word, but still not acceptable. Infrangible is formed from a word referring to break. This, too, is a negative connotation. Therefore, I shall, temporarily, use the Algebraic letter 'X' which is to carry the concept till the word is coined. I like the Algebraic 'X' since it was designed to imply that it carries a concept we know exists, though we do not have a clear word or term or definition with which to express the underlying concept.

We cannot disregard 'X' just because we do not know how to define this quality and ability with an appropriate term, a phrase, or an appropriate single word.

Those with the quality of 'X' do not break from the difficulties or the change; instead, they grow from it. Much like the mythical concept of Hydra, the two-headed monster, who grew two new heads when her one head was chopped off. Unable to be killed until all her heads were chopped off, she had the quality of 'X'. Another example of such a being is Raktabeej from the Vedic mythology. Raktabeej (Rakta is blood. Beej is seed) or the Blood Seed monster was granted a boon where every drop that fell on the ground created multiple replicas of itself. Raktabeej had the capacity to grow exponentially from every trauma, every attack. Certainly, we do not want to be monsters. That is not the point I am making. I am merely focusing on the capacity 'X' to literally grow from adversity.

Psychology might label this quality with elaborate labels, but that is outside the scope of philosophy through which we examine this quality of 'X'. In my view the study of Psychology is a limited and inexact study of the Human psyche. Additionally, the labels they invent, already trickled down to pop-culture, have done more damage than intended by the coiners of the labels. They have broken up families and isolated people. Those labels have become like a inextricable noose around the neck of people destroying their relationships. Branding people is a way to weaken them with the aim of

controlling them. It is totally counterproductive to the qualities I am promoting to build, maintain and grow a strong society made up of strong individuals.

I first read of this concept 'X' in my readings of Nicholas Naseem Talib, a philosopher and financial analyst who wrote the book 'Anti-fragile'. As he stated, and I agree with his concept, being 'Anti-fragile'* is far more advantageous, more strengthening, and far more superior than being resilient. Resilience, while necessary, brings a person or a society back to the position it was before it was dislodged. 'Anti-Fragile'* grows from it, developing new skills and abilities. His word, as I mention above, is rejected with this essay, replaced by 'X' till the correct term is coined.

Mother Nature has the quality of 'X'. Take the example of weeds. Weeds killers and pesticides strengthen the weed. They learn to be resilient, returning to status quo, then learn to be 'X', growing stronger and more populous than before the introduction of weedkiller in their lives. This is a nightmare in farming communities and farms since the soil is rendered infertile after the introduction of weedkillers and their mismanaged cycle of increasing their application till where, much like Rakhbeej it becomes monstrous. The alarming increasing rate of farmers' suicide world over is linked to this imbalance. Societies with this problem active in their farming communities cannot be strong.

Another example of Mother Nature's display of her quality of 'X' is that of volcanoes. The ash thrown out during volcanic eruption creates a required layer of nutrients for the earth around it which receives the ash. The vegetation where the ash fell grows better and stronger. Additionally, there are other elements that are released by the volcano into the air which are strengthening to the atmosphere of the Earth.

During this entire essay the reader would have noticed that I concentrate on the individual and the people. If they noticed this it would be a correct observation. I am of the view that the individual is the vital component of any group. The size of the group is secondary. All groups, even those online, are made up of people. If you want a strong city, county, and nation, it is imperative to have strong people. People learn from people. For those familiar with the paintings of Ajanta Ellora caves near Mumbai, India, painted about 3,000 years BCE, gave the clear message: People learn from People. And more, we as people, teach our young these values of strength as they grow up to take the place of those who pass on.

This individual strength and these qualities discussed in this essay are beyond party politics since each political body needs to have people in it who have these qualities. They are beyond economic divides since people of all social strata have in them people who have these qualities. People with these qualities happen to be in leadership roles.

Are the people with the capacity of 'X' an inspiration to the people around and in their societies? Are they respected? Or are they obnoxiously pugnacious? Or are they treated with horror, branded by those who frequently fear superior strength?

Keep in mind that human society does have the inclination to bring down people who have qualities they perceive as admirable, which they cannot achieve. But that is beside the point. We are examining this quality and its existence.

These are questions that deserve their own answers.

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