

Intro

Welcome to our first CIPR engage podcast of 2021, where we'll be focusing on resilience. Now this year may not have got off to the start we'd all hoped for, making navigating the ongoing coronavirus pandemic even more challenging to self-employed practitioners and communications teams. So, in this episode, we welcome Amanda Coleman, Rebecca Mander and Sharon Flaherty to share their first-hand experiences. Neither Amanda, Rebecca or Sharon are trained on mental health, but they've each overcome significant obstacles and share their lessons from their stories. And a reminder, if you need support, you can contact the CIPR's mental health hotline. There's more details on the CIPR website, www.cipr.co.uk/mentalhealthhotline.

So opening up for us is Dan Jones as we explore the practical tips and takeaways for building resilience and accessing support in today's tough climate.

Dan Jones 1:17

Hello, my name is Daniel Jones, and welcome to episode two of Engage CIPR's podcast series digging deep into challenges and opportunities facing PR and comms practitioners right now. The topic of today's podcast is built in resilience. So in the face of the biggest disruption to our professional and social lives that most of us will ever know, what can we do to build their own personal resilience? I'm joined on today's podcast by three guests who all have their own story to tell about navigating choppy waters and building their own personal resilience. Sharon Flaherty is managing director of creative content agency Brand Content. Rebecca Mander is an author and keynote speaker and a coach who focuses on the subject of resilience. And Amanda Coleman set up her own business Amanda Coleman Communications during the first lockdown in March 2020. Thank you very much for joining me on today's podcast. How are we all managing with the challenges that COVID-19 is bringing with it just now?

Rebecca 2:18

Oh, my goodness, what a year. It's been already. It's ridiculous, isn't it in the first week, I think we had so many historic events. We had to you know, there's Brexit there was the storming the Capitol building. And we were back in a serious lockdown. So some really, really significant challenges. And I think that Amanda beautifully in her recent post was very open about how challenging it's been. And like Amanda, I was in tears listening to, to the announcement from Boris. And I think it was, and for my clients, it's the same, it's not that almost this lockdown is easier, because we know what to expect. And we can follow the rules. And that's okay. But I think there was so much hope at the end of 2020, that 2021 would be a better year, there were so many posts on social media about let's get 2020 out of the way. So that when 2021 you know came with all of its flaws already. It was quite challenging, really, I think to for people and thinking about not just yourself, but how this would impact our clients and our readers. And we know, you know, in the PR world, you're faced with it so much that you're immersed in it. So you know the impact first-hand that it has on people. So it's it's been a challenging time, I think.

Dan 3:55

Yeah, definitely. And do you think the first lockdown sort of prepared us and gave us skills to be able to deal with this, this new one a bit better? Or is it? I know, I know, for me, I certainly had hoped that things may get a lot better this year. And there is

there is hope in the horizon. But do you think we've come into this, this new lockdown, with skills that were gained in the first lockdown and maybe come at it a bit more prepared?

Rebecca 4:26

I think so. And I think we do know what we've gone through. And we know that we can do it again, because and I think focusing on those skills that got us through those periods of 2020 are the ones we need to really pull on our resources right now to get us through the next phase. Definitely. Yes, I think if we'd have known what was coming this time last year, we've all been petrified and all thought that we hadn't got the ability to cope. But actually it was better not knowing because we were thrown into a situation where that actually we took day by day, with all of its changes and challenges, and we overcame it. So I think that's evidence that we can do it again.

Dan 5:12

Definitely, definitely, Sharon and Amanda do you have any thoughts? How are you getting on just now yourselves?

Sharon 5:18

I, we, I guess I found myself in quite an interesting situation. As we started the year I'm, I'm actually in a country in Ireland, and my dad unfortunately passed away in the first of first of January. So going back to your question about and COVID its definitely thrown quite a few interesting challenges in organising a funeral. And when he passed away in a different country, and we've had to get ourselves over to to Ireland, his home country, and South isolate for 14 days, and the local shop is delivering food to our doorstep, which is amazing. And, you know, tried to organise a funeral and then in COVID, is interesting, with, you know, lots of restrictions, but we're getting there. And I think, you know, I think the main thing I take out of this is that, I think it's like, it's so easy just to get so, so focused on the negatives of COVID. You know, and, you know, the way I deal with these things is like, if you just kind of zoom out, it actually makes it a look at the bigger picture actually makes it easier, because otherwise you become more consumed, you know, so if you're just thinking, Oh, no, another few months of COVID role working from home, then you become so distracted by those thoughts. If you actually think well, actually, you know, what, a few months, I've got my health, I can still get outside for a bit of fresh air, and it will come to an end. Like you know, all tough challenges, all bad things come to an end, I think that's the way that I would always say to look at it. And it's not to take away from the challenges people are having with COVID. But it's just just to try to zoom out a little bit and think, no bad things last forever. And, you know, in a few months time, we'll be looking back and it won't be you know, it will be better, and people will be out again, don't forget that they were locked up in their houses for a few months.

Dan 7:00

So, Amanda, how are you finding the current situation that we're in? We're in the third lockdown at the moment, how are you finding the situation?

Amanda 7:10

I think as you know, as Rebecca said before, it's it's, it's really hard this time. And it I think the first time it the weather was beautiful. For a lot of us, the second time we

had Christmas, this time, it's not quite as nice, well it's horrible here. I don't know about the weather everywhere else but it's awful here. And it just, it just feels really difficult. I have to say, back at the start of this, I kept saying "oh, you know, this is 18 months to two years of a thing we need to be prepared for it". And everybody looked at me like I was a I was talking nonsense. But, you know, I think we perhaps could have prepared ourselves a bit better. And admittedly, nobody wanted to think it was gonna go on for this length of time. But it just everybody went at it as if it was a sprint. And this was always going to be a marathon. And I think that's part of the issue with why everybody is perhaps feeling so exhausted. At the minute, it's because we expended so much energy last year. And have just never had a time to be able to recharge properly. And so yeah, it is really tough. I think at the moment.

Dan 8:27

You're here today on this podcast, as you've all got your own experiences of going through choppy waters and building your own personal resilience. Sharon, I wanted to start with yourself. You recently shared on LinkedIn posts where you detailed some of the some of the roller coaster experiences that you've had over the last 18 months. And it's been really profound challenges that you've gone through. I wonder if you can maybe tell us a bit about that post and what it felt for you to share that with everyone.

Sharon 8:59

Yeah, I am I thought long and hard to be honest about whether to write that post. And then when I wrote it, I thought should I actually even share it. I'm just about to come to the end of my maternity leave. And I wrote that just for Christmas on my maternity leave. And I have to say that was a challenge as well breastfeeding and trying to do with one finger on my phone while there you know, you've got the baby. And but I felt that I had kind of disappeared a little bit from my networks and online and in, in real life in public and, and that to me, it felt a bit weird that like, I would just then suddenly come back and start posting on social and being like, "oh, hey, you've just seen this cool thing I want to share" or whatever it would be that would be commenting on and I felt a bit fake, I think and so I felt like I just needed like, almost like a platform just to kind of reset and almost like more for me than anybody else cuz I'm sure those who didn't even notice, but it was more for me to be like, actually, I know I've been away. I kind of just want to come back and share my opinions and be me again and that writing that post made me feel like it was that platform to do that and reset and, and I think the other part of it was that I feel like we just share so much what we're all marketing and PR and I feel we, we just share the good stuff. And nobody sees behind closed doors and nobody and see the challenges of an entrepreneur or CEO. And I'm very private person. So it was really hard for me to share that post. And I certainly wouldn't want sympathy because that isn't, you know, in my nature, but it was more about showing that, you know, people who run companies and everyone who is, you know, everyone really, it's not just about people who run companies, we've all just got stories to share. And if we were just a bit more open and honest, rather than I was just going, Hey, high five we got x pieces of coverage there. Hey, we have this the most amazing campaign. I just thought it was just a bit more authentic, you know, and it was more about showing them the real story of a CEO, I guess.

Dan 10:55

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I guess we can get so used to loving that Instagram preferred life and the PR world gets so used to only sharing the good stuff. But there's so much that goes on behind the wheels that helped the machine turn. So, there's often so much that goes on behind the scenes that we don't get to see. What was the reaction like to your post?

Sharon 11:21

I was overwhelmed if I'm honest, I suppose probably just for everyone listening, I suppose there's a bit of a high-level summary was just them having yeah, being very career focused, I didn't decide to have children until very late on and then and I struggled to hold on to pregnancies. And so we had a few miscarriages and we lost a baby to a condition. And then my partner had cancer. So we had a lot going on. But you know, and you know, the the great story is that we now have a five-month-old and my partner's in remission. You know, so it kind of goes back to what I said at the start of the podcast, you know, life gives and life takes but you know, you do get through challenges. And but the reaction was really really nice because I was nervous posting it. And, and I so many lovely comments. And I didn't think it was inspiring, but everyone kept telling me it was inspiring. And I had lots of private messages, text messages, emails, and people just saying mostly that they really appreciate the frank honesty. And, and that's, that's good, because that's why I did it, you know, just to allow people also to feel like they can share. And, and there was also a really lovely comment, someone left and I thought it was really nice. They said that my post had reminded them that you don't know what's going on in people's lives. And it was reminder to her to be kind. And I thought that was really nice.

Rebecca 12:28

It was an amazing post, it was a lovely post. And, and I know what you're saying, it's you don't want sympathy. And you don't necessarily set out to inspire, but you really do. And that post was you know, so heart led, it was just a fabulous, very inspirational post, I enjoyed reading it.

Dan 12:51

But definitely one of the things that struck me as you're going through what was obviously some of the most profound challenges that, that any of us will ever go through all these things all at once. And we're able to, we're able to find any ways to take to take some time away from what was going on and take some time away for yourself and, and find ways to look after yourself at the time?

Sharon 13:24

Honestly, and it was a case of head down and just get on with it. And my attitude was just kind of like just get on, you know, just get on. And I had a business to run. And it was really important to me that everything that the status quo was maintained. I have a stepson, and you know, I'd made a promise to my partner while he was having chemotherapy, that his life wouldn't change. And so you know, and that might still taking him to his hobbies to his rugby to his Taekwondo and making sure that he didn't feel any knock on effects. And then, and obviously, I fell pregnant around the same time again. And that came with its own worries, because, you know, I wasn't sure what was gonna happen with the pregnancy. And then my partner couldn't come to scan. So you know, there was a whole other things that I just, I would love to turn around to say, I thought, right, I'm gonna go running, and I gotta raise money

for charity right at this moment, and, you know, it's gonna, that's how I'm going to get through, but I didn't, I literally just head down power through until I could lift my head up again, which was when my partner started to look better. We did treat ourselves, though, to a holiday just in the nick of time, obviously. And February and when I went to Australia, so and then there was lockdown in March, so I feel like that the you know, somebody the sun was shining on us then because they got away so, so that was quite good. We got to kind of refresh and, and but, you know, I think he did help anyone else who's going through similar circumstances. I mean, in an ideal world, you would take time for yourself, you know, for me, exercise is always what just makes everything better whether it's even just a walk, it doesn't have to be a run but when you just come back you feel like a new person. And, and, you know, some people have mentors I have a mentor. Or, and some people find it helps to speak to people, some people find it helps just to just to, you know, get on and do, which is kind of my way of dealing with it. But that was not necessarily the right way because it is really good to be open and talk and, you know, and, and take help, I think take help from people and not feel you just have to get on with it.

Dan 15:19

Yeah, I think certainly not. As far as last year since the lockdown came into place. And maybe I think a lot of people have felt a lot of pressure to be doing things all the time. And to be doing activities to look after the well-being whether that's baking banana bread, or making cinnamon bread, or something like that to be seen to do something all the time. But it is okay, if you just want to get some down time and you just want to look after yourself or watch a show on Netflix or just take some time to relax that is okay, those are all part of your well-being as well. And that can be just as beneficial as going for a 5k run.

Sharon 15:57

And for me, it's um, it is coming out is it's been able to deal with the challenges. And I guess in a healthy way, you know, so and coming out the other side. And I've had a mentor for a couple of years. And she's been amazing. And she's taught me to be resilient. And I think I naturally have resilience. But she's helped me with that, you know, and I think sometimes just like I said, At the start, I'm much better now than I would have been 10 years ago, I've been able to see the bigger picture, and take that, that zoom out and realise, you know that if I focus too much on something, then that's not necessarily a good thing, you know, because he can become all consumed. So. But I mean, we all need to be resilient. It's not necessarily something that maybe comes natural, because you have to where the challenges don't need to build up your resilience and how you cope and find coping strategies. But for me, it just means, you know, making sure that you come out the other side and are able to cope.

Dan 16:54

Definitely, definitely. Thanks very much. And Rebecca if we can now turn to yourself you have a background in manufacturing. And you set off on a new career path as a coach focusing on resilience. And you've got a really powerful reason for changing paths. I'm just wondering if you could maybe tell us a bit about a bit. But what inspired you to change paths?

Rebecca 17:17

Yes, certainly. So you're right, I was I was a managing director of a large manufacturing company. But in 2007, I was sales director. And at that time, we sadly lost one of our children, Charlie, and there I was, I think it was then, we did also lose my mum in a year later, who was also our CEO. So there I was running this company. And in 2008, we had the global financial crisis. And I was asked to become Managing Director, and because my mum was no longer there. So there I am running this company, it's a really challenging time, grieving my son, terribly, and my mum, who was we were very close. And also I fell pregnant. So I was a new mum. And I just come back off maternity leave, after having our lovely little girl, Ruby. So I realised first-hand what it's like to need to look apart and be there for your team. When internally you're falling apart, and you'd far rather be googling self help books, then working on the books. So it was quite a challenging time the company grew, we really worked, I knew that I'd done it before I knew I'd manage to get to where I was, as we said earlier learnt from what I done, the skills I'd use to get through to the position that I was in so far. And so I re utilise those to build a company back up. But then when the company was doing very well, and everyone was more settled, we you know, as a family, we managed to weather the storm, I realised that I wanted to do something a bit more worthwhile. Then sell doorbells, which is the company main product. And, you know, it's working for the psychologists not working for but helping the psychologists that had helped me by talking to other psychologists about the first-hand experience of losing a child. And I found that so rewarding. And so I decided that I was going to become a coach. I had a conversation with Warwick University they asked me to come in and talk about where I was in my career. And it was during that coaching conversation that has been recorded for students that I realised actually coaching is all the bits of my job that I love the people development, supporting, compassionate leadership style and none of the bits that I didn't like, like, you know, just focusing on figures and shareholders and the politics of business. So yeah, I retrained and, and didn't look back. And I specialised now in supporting senior leaders forward during personal setback.

Dan 20:20

So you've also got experience of channelling your own personal grief and tragedy into something that's really beneficial in helping other people. What was it that inspired you to focus on helping other people with resilience?

Rebecca 20:37

So I think for me, it was a really powerful moment. I was in the hospital. And I just been told that Charlie hadn't made it. And I remember thinking, Oh, my God, I'm never going to laugh again. I'm never going to smile again. I just will be a shadow of my former self. And then I remembered two women I knew who were lovely ladies, but they were like shells, walking shells. And I thought, Oh, my goodness, that's what my future they'd also lost children. And tragically, and, and they obviously, was still struggling years on. And I thought of my son, he would be a 14 year old boy, telling a counsellor that life was never the same again. Since the day his brother died. And I realised in that moment, I don't think I consciously realised that and say, my goodness, I must do this now. This is dreadful. I literally didn't know where, what what end was up. But in that moment, I made a decision, subconsciously, that I had to get back to some kind, I had to move forward, I had a choice. I didn't have a hell I was going to do it, it felt like you know, was being asked to climb a mountain in a pair

of flip flops. But I knew I had to do it. And so I then put into practice, again, subconsciously, I thought, I can't do it on my own. So I engaged a psychologist, I asked to speak to the police, the pathologist, and accepted friends help and asked for help. You know, if I was feeling bad, I would literally bring up a friend and say, can I come round for coffee? And I would do that. And I think it was when I realised that what I had done, I hadn't felt incredible or anything at all. But I realised that what I had learnt could really help other people. And that leadership, especially is such a lonely place anyway. But when you're at the top of an organisation, and you're going through personal setback, there are no water cooler moments, there are no moments where you can say, oh my God had a dreadful night last night and a real big row with my husband. And so it's very lonely, and to have that support would have been for me amazing. You know, I had a heart led compassionate team. And so they were incredible, but had I not had that and an understanding boss, then I would have been really in trouble. So I think I was inspired to coach resilience. Because I think it's something can be developed, I think it is down to a choice. And it's about, you know, if I can make that choice, you know, then other people can tune I like to be able to facilitate that.

Dan 23:29

Definitely. Resilience is something that's so important. Especially working in the world of PR. So often we can work as small teams or as you say we may not feel like we have someone to talk to. But talking is important and finding that person that you can confide in and say I am struggling, or I don't really know what to do is so important. And they always say a problem shared is a problem halved, and having someone to talk to is so important. I was wanting to ask as well. So recently, with the various lockdowns we've had in the country, we've all had a lot of extra time on our hands. And we've all had a lot of extra time to reflect on what's important, though is what would you say to someone that's thinking of following in your footsteps, to chart in their own direction? Who's got an idea who's really passionate about a subject and wants to try and make a career out of it, but maybe worried about the uncertainty of the pandemic? Just now.

Rebecca 24:28

Gosh, that's a really good question. And I think as a coach, I wouldn't necessarily give advice, I'd ask them a lot of questions. And but I think, because I'd hate to go or Rebecca said this, I'm gonna go and give up my career and go and set up my own business. And I think it's to be not daunted by uncertainty. The one thing we know for certain is that we've always surrounded by uncertainty, nothing is for sure. I think if it's your passion, I always think if you look back on your life when you're 90, and think, right was I did I do what I set out to do, as my, you know, my service to others and, and to myself, it's important to think about that. Financially, I was able to do it, because I had shares in the organisation, and I was able to support myself in my new career path that way. And I think that there are so many struggles at the moment that giving yourself a financial struggle at a challenging time, you know, is something to really consider. Because that is important, I think, rather than just thinking, oh, I've got a great idea. I'll go and do it. I'll drop everything. So again, it's coming back to asking, it's finding, you know, we have a coaching tool called Charlie's star, and part of it is the enquirer. And it's who or what do you need to know in order to make your decision? So have you tested the market? Have you spoken to friends or family? Who are in this or have that done a similar thing? Have you

spoken to a mentor? Have you got in touch with somebody who's maybe doing what you want to do, and they're doing it really well, and get advice and support from them on how they're doing? And they say, they said, it would take three years to build my business. Actually, it took five and it's still I pivoted in two years ago. So it's still challenging at times. So I think to think long and hard, but to get that enquirer to find out to dig deep, speak to your tribe, build a tribe of people around you, who can, you know, sense check what you're thinking, and who are strong enough to support you, but also to challenge you gently on your decisions so that you can sense check yourself, whether or not moving forward in the way you're thinking is a good idea.

Dan 27:00

Thanks, Rebecca. That's really valuable advice, I'm sure will come in handy for anyone listening to the podcast. I'm just going to turn now to Amanda and Amanda, much like Rebecca, you charted a new professional course yourself when you set up your own business during lockdown. And you recently shared your own blog posts where you shared your concern about what this would mean for you. Okay, so it was what it was, how you felt reading your blog and what the reaction has been like?

Amanda 27:31

Yeah, I didn't listen to any of the advice Rebecca's just said. I just said ok, I'm going to setup my own business. My first day was the 23rd of March, which was UK lockdown, part one. And that was me and a new business completely crackers really. And so it's been I mean, it has been, I mean, the first year of a new business, it's very difficult. It's hugely difficult circumstances. And I thought I was doing pretty well, you know, coping with things and managing and juggling things, and the business to focus on. So, you know, I just literally gave myself no time off and focused heavily on trying to make sure the business works. And then January, it's just seemed really hard. And you know, that first week was felt like about three months worth of time. And so when I wrote the blog, it was really came from and again, it was it's just, it's like Sharon was saying earlier, that I just felt people in the first wave of everything were quite how are you? No really, how are you? And there was a lot of support, and there was a lot of kindness. And I felt that it was starting to disappear. And there was much less of that, that was happening. And it was more I will I'm bothering about myself now. And I'm not particularly looking at how everything else is, and PR and comms and marketing the world that it is, it's all about, I've got these new clients and that, you know, my life looks like this wonderful thing that we see on social media. And, and we know it's not, but people, you know, create that impression, which then leads to lots of issues for everybody else. And you know, if you're ever in a you're in a difficult spot, if you're in one of those, you know, dark places, then it just makes it feel worse. So it was very much focused much as Sharon had said before on, please try and just have a bit of kindness. You don't know what's going on behind people, you know, you don't know what's going on behind closed doors. You don't know what's going on, in in people's lives. So yeah, so that was the feedback was really positive because I think, amazingly, I didn't, you know, that was how I felt. I didn't realise quite how many other people were feeling in the same sort of position and feeling the same way. So, yeah, it's, it is difficult. And I've been through some really horrible times, and nothing like the two incredible women who've spoken before they've been through, you know, real personal difficulties. Mine yet, you know, I had a really messy as I call it divorce from my previous employers, it was unpleasant. But it did give me the time to be able to find how I am resilient, and to find what makes it

easier for me to cope. And it was through some amazing support friends, and I had some counselling, which again, you know, is difficult because people don't like to talk about these sorts of things. And when we should be talking about it, because the world of PR, you know, there's a lot of difficulties, people struggle, there's a lot of mental health issues, and we've got to get a lot, a lot more comfortable talking about it. And so resilience for me, it was gonna say when you ask him for resilient says it's that bounce back ability, it's that ability to be able to find a way to pick yourself up when things are really bad. And everybody's different. And it's just finding what works for you.

Dan 31:20

I wonder if, as in the PR world, we we do get so used to cheering the positive positivity and success, but what struck me about everyone that is here today is that people really empathised with the stories that you've all shared. And, and people have reached out to you as you've mentioned and, and it's really spoke and spoken to some of the challenges that people may have gone through in their own life that maybe they're a bit hesitant about sharing for fear of being judged or fear of being seen as weak. And I think often, we may feel that we want to show our stories but we may be perceived as weak for them. But you're absolutely right, Amanda. Resilience says, about getting back up again, when things knock you down. And you mentioned on your blog, that you think those of us in the PR world can help support each other? How do you think we can do that?

Amanda 32:13

Yeah, I think it's, it's by dropping some of the front with each other. So you know, I've, I speak to people who are running their own business, who on you know, and we all go, it's really hard. You know, it this is hard at the minute how's it with you? It's really hard. But we would never, I'm not saying you go and say, you know, oh my god, I'm having a terrible time. But you can listen, you can support each other, you can drop a bit of the fakery, you know, that we create around what we do a bit of honesty, I think, you know, I do crisis communication. So, you know, honesty is for me fundamental to dealing with if it's being effective in a crisis, when you communicate, and it should be at all times. So let's have a bit of honesty. And let's, you know, get that support, that we're when you know, we are going through similar experiences. In some cases, we can support each other. And I tried to do that I sort of every so often, I'll post on social, if somebody wants to chat if you just want to, you know, a brew and a chat, just to offload just to, you know, as a release, whatever. And then, you know, I think we try and do that. And there's a lot of that, that starting to appear now, thankfully, I think this last sort of week or so, he's starting to see those opportunities, just a safe space. Really, I think that's what people need. And, you know, working environments really difficult at the minute with everything that people are managing. And you want to be seen as strong and exactly what Rebecca was saying, you know, if you're in a leadership position, you don't want to be perceived as weak. I mean, I did 21 years in policing. You it was something that you were just not supposed to do. And yeah, it's absolutely critical to be able to say, I'm struggling, because you can actually deal with what you did you get deal with what you're dealing with, I'll deal with what you faced, if you don't actually confront it and say the style.

Dan 34:17

No, definitely, definitely. So I was wondering, for almost a year down the line into COVID, and you set up your own business. How have you found the challenge? And is it something that you'd recommend?

Amanda 34:34

Yeah, it's a rollercoaster. I love it, I must say, I do love it. And it's got so many positives for me. And then it's got a lot of negatives, which is you have to earn money. And, and I did, you know, the vast majority of my work and career were in the public sector, where you worked hard, but you there was always that pay check every month. So it's not for everybody. And I've had a number of conversations with people who've set up their own business or who are going to go freelance. And a lot of the times it's forced by circumstances at the minute. And, and it isn't for everybody. And you've got to have the right sort of mindset, because it is it, you know, you're adding to that stress is exactly the same before, you know, you're adding to that stress off. And you've, you've got to make things work. And yeah, I suppose I have a mindset of this will work, because I'll make it work. And that's what I have to stick to, even when I'm having a bit of a wobbly day, is just to go back to that, I was going to say, difficult nature that I always had, as a child, my mom would say, that I will no, I'm going to do that it's going to happen, I'm going to do it, and just believe in them that you can. But if you, if you can't do that, then it you know, it would be really difficult and challenging. And you don't want to add that pressure on yourself until you're ready to. So it isn't for everybody. But I personally, I'm quite enjoying it in an odd sort of way, given the world the way the world is.

Dan 36:10

That's brilliant to hear. I wanted to end on one final question just for everyone. So for anyone this listen to the podcast today, what one tip would you give them for staying resilient, or building up their own resilience to cope with all the challenges that we're all facing just now?

Sharon 36:28

I was just thinking really, because, obviously, we've talked about kind of our individual challenges and leadership challenges and, you know, resilience there as leaders, but kind of thinking about, you know, the teams and, and, as Rebecca said, how it's important, sometimes that we show our challenges to our teams, because they then will feel more able to open up and, and it's not so much of a tip, it's more of some of the things that we could do as them, you know, as leaders, and so we've implemented my agency Brand Content to a dedicated support line for the team, and they get up to six free counselling sessions a year and, and, you know, that could be because they've got any, any, any troubles. And, you know, we've talked a lot about, you know, miscarriage and children and bereavement, but you know, it could be financial worries or debt, it's or, you know, lots of other things and, and then the line that we're working with also has experts that they can speak to you about these different challenges. So I think, you know, that comes down to actually seeking help, but also as their leaders, putting in place help for and for your teams. So that, you know, you're not just saying in there one to one every couple of weeks. Oh, how are you feeling? Okay, yeah, given a few tips that actually something practical that they can do, because then there's there are limits to how two people can interact together and you can support your teams, but sometimes we might want to speak to someone external. And so offering that to our teams, I think is really important. And then, you

know, the other thing is that we've been working on at the agency is trying to help people get some kind of sense of feeling like they're in the workplace. So we've encouraged people to do the commute to do fit commute. So it feels like they're kind of leaving the house to get to work and come back, you know, where they feel comfortable doing that. And ending the week on like a hi and bye, have a nice little social every Friday, where everyone nominates someone in the week that made their week. And so finishing the week well, and having access to the counselling sessions and meditation once a week as well. So I think all these things are optional, you know, but it's just trying different things. Maybe two people will pop into the meditation session. And but that's okay because it's a choice and what works for you. So I think it's coming back to having looking at different options, offering options to your teams and then and then picking what feels right for them.

Dan 38:54

That's a really good tips and I can vouch personally for meditation as a way of calming anxiety, and I really like the idea of a fake commute. I was reading a couple of days ago that a lot of people are feeling like they miss the commute being at home because they're given an opportunity to listen to music or listen to podcasts that they're not really getting the chance to do it at home. So whilst it's great to be at home to be able to stick our dinners on and just getting out of bed in the morning straight to work we do seem to be missing those relaxing moments. So those were really, really good, tips. So thanks for sharing that with us. And Rebecca, do you have any wanted to assure for anyone listening to build up resilience?

Rebecca 39:42

It is a really hard question to ask someone who coaches resilience what the one tip is. Yeah, it'll be really quick. I must say firstly, that you can't measure resilience. And so if you are asked to be more resilient by someone You're working with or someone says you really need to try and work on your bounce back, then they don't know what you're going through. And so it's really to make sure that you're not benchmarking yourself against others who you might think are more resilient. But actually, we have no idea what they're going on as, as we've said, behind closed doors. But one of the main tips and that I use with all of my clients at the beginning of every coaching group of sessions is the PAL. And that's your positive attitude log. And we talk about gratitude journals. But actually, what they can do is they focus on what happens to us, rather than what we are making happen for us. So being grateful for a blue sky, we're just lucky that we had a blue sky, for example. Whereas if we notice that we had a great meeting, and we facilitated it quite well, then that is something that we've contributed to our day. And in times of challenge like this, we think about, we selectively attend to everything that is negative to prove ourselves, right. Oh, this is awful. Look, oh, typical. It's raining, oh, typical. My delivery didn't arrive, blah, blah, blah, we focus on all of that. Whereas the positive attitude log taking time each day to note for things that you have achieved in that day to make you move forwards, starts helping your mindset focus on the positive approach to resilience and and that can be downloaded if you need to, from my website.

Dan 41:37

Thank you Rebecca and thanks for condensing your whole profession in a simple answer for us. Thanks everyone, I realise that question could have been an entire podcast by itself for you. Thanks for giving us all a little snippet and Amanda, what

would you share with anyone listening to today's podcast? How could they build their own resilience?

Amanda 42:08

I think they were both really good bits of advice that have just been said. Having that positive attitude and taking time out, things like that are important. I'll be really short and to the point. First, take the time to really understand yourself and know your trigger points. So you know and can recognise when you're getting to the point of, my glass is nearly full. So you can do something about it and also try build a network around you that you can access. Whether that's friends, support networks and lucky enough like Sharon, where they provide things like that. Have a range of things that you can access.

Dan 42:59

Thanks Amanda. I just want to say thank you to Sharon, Rebecca and Amanda for sharing your stories with us. And their really valuable insight into this podcast, thanks very much for listening.

Outro 43:12

Thanks for joining us and as a reminder if you need to access the CIPR mental health hotline, you can find details on the CIPR website: www.cipr.co.uk/mentalhealthhotline. And as ever, we'd like you to be a part of the conversation. So please share your thoughts and feedback on our engage podcast by using either #engageCIPR or #engagepodcast. We'll be back with another episode next quarter and if there is a burning topic you think we should explore please email us training@cipr.co.uk.