



— the —  
**RESILIENCY**  
solution

# Building Resiliency During the College Experience

Workbook Guide For Online Resiliency  
Training Course



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**RESILIENCY**  
solution



# THE RESILIENCY SOLUTION

## **Building Resiliency**

Workbook Guide for Online Resiliency Training Course

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## Note from the Author

For almost two decades now, I have sought to make systemic change in the world. This journey led me to focus on helping those that help others the most - you. The aim of this course is, as a pebble dropping into a pond, to create ripples of healing. My hope is that something within these teachings will strike a chord within you, to keep yourself resilient, to teach others to be resilient, and most of all, to prepare you for all that life has in store. The systemic nature of this work can serve to make us all more resilient.

Resiliency training holds a pivotal role in the holistic development of undergraduates, equipping them with essential life skills beyond academic knowledge. The transitional phase of your education can be tumultuous, marked by academic pressures, personal challenges, and uncertainties about the future. By instilling resiliency, students cultivate the ability to bounce back from setbacks, navigate stressors, and adapt to the ever-changing landscape of higher education and beyond. This training fosters emotional intelligence, effective problem-solving, and a growth mindset, laying a strong foundation for your personal, academic, and future professional endeavors. As undergraduates engage with the rigors of education and diverse experiences, the capacity to embrace challenges and failures with resilience not only enhances your mental well-being but also empowers you to emerge as confident, adaptable, and successful individuals in an increasingly dynamic world.

Be Resilient,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Patrick Jeffs'. The signature is stylized with flowing, connected letters.

Dr. Patrick Jeffs



## How to Make Best Use of this Course

This course was designed with a few thoughts in mind:

1. Everyone is different. Everyone has come to this course for different reasons. Everyone has had different life experiences through which to view this course. And everyone learns differently. We attempted to build this course keeping all these things in mind.
2. We intentionally present information in different ways and hope you find how you best connect to this material. Don't think you have to do every part to become more resilient.
3. Expect the following general layout:
  - Intro to the topic
  - Primary takeaways
  - Short activity for a primer on that resiliency topic
  - New learning (includes videos online)
  - Expanded activity or practice for the topic
  - Tips on how to be most successful or areas to look out for
  - Deeper dive: If the topic is something you'd like more work on, you can return to the topic with expanded reading or learning.
  - Topical quote. It's important to end each lesson with some words of wisdom.
4. Lastly, share what you're learning. The more those in your life are also practicing being more resilient every day, the easier these changes will happen.

*Watch the video: Look Forward to Starting*



# Session 1

## Introducing Resiliency

### Getting Started

Focus on being present.

List the top three things you hope to gain from your college experience:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Watch the video: Introduction to Resiliency*

**Resiliency:** The ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences by flexible adaptation to the changing demands of stressful experiences.

**Or you can think about it in these two ways:**

- Your in-the-moment ability to bounce back
- Building capacity over time



Learn more about each Pillar by reviewing the PDF in the online course.

List 5 words that represent Resiliency in your life and schoolwork.

\_\_\_\_\_

List your top 3 strategies that you currently employ that helps you maintain your resilience at school. How do you stay resilient during exams? When multiple projects are coming due?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Looking at the PDF located in the course site, next to each strategy above, write which of the 6 Pillars each of these could fall under. Note that one strategy could incorporate multiple aspects of resiliency.

### Things that Grow and Steal Your Resilience

A primary goal of this course is to practice skills learned in specific scenarios. Additionally, you cannot be your most Resilient self in isolation. In order to best achieve these goals, you need to select moments in which to practice this.

Pick 1-2 moments in each of the following categories to utilize the new principles you'll learn in this course:

Personally: \_\_\_\_\_

With your schoolwork: \_\_\_\_\_

With classmates: \_\_\_\_\_

*Watch the video: Ability to be Present*

By merely identifying these moments, you will naturally become curious about how to better approach them. Please keep these in mind and use them to help you listen to and work through the exercises presented in this course.

Lastly, let's make a list of times throughout your days when you are the **most** and **least** present (or distracted) and note **how** to work towards improving this.

Most present:              Most distracted:              How to be more present this moment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Deeper Dive

*"Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers" by Robert Sapolsky*





## Session 2

### Finding Yourself

#### Getting Started

One of the best ways to know how you are feeling at any given moment is to know your healthy emotional baseline. For this reason, I recommend starting each day quietly by checking in with yourself. Similar practices have existed for thousands of years in many cultures and faith traditions. This takes practice! There are a number of helpful mindfulness apps on the market (many of them free) which can help build these muscles. We've recommended some in the appendix, "Resiliency Resource Guide".

**Self-awareness** is the ability to identify your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physiology. Increasing your self-awareness is the first essential step in building resiliency. Most importantly, the goal is to develop a better understanding of what your needs are at any given moment.

*Watch the video: Priming for Self-Awareness*

The reason self-awareness is an essential skill is that you need to know what your own needs are each day and how to meet those needs before engaging with others or your academics.

Write out two ways that you can check in with yourself before starting your day. I recommend one at home and one once you get ready to work on academics but before starting.

Time for me away from academics:

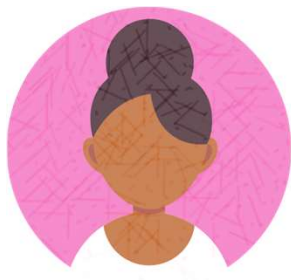
Time for me before engaging in academics:

---

---

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Next, identify a few times throughout the day when you habitually distract yourself (or turn to technology) that you'd like to shift. Next to each of these, write what you could do in these moments to be more present, orient out to your environment, or otherwise settle yourself.

a) externally\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) internally\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c) in relationship with others\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Watch the video: Noticing Your Self*

Lastly, pick 1-2 times during each day to pause for 30-60 seconds and make note of:

How's my body? (Physical Self):\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How's my mood? (Emotional Self):\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How are my thoughts? (Thinking Self):\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

You can expand these moments to additional parts of your day, but it is important to make a plan to start.

Our next session is on self-regulation, which focuses on how to better manage these moments once you realize a change is needed. The good news is that when you notice a need, your body often starts to implement a solution immediately.



For example, if you notice that you're holding your breath, your body will automatically take the breath that it is craving. This is why mere self-awareness is such a critical skill.



## Noticing Your Physical Self

Your body and the internal physical world hold a wealth of untapped information. This is one of the most important takeaways from this course. It's also often the most uncomfortable for many. Developing the ability to scan your body and internal experiences is essential for deepening your resiliency.

### To notice your physical self:

1. Find a quiet, safe space.
2. Look around for 30-60 seconds while beginning to just be present. Pay attention to details but don't get fixated on any one thing too long.
3. Start to pay attention to what you notice in your body.

*TIP: Think in opposites. For example, if you notice that your shoulders are feeling **tight**, the goal becomes how to get them to feel **loose**. Also, if your chest is feeling **constricted**, the focus becomes **expansion**.*

### List of sensations

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Warm vs. Cool   | Full vs. Empty  |
| Tight vs. Loose | Heavy vs. Light |
| Dull vs. Sharp  | Shaky vs. Still |
| Dry vs. Moist   | Strong vs. Weak |

### Other options

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Achy      | Hard      |
| Blocked   | Jittery   |
| Bloated   | Open      |
| Clammy    | Pressure  |
| Congested | Quiet     |
| Cozy      | Smooth    |
| Crampy    | Throbbing |
| Energized | Twitchy   |
| Fluid     | Wobbly    |



## Noticing Your Emotional Self

First, let's get rid of the assumption that you are only feeling one emotion at a time. It's important to sit with ourselves to better uncover the variety, sometimes conflicting, emotions you can be experiencing in any given moment. By starting the day reviewing your emotions, you can better understand what your needs and capacity for that day might be.

This is best done in combination after reviewing sensations but at least taking the same starting steps. In the first few days of this, you may want to make a separate time for this.

1. Find a quiet, safe space.
2. Look around for 30-60 seconds while beginning to just be present. Pay attention to details but don't get fixated on any one thing too long.
3. Start to pay attention to what emotions you notice in your body.

### List of emotions

|            |              |             |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Content    | Loving       | Confused    |
| Encouraged | Relaxed      | Guarded     |
| Excited    | Afraid       | Uneasy      |
| Hopeful    | Defeated     | Suspicious  |
| Proud      | Disappointed | Ashamed     |
| Relieved   | Exhausted    | Defensive   |
| Calm       | Lonely       | Frustrated  |
| Thankful   | Overwhelmed  | Impatient   |
| Caring     | Tired        | Judgmental  |
| Connected  | Angry        | Pessimistic |
| Grounded   | Anxious      | Resentful   |
| Kind       | Bored        |             |

### Deeper Dive

*Finding Flow.* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi





## Session 3

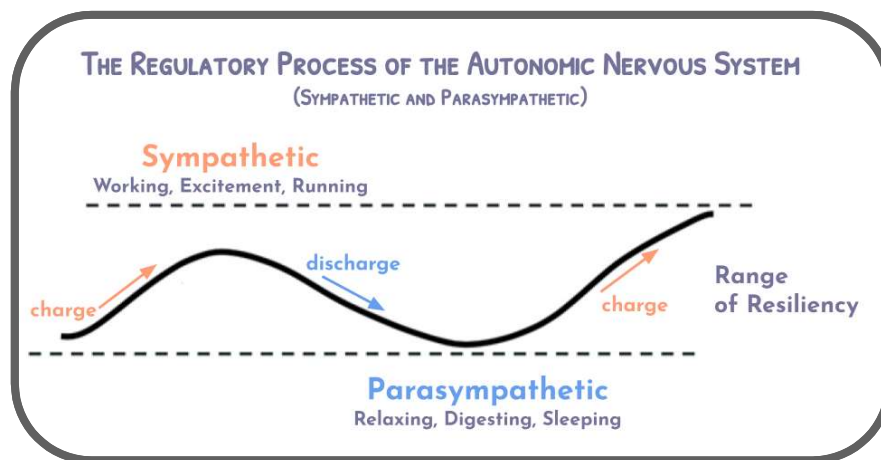
### Time to Regulate

#### Getting Started

You are in constant cycles of activating and settling throughout every day. You need to learn how to utilize this natural balancing act to keep within your range of resiliency. This primes the rebound of resiliency.

**Self-regulation** is being able to change your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physiology. Self-regulation helps you understand in what ways and how to transition yourself. Developing a strong autonomic nervous system is the most crucial element to this.

The human body runs on one nervous system with two branches: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. Both systems are involuntary. The sympathetic branch prepares the body for activity, while the parasympathetic branch allows the body to calm.



*Watch the video: Understanding Your Stress Response*

As undergraduates, your sympathetic response may activate before important deadlines, exams, and presentations. Common responses are sweating, feeling anxious, muscle tension, rapid breathing, and feeling irritable. The key to self-regulation is to activate your parasympathetic response to alleviate the symptoms of your sympathetic response. When this happens, your heart rate and breathing slow, sweating decreases, and you feel calm and relaxed.

List three moments throughout your day when you can feel yourself starting to get stressed. How can you connect yourself to your breath in these moments?

Times I often start to get overwhelmed...

I can remind myself to breathe by...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

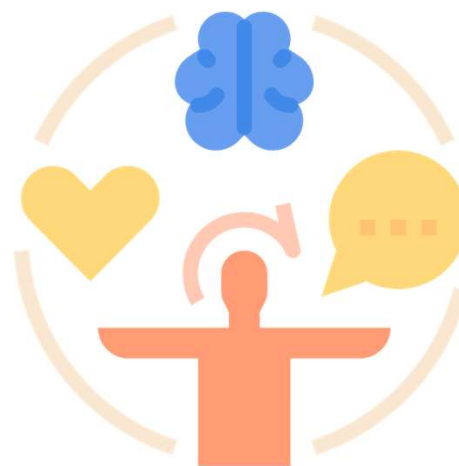
3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Connecting to your breathing (mainly through your nose) serves as a natural limiter of action in your life. This is a primary way to engage your parasympathetic nervous system in stressful situations. Once you connect with your breath, try to train yourself to expand your awareness of your whole body.

*Watch the video: Take a Better 30-Second Break*

Identify three moments throughout your day when you are meant to pause or take a break but, instead, add even more activation to your day.



Moments I am meant to pause/take a break:

What I can focus on instead:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A significant amount of your feelings around being burnt out and feeling overwhelmed can begin to subside if these actions are taken seriously. It will clearly take time to show the benefits, but these are systems-based changes that can also last a lifetime.

### **Deeper Dive**

*"The Headspace Guide to Meditation & Mindfulness." by Andy Puddicombe*





## Session 4

### Importance of Creativity

#### Getting Started

**Creativity** is also being able to create alternatives and to adapt to inevitable change. This skill can be helpful in academic settings, work situations, relationships, or even areas for self-growth where you might feel stuck.

Two important thoughts about creativity:

1. When you practice **self-awareness**, you are reviewing your internal experience with your outer experience.
2. When you practice **self-regulation**, you are more able to stay out of fight, flight, and freeze responses (note the limited and automatic options).

Creativity requires both skills. Additionally, constant input limits your brain's ability to create alternatives from the inside out. The idea that multitasking allows you to get more done may be alluring, but it often limits your ability to solve crucial problems. Mindfulness and breaks throughout the day are essential to fully take in your experience and, ultimately, to be less reactive.

#### 3-Pronged Development

Through these skills, you can set up an environment for increased creativity and mental flexibility. You need to create this from 3 different angles:

1. **Limit what steals it.** Reduce the input and multitasking in your life.
2. **Increase what encourages it.** Spend time with people and activities that make you feel most like yourself.
3. **Do novel things.** Engage in new, and sometimes exciting, activities as this allows your brain to be more flexible and creative in other areas.

*Watch the video: Importance of Creativity*

## Today's Challenge:

### The Myth of Multitasking

List 3-5 moments throughout the day when you are engaged in more than one task at a time. Examples might be eating while watching TV, working while having a conversation, and a serious culprit, texting while driving.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Pick one of these multitasking moments to separate. Use the SMART plan below to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving your goal. A SMART goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound.

*TIP: It's helpful to increase your self-awareness and self-regulation skills during these moments. It's often due to feelings of discomfort that you must fill these times.*

**S** \_\_\_\_\_  
**M** \_\_\_\_\_  
**A** \_\_\_\_\_  
**R** \_\_\_\_\_  
**T** \_\_\_\_\_



### Deeper Dive

*"Thinking, Fast and Slow"* by Daniel Kahneman





## Session 5

### We All Need Someone Sometimes

#### Getting Started

**Connection** is the competency of having strong relationships, supporting others, and having positive and effective communication skills. By having connection, you can easily communicate with people, and you know how to help people feel better and support them. Building **trust** is the most essential component to building connection with others.

The downside of an increase in self-awareness is that you then must do something about it. The good news is that you can then change it.

*Watch the video: Understanding Connection*

Think about 2-3 people that don't make you feel like your best self. Make a brief plan on how you might grow this relationship in a positive way. Maybe even utilize some of the skills you previously learned in this course.

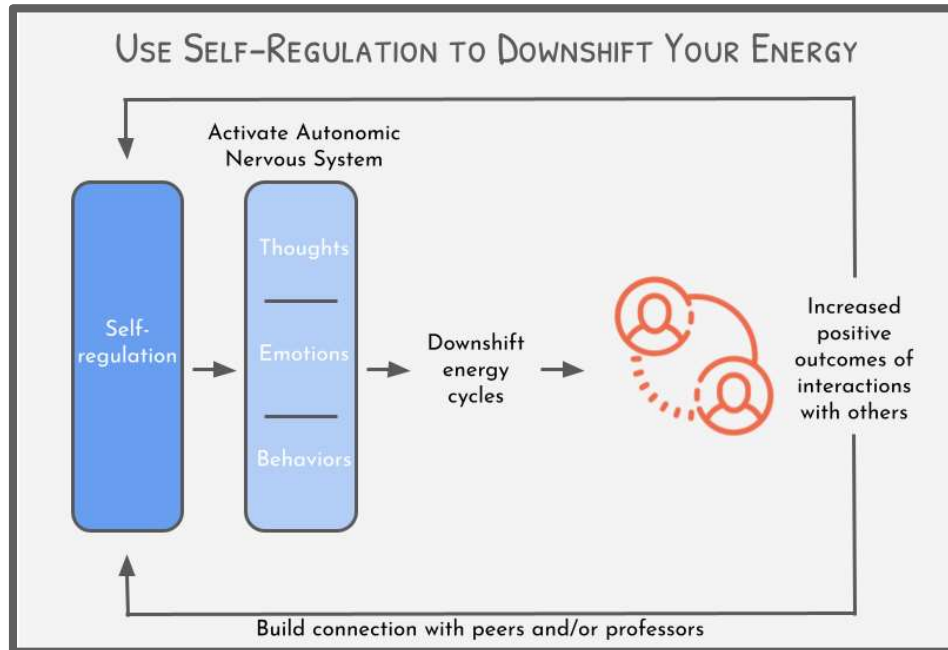
**Name:**

**Plan to grow this relationship:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

We previously talked about how one aspect of self-regulation is the ability to down-shift your energy cycles at any given moment. This can be an essential part of building connection with peers or professors. By accomplishing this, you can significantly increase the positive outcomes of these interactions.

Watch the video: *Priming for Connection*



Take a moment now to write out ways in which you can better down-shift with your peers and professors.

**Down-shifting (self-regulation) with peers:**

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**Down-shifting (self-regulation) with professors/mentors:**

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***Deeper Dive***

*"Daring Greatly"* by Brené Brown





## Session 6

### Expecting Good Things

#### Getting Started

Optimism is the ability to accurately describe when good and bad things happen. Additionally, a primary skill to be developed is recognizing how you **feel** when good things are happening to you (such as a compliment, the sun on your face, or the taste of healthy food).

*Watch the video: Understanding Optimism*

Practice writing out 3 Good Things from the last 24 hours. Make sure to be specific. For example, instead of just writing out "friends", a more specific version would be, "playing cards with my friends."

3 Good Things

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

As you review Dr. Martin Seligman's Explanatory Style below, make note of one area that you do well with and one area that you may need to practice shifting.

| EXPLANATORY STYLE                                                |                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| How do we make sense of life when "good" or "bad" things happen? |                                                            |
| PESSIMISTIC THINKING STYLE                                       | OPTIMISTIC THINKING STYLE                                  |
| PERMANENT<br><i>THIS WILL LAST FOREVER</i>                       | TEMPORARY<br><i>THIS WILL PASS</i>                         |
| PERVASIVE<br><i>THIS IS GOING TO UNDERMINE EVERYTHING</i>        | LOCAL<br><i>RELATES TO JUST ONE SITUATION</i>              |
| PERSONAL<br><i>IT'S ME, IT'S ALL MY FAULT</i>                    | PERSONAL<br><i>THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY MY FAULT</i>           |
| UNCONTROLLABLE<br><i>THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT</i>       | CONTROLLABLE<br><i>THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT</i> |

## Building Optimism for Yourself

One of the best ways to keep your optimism bolstered throughout the day is to have a set of cues or actions to regularly remind you of good things. Additionally, by writing down, there is value in making these things you know and understand more present in your life. After writing these out, make a plan to set up reminders or an accountability structure to ensure you stick with these.

Make of list of options that can give you a positive boost throughout your school day. Add what it is about each option that lifts you up.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Similarly, make a list of options that can give you a positive boost when not engaged in academics. Add what it is about each option that lifts you up.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exploring *YOUR* Explanatory Style

Write an example of each type of pessimistic thought you've experienced. Next, write an optimistic thought that you could have replaced it with.

| PESSIMISTIC THINKING STYLE | OPTIMISTIC THINKING STYLE |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| • PERMANENT                | • TEMPORARY               |
| • PERVASIVE                | • LOCAL                   |
| • PERSONAL                 | • PERSONAL                |
| • UNCONTROLLABLE           | • CONTROLLABLE            |

### Deeper Dive

*"Learned Optimism"* by Martin E. P. Seligman





# *Appendix*

# Resilience Resource List

## Resilience Resource List Video Recommendations

Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope (ACE's study)

<https://kpjrfilms.co/resilience/>

A Better 30-Second Break

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmW\\_3-Kd7yU&t=38s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmW_3-Kd7yU&t=38s)

The Myth of Multitasking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr8W8ejX6To>

Positivity Opens Our Minds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7dFDHzV36g>

Vulnerability

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzlF7o&t=11s>

The Polyvagal Theory: The New Science of Safety and Trauma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br8-qebjlg&t=1s>

Dr. Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-m2YcdMdFw&t=321s>

## Book Recommendations

1. *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* by Dr. Robert M. Sapolsky
2. *The Headspace Guide to Meditation & Mindfulness* by Andy Puddicombe
3. *Finding Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
4. *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman
5. *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* by Martin P. Seligman
6. *The Creative Act: A Way of Being* by Rick Rubin

## App Recommendations

Stop, Think, Breathe



Calm



Whoop



Headspace

