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Resilience

“Resilience isn't predicting the correct future and preparing for it; resilience is acting in ways that make sense across the widest range of possible futures.”

Shaun Chamberlain, *Chamberlain's @DarkOptimism account, 2021*

Shaun Chamberlain is a London activist, author of *The Transition Timeline*, co-author of several other books including *What We Are Fighting For*, chair of the Ecological Land Co-operative and one of the earliest Extinction Rebellion arrestees. He collaborated with the late David Fleming, bringing his award-winning work, *Lean Logic*, to posthumous publication, from which came the paperback, *Surviving the Future*.

The recent destructive fires in the Los Angeles area of the USA, and a series of interactions with folk around some “Thought for the Day” pieces, brought Chamberlain’s quote above to mind, and raises these questions: “How do we survive the future?” and “What resilience do we have?”

I was struck by a *CBS* interview with a Los Angeles resident, Dale Short, at the height of the devastation of the fires. As he stood outside the ruins of his home, he said, “I have to be honest with you. It hasn't all hit me yet. I mean, I have 60 years of memories in that house and three children.” But he went on to say: “I know I’ll be okay even if my home isn’t. I’ll be okay. I’m tough. Even though I’m 91 years old, I’ll start over again.”

Where does that resilience to face, and survive, an unknown future come from? Life experience? Faith? Personal character? Bloody-mindedness? Eternal optimism? We weren’t privy in the *CBS* interview to what underpinned this remarkably positive attitude. But I was simply in awe of what I was hearing about the resilient attitude of this old man.

As we look to *our* future – and before any trauma of destruction or loss, or maybe even because of it – what resilience do we have? Stability, normality, comfort, security, familiarity and all that gives meaning to our lives, can vanish in an instant. So often we live as though we’re in an indestructible permanency. Yet we are in fact in a transient impermanence. So, let’s give thought to resilience; clarify “What if?” factors; think about, talk over with others, what really matters. Focus on what’s fundamental and what’s peripheral. Let’s work on our resilience, for we never know when it might be needed most.

A prayer for today

My Alpha and Omega God, help me with the future as I have been helped in the past.

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