



Collective Resilience: We Rise Podcast

Episode 1 Show Notes

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TITLE: Collective Rising and Resilience with Christine Gyovai

EPIISODE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the Collective Resilience: We Rise Podcast, which shares stories and strategies to inspire action to build resilience and community transformation. Christine Gyovai is passionate about working with communities across the nation -- working with them to take action toward resilience and transformation. She is a business owner, wife, mother, and paddle boarder bringing to light leaders and members transforming their communities.

In this first episode, Christine dives into the meaning of resilience, points of inspiration, and a sneak peak of the incredible guest speakers who will appear on upcoming episodes. We Rise will help community leaders and members learn to forge a new path towards creating resilience and true transformation. One person at a time. One community at a time. One region at a time.

Together, we rise.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

What is resilience, and why does it matter?

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or tough times. It is resilience that enables us to not simply survive, but to thrive, ultimately creating a stronger, brighter, future for generations to come.

Resilience comes in many forms, some of which you have likely experienced. From individual resilience to social resilience, overcoming difficulty and transforming through your struggle is profound and powerful. As a social species, we work, think, live, and thrive as a community. When one person or community overcomes difficulty, the impact is lasting and immense.

The key to resilience is how a person or community rebounds or bounces forward to a stronger future, and what is learned through that struggle.

Christine's story and the journey to We Rise

Growing up in the mid-Atlantic, in the eastern deciduous forest and Blue Ridge and Appalachian mountains, I spent much of my time outside. I am the granddaughter of a firefly scientist, a coal miner, a teacher, and a postmaster. Fast forward several years -- during graduate school at the University of Virginia, my husband Reed and I created a film on mountaintop removal coal mining. Through that process, we learned that acknowledging the pain, loss and transition that communities were going through is vitally important, especially in looking toward the future.

Discovering the incredible work being done in American mining communities, and even globally, was an inspiration to me, leading to the creation of my business [Dialogue + Design Associates](#), where I help communities create the future they want to see.

I began working with a colleague, mentor, and dear friend, Frank Dukes of the [Institute for Engagement and Negotiation](#). After listening to the ideas of many, many community members, we facilitated a meeting together called Building Local Economies in Southwest Virginia, where dozens of people shared their community visions, dreams, hopes and challenges. Through that experience, I was connected with Debra Horne, where I began my work with the [Clinch River Valley Initiative](#). This effort works to pioneer local economies in Southwest Virginia rooted in outdoor recreation.

One of the communities engaged in the Clinch River Valley Initiative was Dungannon. Mayor Debra Horne, a guest speaker on an upcoming episode of We Rise and strong inspiration for the podcast, ran for mayor of Dungannon with a strong desire to create a flourishing community for the children in her town. A plan was created, an action team was organized, and the community transformed socially, environmentally, and economically. With grant funding, the town now has a playground, a farmer's market, and a flourishing downtown, no longer a "retirement community" as others thought of it initially.

Mayor Horne has helped coordinate the Hometowns on the Clinch effort, part of the Clinch River Valley initiative, connecting towns along the Clinch. Mayor Horne and many other leaders in Southwest Virginia have learned from each other, shared ideas and resources and especially encouraged each other to grow regional resilience. When community members

come together, incredible transformation can take place. It starts with a vision for something better. With collaboration, dedication, and hope, a dream becomes reality.

Healing from trauma to create something greater

Facing hard times, difficulty, setbacks, loss, and struggle is unavoidable. Some face tragedy in their youth, others when faced with the reality of mortality. So if trauma is unavoidable, how can we use it for good?

Christine's grandfather was a coal miner. Injured while working, he became paralyzed and wheelchair bound which could have left him miserable and bitter, but it didn't. The grandfather she knew was strong, independent, and found joy in life. This was not because he didn't experience pain, anger, hurt, or grief. Those are unavoidable parts of being human. What he chose, and what we get to choose is what those seeds of trauma blossom into.

Christine shares the work of Dr. James Gordon, who in a recent interview with Marie Forleo said, *"There are ways that we can learn to bring ourselves back into the balance that trauma disrupts the physiological and the psychological, the social, the spiritual balance that's disrupted. We can come back into balance. We can mobilize our intelligence and our imagination to find new ways, both of understanding what's happened and new ways to move forward with our lives."*

We have the power to mobilize and flourish through our struggles and challenges. We have the power to rise.

As we share stories of resilience on the We Rise Podcast, we invite you to share your stories with us too. Welcome, and thank you for listening.

NOTABLE QUOTE FROM CHRISTINE

"To create change, people need to feel like they belong and they're part of a growing movement. They need to know that their voice matters and that they have the inspiration, agency and ability to transform their lives. They are the key to a resilient future."

LINKS/RESOURCES MENTIONED

[We Rise Podcast Website](#)

[Cinch River Valley Initiative](#)

[Dialogue + Design Associates](#)

[Institute for Engagement and Negotiation](#)

[Marie Forleo Interviews Dr. James Gordon](#)

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