

Resilience. Resilience. Resilience.

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When a conference is pitched as “Inspiring” it feels a bit of a reach. And when you book tickets, you expect fully that it may not quite live up to that title.

But, in the hectic rush of deadlines and e-mails we all need to have some time out of the office; even (gasp) away from our phones. Time to be challenged deeply, encouraged, inspired – and maybe even brought to tears. All of which happened to the team of brilliant MediaCom women around me as we spent the day at this years’ Inspiring Women in Business conference in Edinburgh.

Alongside a masterclass in the power of authenticity, there was one word that has been ringing in my ears ever since.

Resilience. Resilience. Resilience.

The workplace, for Karen McClusky, ended up being one of the toughest and most violent gang cultures in the UK. So, more than most, she knew what it was to face an adverse working environment and what would seem to many overwhelming odds stacked against your success. She set out to radically change the way that policing was used to tackle violent crime in Scotland. Creating the unique Violence Reduction Unit she led a new type of policing that worked with offenders, gangs, children at risk, parents, teachers and communities. She sought to find ways to change the vicious cycle of violence and hopelessness which had led to Glasgow's reputation as one of the most violent cities in the world with a prevention strategy to tackle the problem for the long term.

So what was the key to her success? Resilience, resilience, resilience. The resilience to set out her case even though it flew in the face of current practice. The resilience to take a small team and try to change it on the ground and learn what worked (and what didn't). The resilience to take one of the most challenging initiatives from the US and bring it to Glasgow, confronting the gangs publicly and collectively.

Resilience was a theme that was present right throughout the day. From the Syrian refugee setting up her own Haloumi business in Yorkshire to Kellie Rixon sharing how she overcame her very darkest moments when tragedy changed her family forever.

As Ruth Davidson summed up with "how on earth she, an openly gay woman from Fife, had transformed the Scottish Conservative Party" she credited her success to three things. A need to do things not just talk about them. A touch of arrogance that she could do better than the politicians she was interviewing. And, you guessed it, a hefty dose of *resilience*. For many of those changes took nearly six years to come to fruition.

So we all (and not just the women out there) can dig deep. We can make a difference- whatever our personal battleground may be. But it won't always be easy. Whether you want to change the way businesses use digital to bring more equality to the workforce, to teach more girls to code, eradicate the gender pay gap or find more balance between your work

and home life these women showed us that it can be done. Accept that there will be failures. Learn from them and move on. Keep getting up anyway. Find those tiny slivers of hope that will let you keep moving forwards.

Nurture and grow your resilience. For the clear message of these #InspiringWomenInBusiness was that real change and real progress requires real resilience.

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