

Four Secrets to Optimism, Endurance, and Resilience  
By Marissa Levin, CEO, Information Experts

This week I had the honor and privilege of speaking to members of the Entrepreneur Organization (EO) DC Chapter at their annual retreat, held at Nemaocolin Resort in Pennsylvania. I invested a lot in the preparation of my presentation because the caliber of the members for this particular group is exceptional. It comprises the best of the best entrepreneurs across all industries. What differentiates and defines this group is that these members are heavily invested in learning, they have tremendous synergy and trust with one another, and their energy level is extremely high. In short, this group is on fire.

I wanted to give attendees tangible, actionable knowledge that they could immediately bring back to their organizations and implement. They weren't going to be satisfied with anything less. My primary topic was Creating, Compensating, Implementing, and Leveraging Your Advisory Dream Team. But I also wanted to leave them with some "intangible" information that I consider to be equally important, especially for business owners that face many challenges every day as they build their firms.

So I embarked on a bit of an introspective journey to identify the secrets to my optimism, endurance, and resiliency.

People constantly ask me how I maintain such a positive attitude, day in and day out...how I have the endurance to keep going. I have four secrets, which I will share. They are **faith**, **gratitude**, **future-focused patience**, and my **web of influence**.

**As entrepreneurs - leaders who are driven by a need to improve the world around them - we have an obligation to do better.**

### ***Faith***

**Embrace the Journey.** Faith plays a central role in all aspects of my life. While I discard the belief that "all things happen for a reason," I do believe that all circumstances provide a doorway to growth and learning if our minds are open...that all of the paths put before us offer experiences we might not be able to understand or see at the time they are happening, but are significant nonetheless. If we can have faith in a higher reason as to why things are happening, we're able to let go of the fear of uncertainty.

I'm not suggesting we surrender to what's happening and blindly accept difficulty or defeat. What I suggest is to release the **fear**, which impedes our rational thinking. Often when we are in the midst of change and challenge, we are unable to grasp why events are transpiring. Fear clouds the courage and logic we need to weather a storm. It is only after we have gone through an experience that we can look back and see why the dots connected in the manner in which they did. This philosophy is what has helped me navigate my way through great pain and difficulty. Negativity, resentment, anger, jealousy, and feelings of dissatisfaction are your greatest enemies in your life's journey. The good news is that we have control over all of them, and we alone determine how much influence and power they have over us.

### ***Gratitude***

The second is **gratitude**. I begin every day from a place of gratitude. Regardless of what's occurring in our lives, we all can find many things for which to be grateful. Everyone has a story.

Everyone has had pain, loss, and difficulty, personally and professionally. I've had plenty, but that's OK; I'm stronger and more resilient because of it. My challenges were a gift because they have molded me into who I am today, and prepared me for what's ahead. None of us really know what our fellow entrepreneurs have endured. We just wonder how they do what they do.

Especially for people like entrepreneurs, who embrace and live life a bit more passionately than others, we're a target for both more of the good and more of the bad. But if you can adopt the habit of embracing your journey from a place of gratitude and appreciation for all that you have accomplished, for the blessings in your life, and for all that is yet to come, the challenges and difficulties become much more manageable.

### ***Future-focused patience***

The third is **future-focused patience**. By nature, I'm not patient. Most goal-directed, passionate people aren't. We see what we want, and we want to take it. Experience has taught me that rushing what's coming never turns out for the best. But I've also learned that I don't need to helplessly wait to get what I want. There are plenty of things I can do to help me strengthen my foundation, and obtain my goal. So while I wait, I plan.

*I've come to appreciate the time between knowing what I want, and getting what I want.* Do I want to capture a certain contract? I put a strategy in place to get it. Do I want to add a new line of business? I do research to see if it's viable. Do I want to hit a certain revenue target? I surround myself with others that have done it.

Do I want to cultivate a relationship? Substantive, lasting relationships that are based on trust & respect take a long time to build and require patience. Whether it's with a customer, a partner, an employee, or a friend, all lasting relationships require a foundation built on trust. These relationships can't be rushed.

I've reluctantly, painfully, and gracefully become more patient. But it's purposeful and future-focused patience. Not patience for the sake of patience. I'm able to simultaneously make the best of what's in front of me, while building the future version of myself.

And the final secret is what I refer to as our **web of influence**. This "secret" comes from my friend, inspirer, and mentor, Caroline Adams Miller ([www.carolinemiller.com/](http://www.carolinemiller.com/)), author of *Creating Your Best Life*. This book is my happiness bible, and is required reading for all women.

Research proves that we are the average of the 10 people that most closely surround us. We become the people that surround us.

People have a lot more control over their web of influence than they realize. They automatically put long-time friends, family members, and business colleagues into their web, even though they may not be the people that are most supportive, understanding, or happiest for their success.

Are the people that are closest to you personally invested in your happiness and success? Are they a bridge to greater things for you? Do they appreciate your gifts?

This is your life and your web, and you get to decide who is in it. It should be very difficult for someone to earn a spot on your A-team or in your inner circle.

Research also proves that when we share good news with someone, their reaction will affect how we feel about our own good news. With whom are you sharing your good news? Are the people in your web the right people to turn to for support? When was the last time you evaluated your A-team?

My inner circle is pretty tight. I run at a fast speed, and I know I will need support along the way. I can't afford to have the wrong people around me.

These are four of my secrets to help me stay strong, positive, and resilient. What secrets do you have to maintain a positive outlook? Send me a message - would love to know what keeps you going too.

And if you are an entrepreneur in the DC area, you have more than \$1 million in annual revenue, and you are interested in connecting with the best, brightest, and most effective entrepreneurs around you please send me a message about that too, and I can connect you with EO DC.