

QuietWaters

C O M P A S S

May 2015, Volume 20, Number 1

Resilience



INSIDE

RESILIENCE

One of the Great puzzles of human nature.

**Pirates, Red Shirts,
and Resilience**

R E N E W I N G C H R I S T I A N L E A D E R S

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from the President *Scott R. Thompson*

Picture yourself in your favorite coffee house or lunch spot. You are engaged in a wonderful

conversation. You take a quick glance at your watch. Your eyes get big, you breath in a little quickly, sit up a little straighter and you say something like this, "Oh my! I can't believe it's been two hours! When can we get together again?" This occurs almost every time I have the opportunity to meet with either one of our two authors for this issue of the *Compass Magazine*.

These two men have many similarities. Neither one has much hair (or any) on their head. They both have a love for bicycling. They share many gifts including a great sense of humor and quick wit, a genuine spirit of love and compassion, and the ability to teach and to learn. Both are talented communicators and speakers. Both have a passion for ministry.

Dr. Hud McWilliams is a pastor to pastors. He is an educator, a licensed psychologist, and an incredible counselor. Born in Colorado he received his M. A. and Ed S degrees from the University of Northern Colorado and his E. D. in counseling from North Texas State University. Hud served for nine years a professor of Psychology at Texas Wesleyan University and for six years as Academic Dean and professor at the Center for Advanced Biblical Studies in California and Dallas.

Hud likes to boast that he is married to a national TV game show winner. He has been married to his wife, Nancy for over 50 years, and they have 3 adult children and 4 grandchildren.

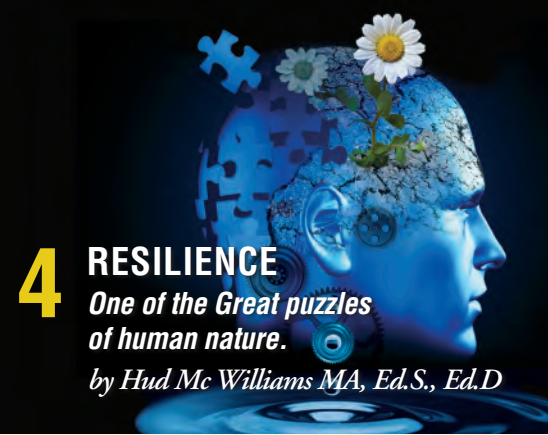
In addition to spending most of his time as a hospice chaplain, Jeff Vankooten is also a professional speaker, content creator, and consultant on intrinsic motivations—empowering people to know who they are and love what they do. He has over 25 years' experience speaking from the platform and has keynoted hundreds of events.

Jeff travels the country giving keynotes and trainings for a wide variety of public and private organizations in virtually every arena, from the tech sector to financial services, Fortune 500, manufacturing, real estate, health care, hospitality, entertainment, retail, legal, and the US government. Always keeping a sharp eye on the future, his work reflects his broad experience as an innovator, trendsetter, communicator, and entrepreneur.

Hud and Jeff share a common belief that resilience, the subject of this *Compass* edition, can be learned and developed. Hud offers us three characteristics that form the core of the resilient person. Jeff shares seven resilient tactics to engage in tough times.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the humor in the trials that we encounter. I hope that these articles will bring a smile to your face as you read through them. Here's to footballs, red shirts, and resilience! ■

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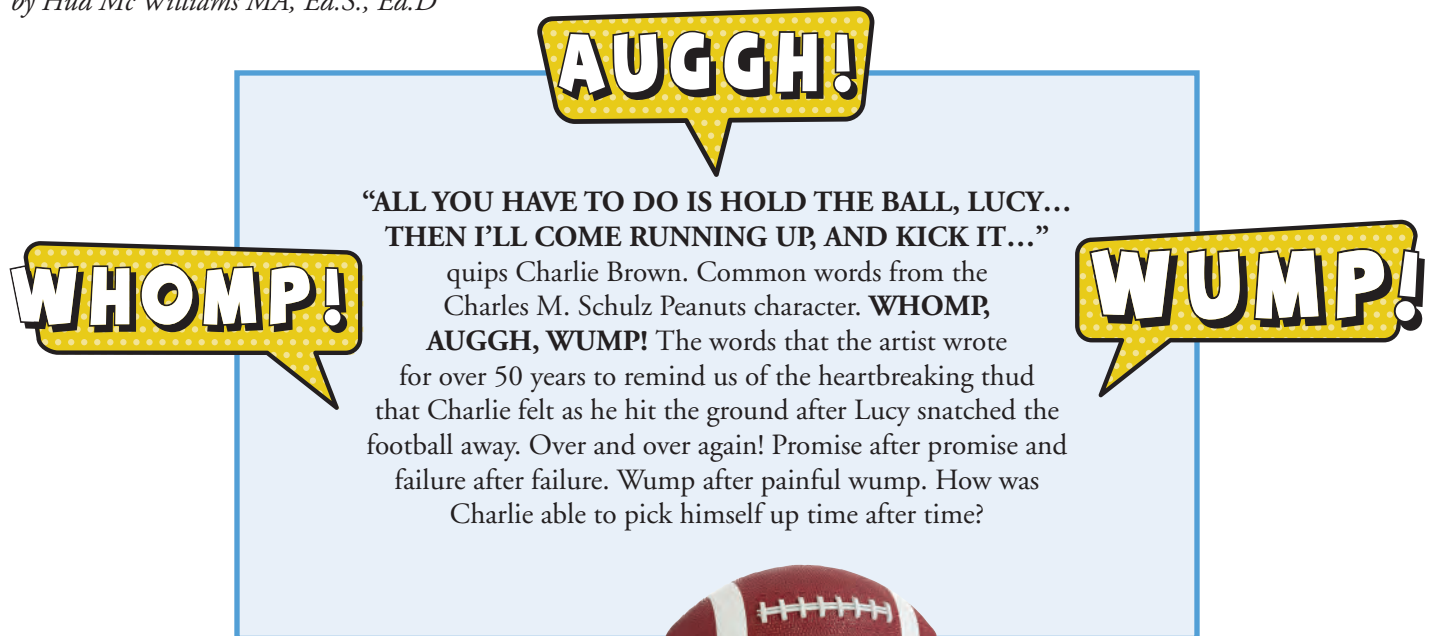
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RESILIENCE

One of the Great puzzles of human nature.

by Hud Mc Williams MA, Ed.S., Ed.D



Charlie helps me with the challenge to get up again and again. Bouncing back, the core of resilience. Somehow Charlie finds hope and attempts again. I looked at maybe a dozen Peanuts strips with this same theme over the years and Charlie never did get to kick the ball! However, I did find a later comic that tried to resolve the tension in this story—but it was not funny or satisfying, and Charles M. Schulz did not create it.

Resilience: the ability to bounce back, spring back, and recover from difficult conditions. Resilience can be learned and developed. When we are bent,

stretched, or compressed, resilience allows us to recover. This is different from being flexible, which is where we bend and don't break, but we are not able to leap back. Another construct that is often confused with resilience is the ability to be adaptable, where we are elastic and pliable but once again unable to bounce back.

Before I get too far into this subject a bit of back-story might help. At the end of this article you will find multiple books and articles whose lists purport to convey the essential elements in learning and developing resilience.

The reason I have included them is because I believe, like the header says, that this remains a great human puzzle. Why do some people grow through adversity and tough times and others crumple? How can we, whatever our contexts, learn to have this elusive trait? If each author proposes different necessary qualities, then how do I sort out what will be useful in my case? I must admit that I enjoyed each book and article I have read, yet I still wonder why there is so much variety even though much of the writing is backed by some research and not just speculation. All agree that resilience is needed, but the routes to access this coveted quality are myriad.

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Why do some people **grow** through adversity and tough times and others crumble?
How can we, whatever our contexts, learn to have this elusive trait?



With these resources as a backdrop, this is what I have synthesized.

Trust is the essential key in resilience: trusting that when life goes south, God is still at work in the midst of shifts and changes. Do not jump and crash, but pay attention; trust, and learn some practices to steady yourself until the new emerges. Trust is so tricky; we all think that we know about trust, yet when we are tested by some demanding circumstance we often discover how thin this trait is. I believe this forms the core of what is needed to be truly resilient. It is the basis for hope. Many popular writings about resilience list the ability to be optimistic as necessary. The problem here is that optimism and pessimism make the same mistake by distorting reality, albeit in opposite directions. What we are left with is a hope based in the air. It seems to me that real hope reflects the fundamental characteristic of not blinking when looking at reality. Hope is tied to this ability; eyes wide open, bringing everything to the light while knowing that we are only responsible to get up again one more time than we get knocked down.

Out of this hope and trust come three characteristics that form the core of a resilient person. Amid the many theories, three fundamental elements mark a truly resilient individual. People may have one or two of these qualities that make it possible to bounce back from hardship, but it takes all three to have true resilience.

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The first is the capacity to accept and face down reality. We train ourselves how to survive before we ever have to do so. This is a summary act of all the spiritual disciplines, where one pre-decides how to act when adversity or challenge comes. It is preparation and training to not be surprised by how absolutely crazy life is in a fallen, broken, marred world. Greatly saddened but not surprised. This is why I believe that Ecclesiastes is the most hopeful book in scripture. It ruthlessly faces reality and reality's limits and does not blink or lose heart, but turns us to trust our relationship with the God we are following and the instructions he

offers. Winners and losers, from what we can see, are all through scripture alongside instruction to not grow weary nor lose heart. On what basis? you may ask. Well, the resounding answer is that hope is based on seeing beyond what we can see. As Paul says, that the eyes of our heart may see, may be enlightened. It is what walking by faith means.

The second capacity that resilient people and organizations [churches] possess is an ability to find meaning in life. And values are just as important as meaning. Too often we discover that we have what I call implicit values. We make assumptions but never take the time or discipline necessary to make our operating values explicit. For example, if I state that I value loving my wife and/or family and then treat them or behave toward them in an obviously un-loving manner, you can call me on my explicit/stated value. If it is never made clear, then what follows is naturally amorphous. With poorly formed values, meaning in life will remain illusory. True values like grace and relationships should remain stable over a lifetime in resilient people. These very things are used as scaffolding in times of trouble. Many holocaust stories hinge on this very capacity, which individuals had obtained before the challenge of a concentration camp, by rooting them in a bigger view than was possible by the reductionist evil they were thrust into. Knowing what you believe matters!

The third building block of resilience is the ability to improvise, the capacity to solve problems without the usual or obvious tools. This means that you can see and imagine beyond the limits of your experience. We often highly value experience as the best or strongest teacher, but scripture is given to us so we can learn from revelation and not just via experience. Too often experience limits our perspective to what we have participated in and thus prevents us from seeing what is possible. This capacity means that we view life through a different, larger, and more malleable lens. When watching a portrayal of secret agents who often find themselves in “impossible” situations, I marvel at how they do not react but rather utilize all their capacity to discover new and creative ways to use what is available to escape or survive. In an older movie about survival, there was a line that has

Trust is the essential key in resilience: trusting that when life goes south, God is still at work in the midst of shifts and changes. Do not jump and crash, but pay attention; trust, and learn some practices to steady yourself until the new emerges. Trust is so tricky; we all think that we know about trust, yet when we are tested by some demanding circumstance we often discover how thin this trait is. I believe this forms the core of what is needed to be truly resilient. It is the basis for hope.

stayed with me. After a very discouraging set of events in the story, one party was panicking and the other said, “The reason people die in the wilderness is because of their shame.” I take this to mean that shame is somehow related to lack of resilience because it shuts us down and then we cannot see what may be, only what is. In short, we are defeated by our own perception. Reaction is another facet of this characteristic since we are then functioning on automatic pilot and not, in fact, responding to the reality we find ourselves in. Denial plays a major role in this entire deceptive process.

Perspective is where this endeavor of learning and acquiring resilience is grounded. In Romans 12:2 Paul tells us that we have a two-edged sword we

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need to wield to live in this world, and that sword produces one product that develops resilience. First we are told the negative, what not to do, and then second the positive, what to do. It takes both at the same time (and may I suggest at all times) to effect the outcome the verse states: I/we need to not be conformed to this world. Oh wow! An extremely demanding and tall order in a world that substitutes reaction for thinking! We are now seeing the bankruptcy of the enlightenment and I believe will soon see the same with the existential post-modern belief. What Christianity stands for is the truth, yet today we get the message that each person creates his own truth and so our world is filling up with opinions and no morals since morals are necessarily tied to truth. True truth, as Francis Schaeffer states, is what holds the believer steady. So when Paul states that we are not to be conformed to this world, it takes a presence to resist the onslaught of media and technology where more information acts as a dulling agent for the access to true truth, the very truth meant to set us free. This cheap substitute ropes us into confusion or defensive belief that functions to conform us to this world.

That is one side of the sword and the other is to transform us into, for the sake of this discussion, resilient followers of Truth incarnate. So how does this take place?

The text tells us that this transformation [note this is not just change or merely adding some new behaviors], follows the renewing of our mind. May I re-translate this? Fighting for a perspective that is truly life-giving and not tied to any circumstance. This is

Maybe a helpful way to begin to apply some of this to our lives is to think about the basis of resilience as not being stubborn powering up but rather self-regulating. This means that I am personally responsible for my choices and thus do not remain a victim and can refrain from blaming. If I can self-regulate, then I will find that this includes self-confrontation, self-disclosure, and the ability to live with discomfort.

where the crux of this challenge is, to gain and strengthen the perspective that is life-giving. The product of Romans 12 verse 2 is this life-rooting point of view. Sarah Young writes in *Jesus Calling* on April 26th, "If you encounter a problem with no immediate solution, your response to that situation [based on your perspective] will take you either up or down. You can lash out at the difficulty, resenting it and feeling sorry for yourself. This will take you down into the pit of self-pity. Alternatively, the problem can be a ladder, enabling you to climb up and see your life from God's perspective. A light and momentary trouble!"

In John 16:33 we find Jesus giving this same perspective to his disciples who were all, except John, going to die in gruesome ways by telling them the perspective they were going to need to be and remain resilient was this, "In Me you may have peace. In the world

you have tribulation, but take courage [or gain a resilient life-giving perspective]; I have overcome the world." This is the very same world we live in, the world that in the scriptures we are told is "in the power of the evil one."

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When Charlie Brown gets up and tries again to trust Lucy with the football we see a hope that is grace, the very same grace that saves us and sets us free. A truly resilient perspective. ■



Hud McWilliams MA, Ed.S., Ed.D

Dr. Hud McWilliams received his M. A. and Ed. S degrees from the University of Northern Colorado and his Ed. D. in counseling from North Texas State University. A licensed psychologist, a passionate speaker and communicator, Hud is a pastor to pastors, and serves on the QuietWaters Ministries Counseling team. He enjoys bike riding, reading, squash, racquetball, hiking, cooking, woodworking, and long conversations.

Resilience: Resources

1. The Resilience Factor, 7 Essential skills for overcoming life's inevitable obstacles, *Reivich and Shatte*

1. learning to listen to your thoughts
2. avoiding thinking traps
3. detecting icebergs, assumptions
4. challenging beliefs
5. fighting for a perspective
6. calming and focusing
7. real time resilience

2. Trauma & Resilience, A Handbook, *Schaefer and Schaefer Eds.*

1. trauma and suffering are part of our human experience
2. scripture-based theology of suffering equips us with realistic expectations about suffering, and sets up hope
3. it is a normal sign of human experience and not a weakness to be impacted by trauma
4. biological, environmental, psychological and spiritual factors modify trauma's impact
5. community needs resilience-enhancing principles to operate out of, in order to provide support
6. we were created with a need for community to be around us during times of suffering
7. spiritual struggle is normal with severe trauma
8. some spiritual characteristics and practices support this struggle, allowing resilience to grow
9. prayer for healing helps restore a disrupted relation with the Holy
10. God works in trauma and suffering to redeem it and its influence in our life

3. Resilience, the science of mastering life's greatest challenges, ten key ways to weather and bounce back from stress and trauma, *Southwick, Charney*

1. fostering optimism
2. facing fear
3. solidifying moral compass
4. attracting and giving social support
5. imitating resilient role models
6. physical training
7. mental and emotional training
8. enhancing cognitive and emotional flexibility
9. finding meaning, purpose, and growth
10. practicing religion and spirituality

4. Resilient Ministry, what pastors told us about surviving and thriving, *Burns, Chapman, Guthrie*

1. spiritual formation
2. self-care
3. emotional and cultural intelligence
4. marriage and family
5. leadership and management

5. Harvard Business Review on Building personal and Organizational Resilience (8 articles)

6. Weavings A Journal of the Christian Life: Resilience (10 articles) volume xxviii, number 2

7. A Resilient Life, you can move ahead no matter what, *MacDonald*

Resilient people:

1. are committed to finishing strong
2. are inspired by a big-picture view of life
3. run free of the weight of the past
4. run confidently, trained to go the distance
5. run in the company of the "happy few"

Pirates, Red Shirts, and Resilience

by Jeff Vankooten

There was a treasure ship full of gold and precious jewels on its way back to port. About halfway there, it was approached by a pirate ship, skull and crossbones flag waving in the breeze.

“Captain, captain, what do we do?” asked the first mate.

“First mate,” said the captain, “go to my cabin, open my war chest, and bring me my red shirt.”

Wearing his bright red shirt, the captain exhorted his crew to fight. So inspiring was he, in fact, that the pirate ship was repelled without casualties.

A few days later, the ship was again approached, this time by three pirate ships!

“Captain, captain, what should we do?”

“First mate, go into my war chest and bring me my red shirt!”

The crew, emboldened by their fearless captain, fought heroically, and managed to defeat both boarding parties, though they took some casualties. That night, the survivors had a great celebration. The first mate asked the captain the secret of his bright red shirt.

“It’s simple. If I am wounded, the blood does not show, and the crew continues to fight without fear.”

A week passed, and they were nearing their home port, when suddenly the lookout cried that ten ships of the enemy’s armada were approaching!

“Captain, captain, we’re in terrible trouble, what do we do?”

The first mate looked expectantly at the miracle worker.

“First mate, go into my war chest and bring me my brown pants!”

Ministry leaders have to be wearing brown pants these days. We suddenly find ourselves in a tough new ministry environment. We are all in a new place; we are all pioneers, navigating on chaotic seas, confronting pirates that we do not, as yet, recognize. We live in a world of massive changes and accelerated transitions that often leave us mentally bewildered and emotionally battered.

Stability is all but gone; internal and external pressures have become too great for mere maintenance and management of what-used-to-be. The systems, and the people in it, are now experiencing increasing levels of distress as they try to manage new challenges from within the stability of tradition. Stress is everywhere. Relationships are strained. Systems are breaking down. Nearly everyone is wounded.

Yet, we were made for the struggle. Exposure to struggles, setbacks, and adversities can steel us to function better than expected with future challenges. Helen Keller, no stranger to adversity, wisely said, “A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships.” It is similar to an inoculation that gives us the strength to resist future exposure to a disease.

There are two ways to respond to adversity, setbacks, and losses. You can either survive or you can thrive. In other words, you can be weak or strong; in stagnation or movement. The choice is yours. Two people can be laid off from work. One will start his own gourmet popsicle company (true, by the way) and become successful; the other will wallow and be paralyzed by self-pity. The circumstances are the same, but the responses are wildly different.

Why is that? Well, the difference is RESILIENCE—the capacity to feel competent in the midst of setbacks and adversity; to bounce back and thrive from life-changing times. Diane Coutu, in an exploration of resilience in the Harvard Business Review, pointed out that:

“More than experience, more than education or training, resilience determines who succeeds and who fails.”

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We suddenly find ourselves in a tough new ministry environment. We are all in a new place; we are all pioneers, navigating on chaotic seas, confronting pirates that we do not, as yet, recognize. We live in a world of massive changes and accelerated transitions that often leave us mentally bewildered and emotionally battered.



How are you going to respond to the challenges, changes, and setbacks in your own life? Are you going to give in or get up? Giving in is easy. It's the getting up part that's hard. Are you going to wear a red shirt or brown pants?

Getting up from and not giving in to tough times will strengthen your resolve for life. You will garner persistence and accomplish things you never knew you could.

What pirates are you facing today as you navigate the high seas of chaos?

The really good news is that resilience is not necessarily an inborn personality trait, but a set of skills and attitudes that can be learned. It's not relegated to only the extraordinary few. It's what Anne Maston calls "ordinary magic". In other words, you already are amazingly capable to bounce back, with untold reserves deep in your heart, mind, and soul that need to be unearthed and unleashed. Tapping into it leads to improved relationships, new possibilities, new strength, and a new spiritual fortitude.

Here are eight resilient tactics to effectively engage tough times.

1. Be Ready not to be Ready

This tactic sounds like it was conjured up over a couple of pints in a pub, but it makes complete sense. We need to embrace uncertainty and chaos as part of the very tenor of our lives. We also need to begin living by a bad plan. No plan is perfect or fool-proof so we need to navigate with a plan that is open to flexibility and interpretation. It won't always work, but that's when

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you make the needed adjustments to another bad plan. After all, no one ever took a driving trip by waiting until all the lights were green. Take a deep breath and get moving with whatever plan you've got at hand.

2. Make Full Use of the Present

Time is a wacky concept. It is fluid, relative and experienced subjectively (it can go either "fast" or "slow" depending on the task). The past is gone but its memory still lingers, the future is out there and unpredictable. All we really have to work with is the present moment – a small sliver of time that is put before us over and over again every day. You can make substantive use of the present by realizing that it is short and it is valuable. Those two features of the present moment can lead to long-lasting significance. I dare you to wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, and admit to yourself you are going to die someday. That isn't morbid; it leads to good stewardship of every moment of every day.

3. Live with the Long View

Our greatest fear should not be failure, but succeeding at something that really doesn't matter. This tactic asks us to attend to life's long-term investments beyond the financial kind. We need to deliberately nurture our pursuits and our perspective. How you view life will determine the hope you have for tough times and the life you choose to live. You've gotta have a "Big Why", an underlying mission that gives meaning and action to everything you do. Few can live well outside a stable framework of meaning. Boil the core of who you are to a sentence. Try it. It will stretch you and force you to really focus. Mine is "To participate in the dreams of my family." A friend of mine's Big Why is "Live Well by Doing Good". What's yours?

4. Let Go of What's Going Away

I've had to do this with my hair... This is a tough tactic to implement because we can get so enamored with the safe and familiar. Yet safe and familiar are relative unknowns to the changes we are experiencing. Sociologists say we have the propensity during change is to default into what they call "Ambiguity Aversion". That is, we would rather stay in a bad but familiar situation than to take the risk to realize a much better but unknown future. We need to be adaptable in order to take advantage of the next round of changes. Remember the bad plan? Use the "F word" liberally during these times: "flexibility". It will help you outperform, outlast, and outmaneuver the gauntlet of change.

5. Take Time to Think

We are googling more and thinking less. There is so much information “downloaded” into our lives every day that we become numb to it all. We become narcotized to its messages and paralyzed in the face of its onslaught. Taking time to think means being intentional about contemplation. We need to carve out time in our day to sit in silence with the information we are receiving every day and think deeply about its value and application to our life. Good teachers take information and turn it into knowledge. Great teachers take knowledge and turn it into wisdom. Be a great teacher to your brain. Take the time to be wise.

6. Don't Go it Alone

Given the cultural conditioning of the “rugged individualist” and the “self-made millionaire”, we tend to bite the leather strap and get through turbulent times on our own. We're tough, after all. We can handle it. Baloney. You are only as good as the people you surround yourself with. So reach out to your relational resources. Interact with your social networks online and especially nurture the intimate bonds in your life. These are the handful of people you know you could wake at two in the morning and they'll be there for you no matter what. Let people in on your struggles and let them join you on the journey (and visa versa). If you are wounded by the changes, give people the privilege of ministering to you.

7. Laugh Deeply and Often

That great American philosopher Jimmy Buffett wrote, “If we all couldn't laugh we would all go insane.” How true. My good friend, a psychologist, told

There are two ways to respond to adversity, setbacks, and losses.

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me that humor is the heart sweating. Laughter provides a much needed release valve for life's pressure and releases “feel good” chemicals in our brains that can alter our outlook toward a more positive light. Humor has the uncanny ability to turn something into nothing. It can bring situations down to size and put them in their place. That's why satire is such a critical component to life. If we can make fun of serious situations, we often can get to the heart of the matter faster and respond with renewed confidence. So, have a glass of wine tonight, kick back, and watch your favorite comedy.

8. Practice Bricolage

“Bricolage” is an obscure word in the English language but critical for effectively facing turbulent times. It comes to us from a French verb meaning “to tinker, or fiddle with”. Bricolage means we make great use of whatever resources we happen to have on hand. It requires that we stop thinking “outside the box”, which is an over-used cliché anyway, and begin thinking “inside the box” to utilize the assets we already have nearby. This takes imagination and persistence, as witnessed by the engineers of NASA who brought the fateful Apollo 13 space craft safely back to earth by practicing

bricolage, using only materials that the astronauts had on hand themselves. (Check your history books.) The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything—they just make the most of everything they have.

A looming marauder appears and approaches us on chaotic cultural seas at an accelerating pace. It comes equipped with boarding parties ready to wreak havoc on our lives, plundering our precious safety, happiness, and security (so perceived).

It often can and does render us ineffective, stealing our confidence and emotional resources.

It's visceral.

You feel it in your bones.

The quivering of the minute hairs on the back of your neck hearken its arrival. The superficial muscles embedded beneath your skin begin to quiver. The skin itself is affected, with sweat easily oozing from its pores. The rush of adrenaline courses through even the smallest capillaries, causing the heart to beat violently, palpitating its reaction against the ribs.

Your breathing becomes frantic. Your mouth becomes dry and your senses crackle with every stimuli. You can't sleep. Or if you do, your dreams are uneasy, disconcerting. You are on high alert and on watch.

Fear has arrived...

Yet, resilience can effectively engage that. It can turn fear into excitement and adventure. It can keep us wearing the red shirt instead of the brown pants. It can help our perspective and approach to the situation bounce back and thrive.

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What ride has the longest lines at an amusement park? It's the roller coaster in all its manifestations.

Why?

It's doggone exhilarating, that's why.

And it's not for the faint of heart.

You lurch forward in the cart you're seated in, tightly secured by a safety strap, up an initial incline to the highest point of the ride. There, at the apex, it hesitates for a moment, lurches, and ponders what to do.

You're at the coaster's mercy—and you know it. There's no other choice. There is no going back. Your senses are enlivened as you wait in that suspended limbo between the up and the down.

The coaster then plunges down an impossibly steep decline, accelerating toward the bone-jarring twists and turns that await. Suddenly an electrifying surge of adrenaline courses through your nervous system and escapes through your scream.

For the two-minute duration of the ride, your brain has become a cacophony of perception; mixed with excitement and dread, exhilaration and horror, longing and avoidance, love and hate.

You stagger out of the cart, down the exit ramp, and out again into the alluring lights of the park. For as short a duration as the ride really was, you've yet to find an experience that quite matches it.

Welcome to the ride of your life. Twists, turns, chaos, disorder. Practicing the tactics of resilience will help you enjoy the adventure with all its pirates.

The really good news is that resilience is not necessarily an inborn personality trait, but a set of skills and attitudes that can be learned. It's not relegated to only the extraordinary few. It's what Anne Maston calls "ordinary magic". In other words, you already are amazingly capable to bounce back, with untold reserves deep in your heart, mind, and soul that need to be unearthed and unleashed. Tapping into it leads to improved relationships, new possibilities, new strength, and a new spiritual fortitude.

In a scene from the movie "Parenthood", the main character Gil is complaining to his wife about his swiftly changing life and its irritating complications. He just wants it to calm down. Grandma, who is primarily dismissed as crazy, old, and irrelevant, wanders in on the conversation.

"You know", she says, "when I was nineteen, Grandpa took me on a roller coaster."

"Oh?" Gil replies, apathetically.

"Up, down, up, down, round and about," Grandma continues. "Oh, what a ride!"

Gil patiently and politely dismisses her story.

"I always wanted to go again," she persists. "You know, it was just so interesting to me that a ride could

make me so frightened, so scared, so sick, so excited, and so thrilled all together! Some didn't like it. They went on the merry-go-round. That just goes around. Nothing. I like the roller coaster. You get more out of it."

She walks out of the room, leaving a residue of wisdom on experiences that lingers for the rest of the movie.

Life, with its relentless and often dangerous twists and turns of change, is a ride that requires patience, boldness and fortitude. In a word, "resilience". It is critical to truly experience the adventure as it really is—wounds and all.

Take the Apostle Paul. You could torture him, imprison him, even go through ship wrecks, and it never truly weakened his resolve. Sure he wore a red shirt. We know the secret—in weakness we are strong. He was honest about his wounds and never put on his brown pants. Paul was as resilient as they come. He was able to be resilient because he served a resilient God who takes setbacks, fear, and impossible situations and redeems them in ways that surprise and astonish. ■



Jeff Vankooten

Jeff Vankooten is a professional speaker, content creator, and consultant on intrinsic motivations—empowering people to know who they are and love what they do. He currently spends most of his time as a chaplain with Abode Hospice.

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“He leads me beside quiet waters.” Psalm 23:2

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