

BEYOND THE COMFORT ZONE – PAUL TAYLOR’S ROAD TO RESILIENCE

FutureLab Podcast

In FutureLab Podcast episode, [Beyond the Comfort Zone: Paul Taylor’s Road to Resilience](#) (17/10/2024), Paul explores resilience through neuroscience, leadership, and life experience. He shares his story of being an Irish Catholic serving as an anti-submarine helicopter navigator, and his insights on purpose, mindset, and adaptability offer lessons with striking spiritual parallels.

1. **Life purpose** is a central theme of the podcast. After the death of an aircrew member, Taylor wrote his own headstone epitaph to identify his purpose.
2. **Living authentically with humility** is stressed, because life is fleeting. As he puts it, ‘Remember that you are mortal’. This isn’t referenced as Psalm 103:14 in the podcast! He cites psychologist Carol Dweck’s growth mindset approach of celebrating effort rather than solely focusing on outcomes. He gives the military example where a mistake in one helicopter would be shared across the organisation through a clear path of cascading the lessons learnt.
3. **Attitude** matters. He emphasises **gratitude** and **awe**. Reflecting on the **miraculous** nature of existence, he says, ‘It’s a 42 trillion to one chance that you were born. It is a miracle that you are a human’.
4. Drawing on the philosopher Epictetus, Taylor discusses how we must prepare for life’s **challenges**: ‘We must all undergo a hard winter training and not enter lightly into what we have not prepared’. While rooted in stoicism, there’s truth in it, with Taylor applying this idea to leadership by emphasising that **difficulties are inevitable**.

5. There’s a great reference to what he calls ‘Crispie donuts’ to represent comforts and habits that are **resilience detractors**. He uses this metaphor to reinforce the message that what we eat and how we exercise affects our capacity in all aspects of life. He explores how lifestyles impact leadership and brain function in his book, Death by Comfort.
6. **Adaptability**. This is about how our environment affects our biology through epigenetics. He explains that our genes change in how they relate to one another. They respond to environmental factors, and making even small changes in our environment can significantly impact us within just three months.

The podcast offers insights on leadership resilience and aspects appear to have Christian themes, but please be aware that there’s a bit of swearing in a couple of places.

Review by Simon Taylor, CPAS Leadership Enabler

