



Title Faces and Phases of Resilience "A Memoir of a Special Kind"

Author Tinyiko Maluleke

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Review By Christelle Faul Marais (Founder and Director, Lucidum)

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Lessons For

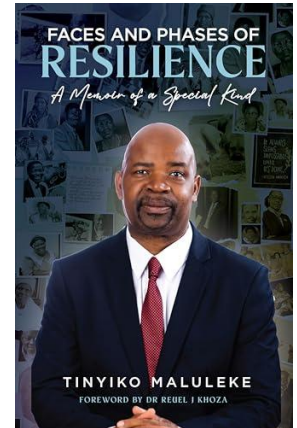
Directors, Prescribed Officers, Executives
Governance Officers, Company Secretaries
Ethics Officers, Risk Managers, Compliance Managers
Audit Professionals
Strategy and Sustainability Professionals
Line Managers

Relevance

7
6
8
3
7
6

Overall Rating

6.2



Synopsis

This book is Tinyiko Maluleke's solo memoir, structured as essays that move between his own life (shaped early on by an illiterate but formidable grandmother, and later by an academic career) and the profiles of people who shaped or shared his era, from Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Michelle Obama to lesser-known mentors, colleagues and family members. Maluleke frames it as a deliberately feminist book, built around his tribute to the women of his family and his generation (his mother, grandmother and aunts) whose endurance under migrant labour, apartheid, and patriarchy he treats as a distinct and under-recognised form of human resilience. The essays do not shy from South Africa's present failures: entrenched corruption at every level of government, xenophobic violence (confronted directly in the essay 'The Day I Die'), and the erosion of the moral capital built during South Africa's struggle years for a true democracy. Yet Maluleke resists despair, blame, and cynicism, arguing that renewal will come from constructive contributions by civil society and ordinary people rather than from waiting for a political saviour. Governance and ethics practitioners should specifically note that institutional integrity is inseparable from whose contributions an organisation chooses to notice and name – resilience recognised only in senior or visible figures is a narrower and weaker resilience than one that also credits the unnamed.

Key Concept:

Testimonial Resilience

Durable and socially real resilience is actually witnessed, honours specific, often unrecorded lives, and turns private survival into shared memory and institutional accountability.

Quotes: 'Today, we run the risk of losing that Mandela legacy – the ability to imagine ourselves as one nation, except perhaps the formalistic sense of living in the same national borders, carrying a passport of the same colour, and grudgingly singing the same national anthem. We also risk losing our moral standing in the universe.' 'True leadership, leadership that lifts families, leadership that sustains communities and transforms nations, that kind of leadership rarely starts in palaces or parliaments.' '[She challenged] the youth of Africa and the world... to be the generation to ensure that women are no longer second-class citizens, that girls take their rightful places in our schools...[a generation] that stands up and says that violence against women in any form, in any place, including the home, especially the home, that is not just a woman's rights violation, but a human-rights violation and has no place in society.' 'When it comes to the defining challenges of times...for all these, the world is looking to Africa as a vital partner.'

Practical Tips

- Consider whether your organisation's record of who gets credited for resilience – in annual reports, internal storytelling, awards – systematically favours senior, visible figures over the unnamed people who actually kept things running through a crisis.
- Consider building space for staff to record and share their own accounts of hardship and endurance, that can be recognised publicly; in this way building a more durable form of institutional memory than a statistic in a corporate report.
- Find ways (especially in governance and ethics programmes) to encourage and accommodate employees across your organisation to bring themselves to work fully. This will not only benefit the goals of the organisation itself but will also elevate the organisation's contribution to broader society and the economy; to be a responsible corporate citizen that are fully legitimate in the eyes of the communities in which it operates.

Think About

- Avoid treating resilience as an individual trait to be praised in a few standout leaders; locate resilience in ordinary, often unrecorded lives.
- Investigate if your organisation's culture is a true reflection of how it is understood by the leaders at the top; remember that the culture is only as resilient as the organisation's least visible people.
- Understand that acknowledging past and present institutional failure – corruption, xenophobia, broken promises openly, is not disloyalty; honest reckoning is a precondition for credible renewal.
- Consider whether your organisation's transformation and gender commitments amount to genuine recognition of all contributions (including those that may have been historically or culturally excluded, such as women), or a policy layer over structures that still keep that contribution invisible.

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