The Resilience Factor
By Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte, Ph.D.
Reviewed by Judith Zimmerman

About the Authors
Karen Reivich, Ph.D., is a co-director of the Penn Resiliency Project at the Positive Psychology Center and a research associate in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, where she also teaches. She is a leader in the field of depression prevention, resilience, positive psychology interventions, and school-based intervention research.

Andrew Shatte, Ph.D., is a research assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Arizona. He is executive director of the Phoenix Life Academy – focusing on boosting resilience and connection to life and work.

About the Book
As two expert psychologists and members of a prominent research team, Karen and Andrew reveal seven proven techniques that have helped thousands of people improve their capacity to handle life’s inevitable surprises and setbacks. The secret to resilience lies in accurate thinking, not positive thinking, which is contrary to popular belief. Resilience is not only an ability that we are born with and need to survive, it’s a skill that anyone can master in order to thrive.

The Book’s ONE THING

“It’s not what happens to us but how we respond to what happens to us that has the greatest effect on the trajectory of our lives.”

Everyone Needs Resilience

Blue Sky Leadership Consulting works with organizations to leverage Strategic Thinking and Execution Planning and we encompass many of the principles in these books into our Four Decisions™ methodology and development of your company’s Growth Roadmap™.

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What is Resilience?

‘The basic strength underpinning all the positive characteristics in a person’s emotional and psychological makeup. A lack of resilience is the major cause of negative functioning. Without resilience there is no courage, no rationality, no insight. It is the bedrock on which all else is built’.

The ability to persevere and adapt when things go awry.

“Most people consider themselves to be fairly resilient. But the reality is that most of us aren’t emotionally or psychologically prepared to handle adversity, which means that instead of facing our problems bravely and confidently, we risk giving up and feeling helpless.”

“Resilience enables you to achieve at the highest levels at work, to have fulfilling, loving relationships, and to raise healthy, happy, successful children. It allows you to meet the needs of your job and still have time and energy to be there for your family. It is what enables you to bounce back quickly after a crisis at work or home. Resilience helps you handle the stressful moments with your adolescent, your ex, or your new partner.”

Characteristics of Resilient People

Emotional Regulation
- Ability to stay calm under pressure
- Control of emotions
- Appropriate expression of emotions
To improve: Learn to understand your thinking, and learn to calm and focus your mind

Impulse Control
- Linked closely to emotional regulation
- Impulsive interpretation of events can lead to the use of false beliefs and loss of perspective
To improve: Learn to understand your thinking and avoid thinking traps; also learn to challenge beliefs

Optimism
- Involves having a belief that things change for the better – seeing a bright future but also being realistic
- Linked to self-efficacy – having faith in your ability to solve problems
To improve: Ensure that you have good self-efficacy

Casual Analysis
- Able to identify the causes of problems
- Using a thinking style that is flexible and open to possibilities as well as realistic
- Avoid blaming, as well as ruminating about things beyond your control
To improve: Challenge your beliefs

Empathy
- How well you relate to other people’s cues about their psychological and emotional states (this is useful in knowing how to motivate other people)
To improve: Learn how to notice how you think and detect ‘icebergs’ (the beliefs you use) to understand what motivates you, then you can apply these skills with others.

Self-efficacy
- Our sense that we are effective in the world, and are able to solve problems that may arise, and have faith that we will succeed
- Linked to optimism (pessimism damages self-efficacy)
To improve: Avoid thinking traps (put things into perspective), challenge beliefs – these help to improve problem solving and confidence, thus self-efficacy

Reaching Out
- Trying new things, getting involved with people or new things
To improve: Challenge beliefs, put things in perspective

The 7 Vital Skills of Resilience

1. **Learning Your ABC’s**
   A. **Adversity** – What Pushes your Buttons? Adversities are events that precipitate a reaction from us. They can be big-like losing a job, ending a relationship, or the death of a loved one. Or they can be relatively small-like missing a deadline, arguing with a friend, being late for a meeting.
   Identify the adversities that challenge your resilience. Identify the adversities that are most challenging for you.
   B. **Beliefs** – Your ‘in-the-moment’ ticker-tape beliefs. Ticker-tape beliefs are the thoughts that run through your mind – sometimes outside your awareness – that determine how you feel and what you decide to do in the midst of an adversity, challenge, or new experience. They directly affect the emotions you feel and the actions you take in response to adversity. Identify what you say to yourself when confronted with an adversity.
   C. **Consequences** – Are feelings and behaviors. The way you feel and what you do in the moment of an adversity or challenge. Identify how your beliefs make you feel and behave.

2. **Avoiding Thinking Traps**
   Seven thinking traps:
   Trap 1: Jumping to conclusions – making assumptions without the relevant data
   Trap 2: Tunnel Vision – seeing only the negative aspects of a situation
   Trap 3: Magnifying and Minimizing – when we tend to overvalue some events and undervalue others.
   Trap 4: Personalizing – the reflex tendency to attribute problems to one’s own doing.
   Trap 5: Externalizing – The flipside of personalizing: Blaming others
   Trap 6: Overgeneralizing – You attribute the causes of problems to other people’s character rather than to their behavior
   Trap 7: Mind Reading – We believe we know what those around us are thinking and we act accordingly

3. **Detecting Icebergs**
   “I should succeed at everything I put my mind to”, or “Getting emotional is a sign of weakness”. These deeper motivations and values often drive us and determine how we respond to adversity. These underlying beliefs are icebergs and are usually outside our awareness. This skill, detecting icebergs, is a skill that will significantly improve your relationships. – pg. 124
4. **Challenging Beliefs.**
   You can accept yourself as you are and continue down the same path you’ve been traveling. Or you can change. Challenging beliefs will help you clarify your problems and find better, more permanent solutions to them.

   Challenging beliefs is especially useful for people who wrestle with sadness, anger, guilt, and embarrassment. It challenges you to find more options and the more options you can pursue, the more likely it is that you will find a solution.

5. **Putting it into Perspective**
   “I have had many catastrophes in my life, some of which actually happened.” – Mark Twain

   Do you get caught in what-if thinking in which you turn every failure or problem into a catastrophe? Do you worry yourself into a state of paralyzing anxiety about events that haven’t even occurred?

6. **Calming and Focusing**
   A powerful tool that helps you to quiet your emotions when they are out of control, to focus your thoughts when they are intrusive, and to reduce the amount of stress you experience.

   Do you feel overwhelmed by stress? Do your emotions come on so quickly that you can’t seem to think straight?

7. **Real-Time Resilience**
   It takes the essential ingredients of Challenging Beliefs and Putting It in Perspective and uses them to fight back against counterproductive beliefs as they occur.

   “The more you practice Calming and Focusing and the more you increase your Real-Time Resilience, the more resistant to stress you will become. Regardless of what your job is, or how many children in diapers live in your home, or how old you are, one thing is certain: You experience stress.”

   “One consequence of stress is anxiety, and anxiety in manageable doses is a great motivator. Stress becomes a problem only when we don’t control it and it begins to overwhelm us.” – pg. 189

**Applying the Skills**

**Resilience in Marriage and Long-Term Relationships**
The two most common problems in relationships – problems that destroy the very foundation of the relationship – are poor communication and destructive fighting. Among young couples marrying today, almost 50% will divorce and half of those divorces will occur in the first seven years of marriage.

Sometimes relationships bring out the best in us, and sometimes the worst. The more you practice the skills, the more resilient you will become.

**Resilience in Parenting**
As a parent today, you must confront challenges that your grandparents did not face when raising their children. More than ever, children need to learn resilience.
“We all want the best for our children. We want them to be successful at school, accepted and liked by their peers, fair-minded and moral. We want them to make good decisions and be kind to others. By using the resilience skills as you navigate the difficult road of parenting, you will experience more moments of joy and fewer moments of hair-pulling frustration” – pg. 281

Resilience at Work
In June of 2001, over a thousand American adults were polled about their work and recreational activities. The poll revealed that Americans work an average of fifty hours per week – 2-1/2 times the number of hours they spend on their relaxation pursuits. For many of us, work has come to dominate our lives. Therefore, one of the biggest boosts in our resilience may come from applying these skills to the adversities we encounter on the job.

Resilience for Life

“Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We’ve got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.” – D.H. Lawrence (1928)

Create Yourself: Understand who you are and who you want to be. Examine your deep beliefs and values about yourself, your world, and your place in it. You must understand what beliefs are leading you to behave in the old, tired ways that you don’t like as well as the thinking that’s holding you back from reaching your ideal.

Loss of Meaning:
“The events of September 11 reminded us of our own mortality. Belief in religion has diminished. Trust in our political assemblies tanked dramatically after the Nixon years. In the large urban centers across America, our communities have disintegrated. Church, community, society, and even extended family are no longer the source of connection they once were. We have lost meaning in our lives.” – pg. 309

Create Meaning:
- Reach out to others: Relax in your relationships with others and create the kind of connections you want
- Reach out at Work: Take on new challenges and opportunities
- Take Risk: try a new food; talk with someone ‘not like you’; take a class in something different
- Heal after Loss: Help yourself heal and rely on your friends and family as you muddle your way through

“And when you’re living a more resilient life, you’ll be better able to connect deeply with those you love. All of our lives have twists and turns but with resilience you can thrive no matter what obstacles you face.”
Our Faculty and Sponsors

Calendar of Events

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<tr>
<th>San Antonio</th>
<th>San Antonio</th>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Houston</th>
<th>San Antonio</th>
<th>Cody Library</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;1st Friday&quot;</td>
<td>Wine &amp; Cheese</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday</td>
<td>4th Thursday</td>
<td>&quot;4th Friday&quot;</td>
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<td>7:30 AM</td>
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<td>6-Sep</td>
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<td>26-Sep</td>
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<td>Phil Bohlender Bringing Out The Best in People</td>
<td>John Rugh All About Them</td>
<td>John Rugh All About Them</td>
<td>Judy Zimmerman The Resilience Factor</td>
<td>Judy Zimmerman The Resilience Factor</td>
<td>The One Thing</td>
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<td>BOOK 100 Peter Braeuler Best of Jim Collins</td>
<td>Nadia Anglade The Magic of Believing</td>
<td>Nadia Anglade The Magic of Believing</td>
<td>Mark Wittig 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</td>
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<td>Phil Bohlender Bringing Out The Best in People</td>
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<td>EVENT 200</td>
<td>Malcolm Coon Essentialism</td>
<td>Marisa Ortiz Excuses Begone</td>
<td>Marisa Ortiz Excuses Begone</td>
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<td>13-Nov</td>
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<td>Rob Wicall The Energy Bus</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Ulysses</td>
<td>White resuscitates Grant’s career as a public servant through his presidency and beyond—he was a defender of equal rights and an enemy of the Ku Klux Klan—by placing him in the context of the complex postbellum landscape, where the war may have been won but the country was hardly whole. In our current divided nation, it would serve us well to learn from our history.</td>
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<td>Start with No</td>
<td>You must make clear that you do not take “no” as a personal rejection, but as an honest decision that can be discussed and perhaps reversed.</td>
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<td>Fearless Leadership</td>
<td>To be a FEARLESS leader one must lead with Courage, Tenacity and Integrity and when life happens lead with Resilience.</td>
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<td>Overcoming Organizational Myopia</td>
<td>Tearing Down Silos! Silos exist in every organization! They must exist! We want silos! — We need silos! — We naturally form silos!</td>
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<td>The Gifts of Imperfection</td>
<td>Wholehearted living is about engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness. It’s about cultivating the courage, compassion, and connection to wake up in the morning and think, “No matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough.”</td>
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<td>Essentialism</td>
<td>If you don’t prioritize your life, someone else will.</td>
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<td>Living with the Monks</td>
<td>Turning off the “noise” of the world allows you to turn on your inner self. How can you live your life in a more meaningful way?</td>
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<td>The Big Leap</td>
<td>Remove Your Last Obstacle to Ultimate Success in Wealth, Work, and Love</td>
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<td>Bringing Out the Best in People</td>
<td>Gain maximum long-term performance from every employee by predefining the behaviors required for achieving successful results and then applying the appropriate consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All About Them</td>
<td>When companies, including yours, relentlessly focus their brand on their customers instead of themselves, they flourish.</td>
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**Let’s Pan for Some Gold**

**What thought, or idea had the biggest impact on you today?**

**What is your ONE THING?** What one specific action you will take TODAY from what was discussed?