

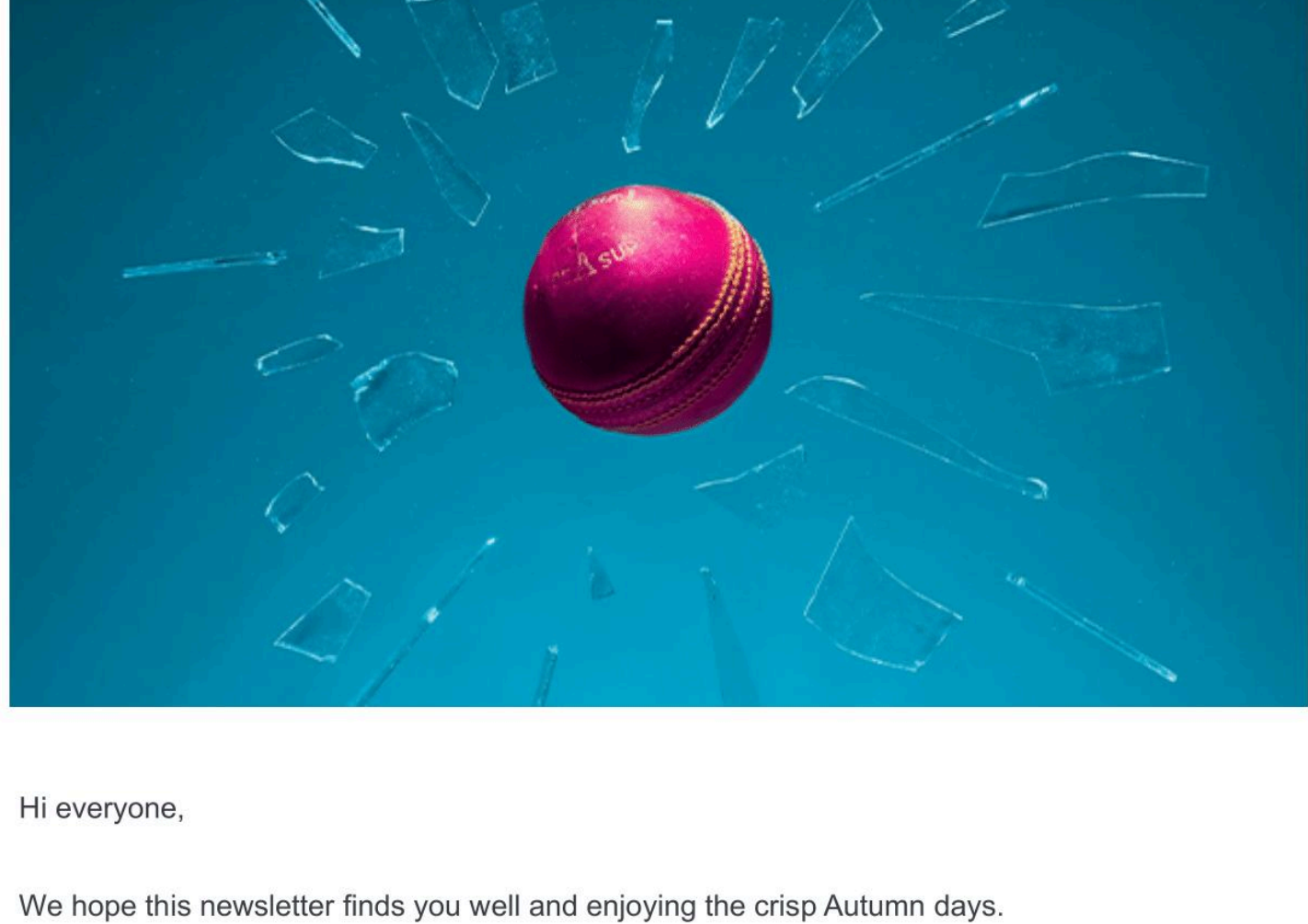


THE ICC ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING GREAT COACHES

MAY 2025

Next-level resilience: Becoming antifragile or shatterproof



Hi everyone,

We hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the crisp Autumn days.

As coaches, we often support clients through major decisions and periods of change, and we hope they can remain *resilient* throughout. But what is resilience, really?

In lay terms, we think of resilience as the ability to ‘bounce back’ after hard times, or to go through the metaphorical fire and to come out unscathed. But work by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2012) and Dr Tasha Eurich (2025) tells a more nuanced story. Being resilient in this sense will only get you so far – it’s better to be ‘antifragile’ as Taleb puts it, or ‘shatterproof’ as Eurich explains. Some authors have called this resilience 2.0.

The ideal is that you go through hard things and *become stronger in the process*.

Let’s step through a quick example.

- A twig is **fragile** because it’s thin and brittle and easily broken.
- A tree trunk is strong and **robust**, meaning it can’t be easily felled, but when it falls, it falls.
- In contrast, the femur bone in the human thigh displays some ‘**antifragile**’ characteristics. When we put stress and pressure on our bones, by resisting gravity, and by running and playing sports, the stress strengthens our bones and surrounding muscles. It’s not just that we rise to the challenge; we actually rise *above* the challenge.

Why our model of resilience matters

If we have the wrong model of resilience in our minds, we may not serve our clients – or ourselves – in the most helpful way. According to Dr Eurich, who’s an organisational psychologist and NY Times bestselling author, resilience is not an unlimited resource that we can perpetually draw on. Rather, we all have a ‘**resilience ceiling**,’ or point at which we can no longer cope, when even small stressors can trigger a wildly disproportionate response. (This is the classic ‘straw that breaks the camel’s back’ phenomenon. You may have experienced it in your own life, when something minor, like slow WiFi, a loud colleague or a stubbed toe, causes you to spiral into utter rage / overwhelm / fatigue/sadness, etc.) If you’ve reached your resilience ceiling, you can no longer just grit your teeth and power on through, which means new strategies are required.

Eurich’s wish is that we become shatterproof, which means “channelling adversity to grow forward, and harnessing the broken parts of ourselves to access the best version of ourselves” ([source](#)). In other words, we don’t become resilient by suppressing our feelings and denying the tough experiences we’re working through, but by acknowledging our reality and using it to fuel our growth. Let’s briefly explore how this may look in the context of coaching.

Strategies to enjoy next-level resilience

Eurich recommends a four-step process to become shatterproof, outlined in her new book by the same name. You can read about her strategies [here](#), but in the interests of being well-rounded, we’ve combined Eurich’s insights with those of Nicholas Nassim Taleb and other researchers who focus on post-traumatic growth.

Feelings: What are your emotions trying to tell you?

Eurich explains that pain and other uncomfortable emotions exist for a reason – they’re a form of data, highlighting our unmet needs. So work with your clients and explore – when do they feel less resilient, and less able to cope? What contexts trigger those emotions? What exact emotions are cropping up, and what is sitting *underneath* that? For instance, if your client feels overwhelmed with too much to do, maybe underneath, they feel unsupported by their team and resentful. Or worried about their future at the company, which is causing them to say yes to projects when they are already overloaded. Unpack all those threads.

Old stories and strategies: Are they still serving you?

As coaches, we’re familiar with the topic of limiting beliefs, which can include the stories that we tell ourselves about what is happening and why. If your client is going through a challenging time, you may like to explore the narratives or meanings that they are overlaying on their experiences, and alternative narratives that are more empowering. With the overwhelmed client, for instance, their narrative may be that “I have to do everything myself, nobody else can be trusted.” You can explore the extent to which that narrative is helping or harming your client, and other narratives that they would rather believe instead.

In a similar vein, Eurich explains that we often engage in unhelpful strategies to try to get our needs met. Like the child who plays up to get attention, we might become people pleasers to try to feel we belong, but we only end up feeling burnt out. Or we might try to predict and control for every outcome, to reduce our feelings of uncertainty about the future, but we end up exasperated at the inevitable randomness of life.

For all these stories and strategies, the goal is insight. How did the stories serve your client in the past? Are they still serving your client now, or is it time to let them go?

New stories and strategies: How might you experiment?

Once you’ve identified unhelpful stories and strategies, you can begin to experiment with new approaches.

[Richard Tedeschi](#) studies post-traumatic growth, and he notes that people naturally tell stories to try to understand their tough experiences. But as a coach, you can explicitly prompt reflection that focuses on growth by asking things like, “How have you changed as a result of this? How has this experience shaped your priorities? What new opportunities have emerged from this experience?” Or more creatively – “Imagine your life is made into a movie, and you’re the main character. How have you changed and grown through this period of time?” Only move onto this step once your client feels fully heard and seen, because you don’t want them to feel you are ‘bright-siding’ their suffering, or only trying to find a silver lining.

[Experts](#) also recommend that we all experiment more to become more antifragile or shatterproof. An experiment is a small, manageable risk, like taking on a project at work that’s slightly out of your comfort zone, or even posting content on LinkedIn to raise your profile. Experiments have a range of benefits – we get comfortable being slightly uncomfortable, we practice taking action even in the face of uncertainty, and we feel more agency and less anxiety. You could bring experiments into your coaching when agreeing on next steps at the end of a session.

Growth trumps winning: What can you learn?

As your clients rewrite their stories and as they start experimenting, remember that the goal is always reflection and growth, not ‘winning’ or avoiding loss. A win/loss mindset is binary and limited, but a mindset focused on growth will always foster positive change.

As [Dr Paige Williams](#) from Australia puts it, “In learning to embrace challenging experiences as learning opportunities, we can become more AntiFragile.”

Service: Who can you help?

Finally, Richard Tedeschi and colleagues have found that people are more likely to grow after tough experiences *if they go on to help people* who face similar challenges. Once your client is in the right headspace, you can discuss things like – who else is going through this? How can you use what you’ve been through to make other people’s lives a little easier?

So there you have it. A range of strategies to become more anti-fragile or shatterproof, and we trust that they’re beneficial for you and for your clients.

See you next month!

The team at ICC Academy

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diversity, equity
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2025 DATES FOR COACH TRAINING

FOUNDATION COACHING CERTIFICATE

JUNE/JULY 2025 Module 1: 4th and 5th June Module 2: 18th and 19th June Module 3: 2nd and 3rd July Module 4: 16th and 17th July	SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025 Module 1: 10th and 11th September Module 2: 24th and 25th September Module 3: 8th and 9th October Module 4: 22nd and 23rd October
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TEAM COACHING CERTIFICATE

JULY/AUGUST 2025 Module 1: 30th and 31st July Module 2: 13th and 14th August Module 3: 27th and 28th August

EXECUTIVE COACHING CERTIFICATE

JULY/AUGUST 2025 Module 1: 23rd and 24th July Module 2: 6th and 7th August Module 3: 20th and 21st August



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