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By Adrienne Barrett.

Everyone knows the saying “hope for the best, prepare for the worst.” As tax professionals, we actually have to take this mindset a step further.

Instead of simply preparing for the worst, we need to teach ourselves to use the worst-case-scenario to make our businesses stronger. Doing so not only guides us

through difficult situations in the future, but prepares us to capitalize on best-case-

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The best way to understand the anti-fragile mindset is by looking at how the human body builds muscle. When we exercise our arms, we're actually tearing muscle fibers — this is what results in the “burn” many describe while in the gym. While it may be uncomfortable in the moment, these tears are a necessary step for the muscle to build back stronger and, ultimately, more resilient.

The same is true for our minds. Just like our muscles, they become stronger as we work through difficult situations, use critical thinking, and solve problems during uncertain circumstances. Just like lifting weights gets easier as our bodies get stronger, handling worst-case-scenarios get easier as we exercise our minds.

The opposite is true as well: As difficult scenarios become easier to navigate because you are prepared, new opportunities become easier to capitalize on. It's like strengthening our bodies at the gym so we can more easily play with our children and grandchildren.

Building an anti-fragile mindset requires mindfulness, patience, and, of course, repetition. Oftentimes in the daily grind of professional life, we forget that taking time to slow down or even better, to step away, is key to problem solving. Slowing down allows us to give time to the big picture, to assess what is going on, and to begin to formulate what-if scenarios, risks, rewards, and all the needed elements needed to brainstorm solutions. **This process won't be perfected overnight**, but with dedicated training it becomes a powerful tool.

In practice, the anti-fragile mindset allows us to create contingency plans for every situation, good and bad. When we implement these plans, we're more likely to be successful and properly advise our clients to take the same approach on their financial journeys.

This is especially true for small business owners. If an employee needs to take maternity leave, for example, contingency planning allows for celebrating that big

life moment while properly preparing for a temporary loss in that department.

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we are able to learn from the past, we can create different strategies to lower a client's financial burden and cover the gaps in their business.

Tax professionals are serving a new generation of clients who have grown up expecting everything at their fingertips. While this may seem daunting, there's an opportunity to educate these clients on advisory services and the value of having a real-life expert who has an obligation to them. After all, Internet applications certainly have their benefits, but they can't be relied on for real-life tax planning and strategy.

As the world continues to change, so will each piece of the industry. Applying the principles of anti-fragile mindset thinking will provide the foundation for tax professionals to quickly adapt to change and remain ever resilient.

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