

- 1) Tell us a bit about yourself. Name (non-anonymous), School/Career, Hobbies/Interests, etc...

My name is Tom Farrell and I was born in 1967. I grew up in Anchorage, Alaska until 1978, then in the Gold country of northern California. I attended college at Cal Poly, SLO in 1986 and graduated in 1990 with a BS in Civil Engineering. I worked for three years as a staff geotechnical engineer in Sacramento and then began attending UC Davis in 1993 to achieve a master's degree. I graduated UC Davis in 1996 with a MS Engineering with a Geotechnical Engineering focus while still working as a staff geotechnical engineer in Sacramento. I became a Principal Engineer and Vice President of the same company in 1997. In 1998, my boss, the president of the company, was fired from our company. This event left me bewildered and without a direct leader. I thought I was on the long career path with this engineering company, but that changed in 1998. This huge change gave me the opportunity to seek different paths for my career. I had to adjust and decide what I wanted to do. Katie and I decided in 1999 to start our company Farrell Design-Build Inc. We had Myrial, and baby Vivianne on the way when we made this decision. It was risky for sure. Our company was incorporated in California in July 1999. Today, I am the President and CEO of the corporation. We have grown from 8 people to over 100 since the beginning. The trials and successes over the years have been many.

Personally, I find joy working and playing with my wife on our 9-acre farm with chickens, goats, and donkeys and our children, reading historical accounts, playing golf, and fishing in northern California.

- 2) What is your personal definition of Resilience?

For me, resilience is the notion and ability to take a hit, sustain damage, identify why you got hit or what hit you, repair and recover, and then adjust and adapt your actions and behavior to continue to succeed and live. Then it is simply "wash rinse and repeat" successfully. Resiliency can be sustained by the forward vision of your life and goals and using that vision to plan, educate, work, and take action to achieve those goals and live with joy.

- 3) Can you remember a time in your life that was difficult? When you faced adversity that you couldn't overcome?

When my boss was fired in 1998 I did not know where to turn, what to do, or how to respond professionally. We are still great friends and our families get together once a year to pound out the mochi. But at the time in 1998, he and I were blindsided by the turn of events and deeply saddened because we had worked together for so many years. Our work had solidified the team, increased profits, and put the company in such a great place. We had a plan. And then BAM... he was out.

4) Were there individuals who encouraged your resilience?

My Dad encouraged my resilience. He was not formally educated until I was in high school. He was a smart and hard worker. He always told me “Son, make sure that you are looking ahead in life. Look ahead at what problems or road blocks can delay or block your goals. Label them, and work on them, set your sights on solving those problems and you will succeed.”

Katie, my best friend, wife, and mother of our children, supported me and showed me what joy had in store for us. She is always so bright and smiling, giggling and laughing, no matter what situation is in front of us. She helped me with finding joy, patience, redirection, and setting goals for our family. Even when we sustain damage, there is always somewhere to find joy.

5) Were there resources available for your recovery? Who/What were they?

My wife and children were my resource to brush off the dirt and step up to maneuver and adapt to succeed. I already had a great job that paid well. So, I adapted with my professional staff. I was adapting and searching for answers, until shortly after the event when I was asked by someone if I wanted to start a business. That changed everything. But that’s a different story. The 7 Habits book was a good resource for responding to the adversity in my professional work.

6) What decisions helped you get through this time?

I decided to stay focused on and work on what tasks I could accomplish today, that would invest in and eventually manifest in measurable results in the future. I decided not to dwell on what was lost. I decided to look ahead. I decided to be productive every day. I decided to meditate and focus on creative visualization regularly.

7) Were there any habits that you formed while getting through this time?

I dressed nice and tight every day for work. I used meditation and creative visualization to clear my mind to see what was in store for me and our family. To search the quiet, free time, breathing space in our living room during meditation, listening to my heart beat and my breathing, my mind and thoughts. I wrote down my goals and answers discovered during my meditations. I would say my goals and answers gently to myself. I applied the practices of a book I read by Steven Covey called *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. And then I applied all of this to my daily habits of solving problems to advance the future manifestation of intended results and goals.

- 8) When did you begin to feel like your life was balanced or somewhat normal after this time? Was there a specific moment you remember feeling better? If not, what is your hope for your future wellbeing?

Our life became balanced and normal after March of 2006. Katie and I had been through so much since that event in 1998. Shortly after my boss was fired, we started a business that really turned our life upside down. But the moment we felt normal again was between March and April 2006. We were at home with the sun setting in the west and looking into each-other's eyes and we both sighed a breath of relief, and embraced each other

- 9) Have you met others with a similar experience? How did this effect your mental health?

I have not really met anybody with the same experience. The experience was healthy, because I had to respond for my family to succeed. And I desperately wanted that. The experience of taking a hit and sustaining damage, repairing, recovering, adjusting, and taking action to move forward in a better way was life changing.

- 10) What advice would you have for those who are facing similar issues in their life?

Life is a wonderful experience, BUT you WILL likely sustain damage at least once emotionally, physically, spiritually, and/or financially. I would advise you to seek the moments of joy and emphasize them in your life like my best friend Katie has taught me. I would advise you like my Dad told me, "Son, make sure that you are looking ahead in life. Look ahead at what problems or road blocks can delay or block your goals. Label them and work on them, set your sights on solving those problems and you will succeed." I would advise you to stay the course and meditate to find the paths to success and work every day to achieve it. And finally, I would advise you to be gentle and kind.