



theFrumiGroup

The Resilience Factor 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles Notes by Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD.

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Author's big thought: 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. The Resilience Factor proves that resilience is not an ability that we're born with and need to survive, it's a skill that anyone can master in order to thrive.

Chapter Notes:

INTRODUCTION

- How many times in the last week have you said to yourself, "I can't take this stress anymore," or "Why do I keep overreacting to such little things" or even "Is this all there is to life?"
- What you need is more resilience—the ability to persevere and adapt when things go awry.
- Everyone needs resilience, because one thing is certain, life includes adversities. If you increase your resilience, you can overcome most of what life puts in your way.
- Research shows that 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.

Building Resilience

- We all know resilient people. They inspire us. They seem to soar in spite of the hardship and trauma they face. In fact, the most resilient people seek out new and challenging experiences

because they've learned that it's only through struggle, through pushing themselves to their limits that they will expand their horizons.

- Resilient people understand that failures are not an end point. They do not feel shame when they don't succeed. Instead, resilient people are able to derive meaning from failure, and they use this knowledge to climb higher than they otherwise would.
- Resilient people have found a system for galvanizing themselves and tackling problems thoughtfully, thoroughly, and energetically.
- Resilient people like all of us, feel anxious and have doubts, but they have learned how to stop their anxiety and doubts from overwhelming them.
- Your capacity for resilience is not genetically fixed. Resilience is under your control. You can teach yourself to be resilient.
- 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.
- Resilience is of vital importance when making quick and tough decisions in moments of chaos. What's more, it grants you the ability to do so with grace, humor, and optimism.
- Resilience transforms. It transforms hardship into challenge, failure into success, and helplessness into power. Resilience turns victims into survivors and allows survivors to thrive. Resilient people are loath to allow even major setbacks to push them from their life course.
- Increasing resilience will require work on your part, and it will require energy and commitment.
- After reading this book and mastering these skills, you will have a better understanding of who you are and why you behave in the way you do, than ever before.

PART ONE: The Commitment to Change

CHAPTER 1: Resilience Matters

- The authors have developed a set of skills to help people from all walks of life achieve their goals by enhancing their capacity for resilience.
- These skills promote resilience, leading people to solve their own problems, take appropriate risks, and accurately forecast the implications of an adversity.
- Their research has demonstrated that the number-one roadblock to resilience is not genetics, not childhood experiences, not a lack of opportunity or wealth. The principal obstacle to tapping into our inner strength lies with our cognitive style, which is referred to in this book as thinking style—ways of looking at the world and interpreting events that every one of us develops from childhood.
- You can increase your resilience by learning to understand your thinking styles and developing skills to circumvent them so that you can assess the true causes of adversity and its effect on your life. And it is resilience that will help you achieve your goals.

- You don't need to use every skill every day to see improvement in your resilience. In fact, many people find dramatic changes in their resilience after mastering and using just two or three of these skills.

The Nature of Resilience

- Research has also revealed that humans have four fundamental uses for resilience. Some of us must apply our reserves of resilience to **overcome** the obstacles of childhood—a broken home, poverty, or even emotional neglect or physical abuse. We need resilience to put behind us the damage that may have occurred in our youth and to take responsibility for creating the adulthood we want.
- All of us need resilience to **steer through** the everyday adversities that befall us—arguments with friends and family, disagreements with the boss, or an unexpected expense. Life is rich in stress and hassles, but if you're resilient you will not let the daily tribulations of life interfere with your productivity and well-being.
- Most of us at some point in our adult lives come up against a major setback, a life-altering event that blows us off course. For some it's a job loss or a divorce. For others, the death of a parent or child. These are monumental crises that tax our resilience. And depending on our supplies of resilience, we will either become helpless and resigned, or we will **bounce back** and find a way to move forward.
- These three uses of resilience are reactive in nature, determining our response to adversity. We also explore a fourth use of resilience that transcends our desire to protect and defend ourselves. Those of you whose goal is to find renewed meaning and purpose in life and to be open to new experiences and challenges can apply resilience to **reach out** so that you can achieve all you are capable of.

CHAPTER 2: How Resilient Are You?

- The author's work on the nature of resilience shows that it is comprised of seven abilities: emotion regulation, impulse control, empathy, optimism, causal analysis, self-efficacy, and reaching out. These seven concrete factors can be measured, taught, and improved.
- Take the RQ test that is an Appendix to this summary and score yourself.

CHAPTER 3: Laying the Groundwork

- The authors' work is founded on decades of research devoted to the study of resilience, the variables that erode it, the factors that buffer it, and the effects of compromised resilience on later achievement.
- There are four principles on which their work is based—the four research-driven pillars that provide the foundation for the skills of resilience.
- **Pillar 1: Life Change Is Possible**
 - This is based on the belief that people can change their lives. According to this approach, people are not fatalistic victims of their ancestries or of their pasts.

- We are free to change our lives at any point if we have the motive and the drive, and if we are equipped with the appropriate skills.
- If thoughts and emotions power behavior, then, even if the scientific method is more difficult to apply, thoughts and emotions must be studied if we are to understand people— including their resilience.
- **Pillar 2: Thinking Is the Key to Boosting Resilience**
 - The success of cognitive therapy highlights what many of us already suspect—that our thoughts and emotions are the very core of who we are; that they represent our essential humanity.
 - The skills of cognitive therapy form the basis of the seven skills in this book.
- **Pillar 3: Accurate Thinking Is the Key**
 - The authors believe that the preponderance of data suggest that there are clear dangers to optimistic illusions and clear advantages to what they call “realistic optimism.”
 - *Realistic optimism* is the ability to maintain a positive outlook without denying reality, actively appreciating the positive aspects of a situation without ignoring the negative aspects. It means aspiring and hoping for positive outcomes, and working toward those outcomes, without assuming that those outcomes are a foregone conclusion.
 - Realistic optimism does not assume that good things will happen automatically. It is the belief that good things may happen and are worth pursuing but that effort, problem solving, and planning are necessary to bring them about.
- **Pillar 4: Refocus on the Human Strengths**
 - Resilience, then, is 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.
 - Some of us need more resilience just to get us out of the negatives. Others want more resilience so they can flourish. The skills you learn in this book can help you do both.

PART TWO: Mastering the Seven Skills

CHAPTER 4: Learning Your ABCs

Know Thyself, Then Change

- The authors have grouped the seven skills of resilience into two categories: know thyself skills and change skills. The three know thyself skills are designed to guide you toward a better understanding of how your mind works. They help build your self-awareness.
- The know thyself skills—Learning your ABCs, Avoiding Thinking Traps, and Detecting Icebergs—give you a map of your beliefs, feelings, and behaviors and how they are interconnected. After you’ve mastered these three skills, you will have greater insight into how you see yourself and the world and why you react to events as you do.
- Insight is the first step of change, but it is not sufficient. Even after you have learned the know thyself skills, you will learn the four change skills. You’ll learn to identify the true causes of a

problem and accurately assess where you have control to fix or recover from it. You'll learn how to keep the implications of problems in perspective and how to fight back against your non-resilient beliefs in real time.

You Are What You Think

- The foundation of the seven skills of resilience is built on the simple realization that our emotions and behaviors are triggered not by events themselves but by how we interpret those events.
- The first skill is Learning Your ABCs. Specifically, it guides you to a greater understanding of the recurrent situations in which you are least resilient. ABC equips you with the skill to detect your thoughts when you are in the midst of an adversity and to understand the emotional impact of those beliefs.

A. Adversity—What Pushes Your Buttons?

- The first step in the ABC skill is to identify the adversities that challenge your resilience.
- Here is a partial list of possible adversities:
 - Maintaining balance between work and family
 - Juggling several tasks at once
 - Recovering from a bad breakup
 - Dealing with other people's anger
 - Negotiating household responsibilities with your partner
 - Losing your job
 - Hosting dinner parties
 - Being diagnosed with a serious illness

B. Your In-the-Moment Ticker-Tape Beliefs

- Once we've identified our "A"s—our adversities—we can start to concentrate on our "B"s—our beliefs.
- Ticker-tape beliefs are the thoughts that run through your mind, your awareness—that determines how you feel and what you decide to do in the midst of an adversity, challenge, or new experience. Most often, these are the beliefs you will focus on when using the skills of resilience.
- Your ticker-tape beliefs place you squarely on an emotional and behavioral trajectory that will either facilitate your ability to handle the situation or cause you to stumble and falter. In other words, they directly affect the emotions you feel and the actions you take in response to adversity. If you want to improve your ability to respond to adversity you must listen to what you are saying to yourself when it occurs.
- Two categories of beliefs are particularly important to understand when building resilience: *causal beliefs*, which we call "*why beliefs*"—and *implication beliefs*—"*what-next beliefs*."
- The leading "causal attribution" researchers, Martin Seligman among them, have found that every answer to the question "why" can be described along three dimensions. Seligman called these dimensions personal (me versus not me), permanent (always versus not always), and

pervasive (everything versus not everything) and that people tend to answer the question “why” the same way, over and over again.

- The better you are at identifying and labeling your “why” beliefs, the easier it will be for you to change them when they interfere with your ability to respond to adversity.
- Many of us experience what-next beliefs that are catastrophic and highly improbable. Far from preparing us for real threat, the anxiety that these beliefs cause hampers our problem-solving efforts—and undermines our resilience.
- Some people’s ticker tapes are a hodgepodge of beliefs: some evaluation, some narration, a few ideas about why, a couple of predictions. But for the most part, people have a dominant style.
- The challenge for you today is to start refining your understanding of how you think.

C. Consequences Are Feelings and Behaviors

- You’ve started thinking about “A”s—the adversities that push your buttons—and “B”s—the beliefs that run through your head when you are confronted with adversities. Beliefs matter because they shape the quality and intensity of your feelings and influence your behaviors—your Consequences (“C”s)—the way you feel and what you do in the moment of an adversity or challenge.
- We care about feelings and behaviors for a very simple reason: Your success at work and in relationships, your mental health, and even to a large extent your physical health is nothing more than a composite of your mood and behaviors. Resilient people are able to regulate their emotions and control their reactions so that they respond appropriately in any given situation.
- The goal is not to be in a good mood at all times or to never give up. Rather, the goal is to have your emotions and behaviors be productive, appropriate responses to the facts of the situation, not knee-jerk reactions to your ticker-tape beliefs.

Violation of Your Rights Leads to Anger

- The anger family of emotions, including annoyance, irritability, acrimony, outrage, fury, and wrath to name just some, is brought on by the belief that someone has intentionally violated your rights; that someone has set out to harm you.
- People who misperceive harm and believe their rights have been violated when they have not lack resilience and suffer a great deal. People who anger easily and have poorer impulse control wreak havoc in their own lives and in the lives of those around them.

Real-world Loss or Loss of Self-worth Leads to Sadness and Depression

- People who are “why” oriented and who focus on internal causes of problems are more likely to feel sadness and depression when things go wrong. Nothing erodes resilience more quickly than depression.

The Violation of Another’s Rights Leads to Guilt

- If your emotional life is governed by guilt, you are wasting too much energy on that emotion. That’s not to say that all guilt is bad—some guilt is a good thing.
- Guilt may have evolved because it helps us to change our course of action and make amends. When our guilt stems from situations like overeating, procrastinating, or wasting money, it

signals us that there has been a breakdown in self-control. Guilt acts as an internal brake of sorts, forcing us to notice what we are doing that makes us feel this way. It forces us to pause and provides us the opportunity to regain control of ourselves.

- We've all experienced the "internal brake" function of guilt. One useful function of guilt is to get us to stop doing whatever it is that we are doing that is generating the guilt.
- Another is to motivate us to make amends. Researchers point out that, although some of us experience guilt and blame, many people appear to be prone to one more than the other.
- Blame-prone people believe that weaknesses in their character and flaws in the self are the cause of most of the transgressions they commit. Guilt-prone people tend not to look past the level of behavior; they believe, as it were, "I did a bad thing, but I am not a bad person."

Future Threat Leads to Anxiety and Fear

- Anxiety and fear affect almost every system of our bodies. Our physiology changes. And behavior and thinking changes as well.
- Even if the level of anxiety you experience is mild, you can still learn to identify the what-next beliefs that brought on the emotion.

Comparing Yourself Negatively to Others Leads to Embarrassment

- The notion of personal standards helps explain why there is great variability in the situations that trigger embarrassment; what generates embarrassment in some people does not disturb the equanimity of others because we do not all have the same personal standards.
- Embarrassment is rooted in social comparison. We feel the greatest embarrassment in the presence of others.
- What matters most in the context of resilience is how you respond in moments of social interaction—when your idea is nixed by your work team, when you are chastised in front of your friends, when your boss tells you that she is underwhelmed by your performance.
- When we listen to people's ticker-tape beliefs in the moment of their embarrassment, they almost always include references to others. They center on the fear that they have lost standing in front of people whose opinions matter.

How to Use the B-C Connections

- The knowledge of these B-C connections is the foundation of self-awareness. By listening to your ticker tape, you can make sense of, even predict, what emotions and behaviors will follow. And, as you will see, each of the next six skills of resilience build on ABC.
- There are two important uses of the B-C connections. You can use them to disentangle the mixture of emotions you experience when faced with a button-push adversity; or to identify the beliefs that are causing you to get "stuck" in a particular emotion, gain understanding of why you reacted as you did, and learn to keep your bearings in even the most stressful of circumstances.

ABC Exceptions

- In some cases, events are so severe that your reactions are driven by the event itself, not your beliefs about the event. When a loved one dies, the emotions that follow largely stem from the tragedy itself, not from one's interpretations of the tragedy.
- This fact does not mean that one's beliefs play no role in healing from tragedies and that the ABC skill serves no purpose. To the contrary, your beliefs and resilience determine how quickly and how easily you will regain control of your emotions and behaviors following colossal experiences.
- There's another instance in which the ABC model doesn't hold true. The amygdala, stores the emotional aspects— in some situations, the amygdala can override the neo-cortex, which serves motor, sensory, and cognitive functions, causing our emotions to prevail over our thinking. This is referred to as an "Amygdala Hijack." The speed with which the amygdala reacts has clear survival value.

CHAPTER 5: Avoiding Thinking Traps

- The second skill of resilience—is Avoiding Thinking Traps.

The Eight Common Thinking Traps

- While almost all of us have made all of the thinking errors at one time or another, each of us tends to be most vulnerable to two or three traps.

THINKING TRAP 1: JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

- This is a thinking trap of making assumptions without the relevant data.
- In describing this thinking trap, the authors are not suggesting that intuition is a bad thing. The gut feelings we get about a situation, particularly those around danger, are often valuable. But most of the intuitions we have do not require immediate action.
- Most intuitions, just like assumptions, can benefit from gathering more information. In fact, they suggest that you treat intuitions and jumping to conclusions in the same way. That is, by all means take them seriously, but treat them as theories, not facts.

THINKING TRAP 2: TUNNEL VISION

- Tunnel vision is most often directed toward negative outcomes, since being broadsided by an unexpected boon doesn't carry the same survival threat as an unanticipated adversity.
- But some people develop styles that tunnel their vision for the positive. And while ABC dictates that such people will avert negative emotions, such as anxiety and sadness, positive tunnel visioning creates problems of its own.

THINKING TRAP 3: MAGNIFYING AND MINIMIZING

- Most people who magnify the negatives and minimize the positives in their lives are not aware that they are in a thinking trap.
- Unlike people with tunnel vision, magnifiers and minimizers have registered and can remember most of the events that have occurred, but they tend to overvalue some and undervalue others.

- Some people do the opposite—they magnify the good and minimize the bad. Those who magnify the positive and minimize the negative may be underestimating the real need for life change.
- If you fall into the maximizing and minimizing thinking trap often, your professional relationships will suffer. People do not like to work with someone who is forever forecasting doom and gloom. Not only is it unpleasant, but negative moods slow creativity and problem solving, for both the individual experiencing them and for members of the team. People tend to think less clearly, less flexibly, and less effectively when they are angry or sad. Colleagues start to distance themselves from those who can't rein in that negativity.
- Resilience rests on an accurate appraisal of one's life. Extreme pessimists and extreme optimists will suffer equally.

THINKING TRAP 4: PERSONALIZING

- This is the reflex tendency to attribute problems to one's own doing.
- Personalizing will lead to beliefs of violating the rights of others and so to the emotion of guilt.
- It's important to acknowledge the adaptive edge to personalizing. In many cases, we think that if we attribute the cause of the problem to ourselves, then we grant ourselves the power to solve it.
- Resilience comes when you believe that you have the power to control the events in your life, the power to change what needs changing—and that belief is accurate.
- There are two occasions when attributing the cause of a problem to oneself does not increase resilience. First, if you—like Personalizers - only see the internal causes of a problem and systematically ignore the external causes, then your resilience will be lowered. Second, self-efficacy and therefore resilience, hinges on whether you believe the internal causes of the problem are changeable or not.

THINKING TRAP 5: EXTERNALIZING

- Externalizing is the flipside of personalizing. Externalizers fail to locate those elements of an adversity that are genuinely of their doing and within their control.
- Seen through the lens of ABC, while Externalizers avoid sadness and guilt, they instead find themselves prone to anger.

THINKING TRAP 6: OVERGENERALIZING

- When you overgeneralize global characteristics in others, you've stripped them of control, at least in your mind, just as Personalizers who overgeneralize strip themselves of control.

THINKINGTRAP 7: MIND READING

- Many of us are mind readers. We believe we know what those around us are thinking and we act accordingly. Some mind readers expect others to know what they are thinking.
- Just as personalizing and overgeneralizing tend to co-occur, mind reading has a common partner. People who mind read tend to jump to conclusions.

THINKING TRAP 8: EMOTIONAL REASONING

- Emotional reasoning is about drawing conclusions, usually false conclusions, about the nature of the world based on one's emotional state.

Why Do We Fall into Thinking Traps?

- We probably could avoid the traps if we were more logical, but research shows that humans are poor logicians.
- To understand the world, we usually have to piece together the general rules of how it operates by ourselves. Most of our thought processing involves using our intellect to detect patterns or rules about the world based on our experiences. This is a process of induction— of building general rules from an accumulation of specific examples.
- This is where the skill of Avoiding Thinking Traps comes in. The skill doesn't deny that building theories about the world and ourselves through induction is useful. Rather, it helps us recognize the mistakes we make most often in the inductive process and to become better at it.

Simple Questions to Avoid Thinking Traps

- If you tend to jump to conclusions, you know that speed is your enemy. Your goal should be to slow down. Then ask yourself what evidence you've based your conclusion on. Are you certain, or are you guessing?
- When reviewing moments when you're prone to tunnel vision, you need to refocus yourself on the big picture. Ask yourself: What is a fair assessment of the entire situation? What is the big picture? How important is this one aspect to the big picture? These questions will help you broaden your perspective beyond the tunnel.
- If you find that you overgeneralize, you need to look more closely at the behaviors involved. Ask yourself: Is there a narrower explanation than the one I've assumed to be true? Is there a specific behavior that explains the situation? What does impugning my (or someone else's) character buy me? Is it logical to indict my (or another's) character and/or worth as a human based on this specific event?
- Do you magnify the bad and minimize the good? If so, then you need to strive for balance. Ask yourself: Were there any good things that happened? Did I do anything well? Alternatively, if you tend to dismiss the negative, ask yourself: Am I overlooking any problems? Were there any negative elements that I am dismissing the importance of?
- If you are a Personalizer, you need to learn to look outward. Ask yourself: Did anyone or anything else contribute to this situation? How much of the problem is due to me and how much is due to others?
- On the flip side, if you habitually externalize, you need to start holding yourself accountable. Ask yourself: What did I do to contribute to this situation? How much of the problem is due to others, and how much is due to me?
- Mind readers need to learn to speak up and ask questions of others. But first, ask yourself: Did I make my beliefs or feelings known directly and clearly? Did I convey all of the pertinent information? Am I expecting the other person to work hard at figuring out my needs or goals?

- Finally, if you lapse into emotional reasoning, you need to practice separating your feelings from the facts. Ask yourself: Have there been times when my feelings didn't accurately reflect the facts of a situation? What questions must I ask to know the facts?

CHAPTER 6: Detecting Icebergs

- Now it's time to move from the level of ticker-tape beliefs to the deeper beliefs and values that affect our emotions and behavior—and that may be placing a ceiling on your resilience.
- Have you ever had a time when your emotions seemed too intense? Or maybe there have been times when your behavior seemed overboard or out of line.
- Sometimes your ticker-tape beliefs don't explain the intensity of your reaction to a given situation. When that happens, it's a sign that you are affected by an underlying belief—a deeply held belief about how the world ought to operate and how you feel you ought to operate within that world.
- Examples of underlying beliefs include "I should succeed at everything I put my mind to" or "Getting emotional is a sign of weakness."
- Mastering the skill of Detecting Icebergs is an important step in increasing your emotion regulation, empathy, and reaching out scores on your RQ profile. More important, it's a skill that will significantly improve your relationships.

Surface Beliefs versus Underlying Beliefs

- Ticker-tape beliefs are your in-the-moment beliefs about an adversity and that they drive your emotions and behaviors. You can think of ticker-tape beliefs as surface beliefs, because they float on the surface of your awareness.
- Sometimes your ticker-tape beliefs don't explain your reactions. When that's the case, it means that you're responding not to your ticker-tape beliefs but to your underlying beliefs—fundamental, deep-rooted beliefs about who you are and your place in the world.
- Underlying beliefs are general rules about how the world ought to be and how you should operate within that world. Because they're general rules, they apply to many different adversities. And since they are general rules, once you've identified and challenged them, you'll become more resilient in many areas of your life.
- You use Detecting Icebergs to bring your underlying beliefs to the surface so that you can evaluate them and, in essence, determine what's making you "tick."

Iceberg Beliefs

- Many people have iceberg beliefs that fall into one of three general categories or themes: achievement, acceptance, and control.
- **ACHIEVEMENT** - People who are achievement oriented tend to have an underlying belief that success is the most important thing in life. Iceberg beliefs around perfectionism are also common for achievement-oriented people, and they often suffer from tunnel vision, one of the thinking traps.

- ACCEPTANCE - the need to be liked, accepted, praised, and included by others. People who are governed by an underlying need for acceptance are more likely to notice, and then overreact to, interpersonal slights and conflicts. Acceptance-oriented people tend to jump to conclusions and mind read.
- CONTROL - People who are control oriented have underlying beliefs about the importance of being in charge and in control of events. People who have strong iceberg beliefs around control tend to have a heightened sensitivity to experiences in which they are not in charge or are not able to change the course of outcomes. The cost-benefit ratio of iceberg beliefs is important to assess. Indeed, after you have identified your iceberg beliefs, the fundamental questions you must ask yourself are: What is this belief costing me? How is it helping me? And how can I change it so that I reduce the costs and increase the benefits?

How Iceberg Beliefs Can Hurt You

- Four problems can arise from iceberg beliefs, each of which will undermine your resilience:
 1. Iceberg beliefs can become activated at unexpected times, which lead to out-of-proportion emotions and reactions.
 2. Their activation might lead to emotions and behaviors that, although not extreme, are mismatched to the situation.
 3. Contradictory iceberg beliefs can make it hard to make decisions.
 4. Iceberg beliefs can become too rigid, which causes you to fall into the same emotional patterns over and over again.

How to Detect Your Iceberg Beliefs

- The goal of Detecting Icebergs is to make you aware of the iceberg beliefs that are:
 - Unwittingly causing you to overreact or react in a way that is different from what your ticker tape would predict
 - Undermining your decision making
 - Causing you to over-experience a particular emotion
- The first step when detecting iceberg beliefs is to describe the ABC. As with all of the skills, you have to begin by breaking down your experience into the facts of the situation, listing your ticker-tape beliefs, and identifying the in-the-moment emotions and behaviors.
- Detecting icebergs will help you to identify the deep beliefs that interfere with your ability to respond effectively to adversity. As you practice this skill, you probably will find that you have a core set of iceberg beliefs that affect your mood and behavior over and over again—across a variety of situations. Once you’ve identified what they are, it’s time to shift out of insight mode and start changing the beliefs that are getting in your way.

CHAPTER 7: Challenging Beliefs

Life Change Is Possible

- The next four skills are about how to create that change. These skills will change your thinking to view the world more accurately, to be a better problem solver, to be less at the mercy of your

emotions and behaviors, to respond better when adversity strikes—in short, to be more resilient.

- The self-analysis the skills encourage you to do is also the groundwork for the change skills. You can't change your beliefs until you detect what they are, whether by doing ABC to tune in to your ticker tape or by detecting your iceberg beliefs.
- Once you've uncovered all the beliefs that play a role in determining how you feel and behave in the wake of an adversity, the next step is to evaluate how accurate—how realistic—those beliefs are and to change to more accurate beliefs when necessary.

The Seven Steps of Challenging Beliefs

- Challenging your beliefs will help you to clarify your problems and find better, more permanent solutions to them. You have to start at the beginning: ABC.
- STEP 1. ABC AN ADVERSITY
- STEP 2. PIE CHART THE CAUSES - The second step in Challenging Beliefs helps you get a deeper understanding of your why beliefs and how they affect your problem. The beliefs we want to test when challenging our beliefs are those that are specifically about cause: Create your own pie chart of your “why” beliefs.
- STEP 3. IDENTIFY YOUR EXPLANATORY STYLE - Explanatory style is our learned response to adversity, a pattern of ready made explanations for the problems we experience. Remember that explanatory style can be described in three dimensions: “me-not me,” “always-not always,” “everything-not everything.” Our explanatory style limits our problem solving. The next step in the Challenging Beliefs process, then, is to map out how our explanatory style hurts our ability to solve our problems.
- STEP 4. BEING FLEXIBLE - We're blind to most causes outside our explanatory style, we come up with tired old solutions that try to reverse those same old causes, and we fail at solving the problem yet again. To get out of this loop, we need to break out of our explanatory style, and that means getting more flexible. When it comes to why beliefs, the three dimensions of your explanatory style is the box you're stuck in. To be creative, to think outside the box, we have to use the three dimensions of explanatory style to code the “why” beliefs that first pop into our heads and generate some alternative reasons why an adversity has occurred.
- STEP 5. BEING ACCURATE -Getting more accurate in our “why” beliefs is an essential part of the Challenging Beliefs process. The biggest obstacle to becoming more accurate is your confirmation bias, a mechanism which leads us to hold on to information that's consistent with our explanatory style while filtering out contrary evidence—details that don't fit neatly into our prepackaged perceptions. For this reason, you have to search deliberately for evidence both for and against each belief.
- STEP 6. NEW PIE CHART - Construct a new pie chart for your adversity. Include only those beliefs, either initial or alternative, that are supported by evidence.
- STEP 7. NEW SOLUTIONS - Now you want to rate the changeability of each of the slices of your new pie—how subject each cause is to change.
- Challenging Beliefs is especially useful for people who wrestle with sadness, anger, guilt, and embarrassment.

CHAPTER 8: Putting It in Perspective

- Putting It in Perspective is a skill that, by changing your beliefs about future threat, brings your anxiety down to a manageable level—a level that is more in proportion with the real degree of threat. That’s when you are best able to prepare for the most likely consequences of an adversity.
- Putting It in Perspective works with our beliefs about the implications of the adversity— what’s going to happen in the future now that the adversity has struck.
- By helping you to curb your worst-case fears, Putting It in Perspective can substantially increase your sense of optimism about the future. And with your fears in check, you will be freed up to reach out and take advantage of the myriad opportunities that come your way.
- Whether you use Putting It in Perspective to quell overwhelming anxiety or to stay alert to an actual threat, it will bring you greater resilience through superior emotion regulation, impulse control, and realistic optimism.
- **Step 1. Write Down the Ticker-Tape Chain** - When looking back at the adversity, the first step is to write down your future-threat ticker-tape beliefs as they occurred, as each catastrophic belief chained into the next. The seductive nature of the catastrophic chain is compounded because elements of the chain are true, not in the sense that they are highly probable but that they flow logically one from the other. Patches of logic in our catastrophic chain make it easier for people to glide over and accept the other parts of the chain. The seductive nature of the chain coupled with your mounting anxiety is why your catastrophic beliefs seem so real when you’re in the midst of them.
- **Step 2. Estimate the Probabilities of Your Worst-Case Fears** The key to ending your catastrophizing is, of course, to break free of the chain of future-threat beliefs. And the best way to do that is to underscore what you know as fact. Then establish what’s most likely to happen and take steps to prepare for it.
- **Step 3. Generate Best-Case Alternatives** –Constructing an equally low probability best-case scenario does two things. First, it forces you out of your worst-case scenario thinking. Second, your best-case story will make you laugh. And there is nothing like a little humor to lower your anxiety and get you in a better place to deal with the real problems before you.
- **Step 4. Identify Most Likely Implications**
- **Step 5. Problem Solve the Most Likely** - Come up with two or three ways that you could have fixed the real problems that stemmed from your adversity.

Unrealistic Optimism—Overly Positive Implications Beliefs

- It’s clear that unrealistic optimism, since it underestimates risk, can lead us to engage in behaviors that are potentially harmful. Unrealistic optimists believe that they lack the vulnerabilities, such as “cancer” genes, that put others at risk, or they think they have strengths to protect them that others lack—like exceptional driving skills. They distinguish themselves from the typical “victim,” and in doing so they fail to see that, in many cases, they are also at genuine risk.

Applying Putting It in Perspective to Unrealistic Optimism

- If you're an unrealistic optimist, you can use Putting It in Perspective too—but in reverse. You don't need to generate the most catastrophic outcomes, but it is important for you to come up with a list of possible negative implications of the adversity you're now facing.
- As always with these skills, the key is flexibility and accuracy. Be flexible enough to get outside your overly optimistic style so that you can identify potential problems and plan for them.

CHAPTER 9: The Fast Skills: Calming and Focusing and Real-time Resilience

When You Need Speed

- In this chapter you will learn two fast skills that are used to change non-resilient emotions or actions as soon as they arise.
 - Skill 6—**Calming and Focusing**—is 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.
 - Skill 7 is called **Real-time Resilience**, which takes the essential ingredients of Challenging Beliefs and Putting It in Perspective and uses them to fight back against counterproductive beliefs as they occur.

Stress

- The more you practice Calming and Focusing and the more you increase your Real-time Resilience, the more resistant to stress you will become. And that's important because stress is a serious threat to your emotional and physical health.
- Stress is actually a good thing; it stimulates us and motivates us to meet the challenges that we face. One consequence of stress is anxiety, and anxiety in manageable doses is a great motivator.
- Stress compromises your immune system. And a compromised immune system means that you'll get sick more often.
- It is important to distinguish between stress and stressors. *Stress* is what happens to your body and your mind when exposed to stressful situations. Body aches, fatigue, compromised immune functioning, depression, and anxiety are a subset of the symptoms of chronic stress. *Stressors*, in contrast, are the events or situations that elicit stress in individuals.
- Stressors can range from mild (forgetting to pick up your dry cleaning, missing the train, spilling coffee on your new suit) to extreme, like the death of a loved one, a natural disaster, or being the victim of violence. Stressors usually are external events, things that happen to us. But they also can be internal "events".
- Change, whether positive or negative, is a stressor. And change is here to stay.

Some People Are Overwhelmed by Stress More Quickly Than Others

- Research shows that how you interpret stressors and how you respond to stressors contribute significantly to how much stress you will feel. This sounds an awful lot like ABC.

- There are three critical factors—control, commitment and challenge – that differentiate those who are resilient to stress from those who are more vulnerable.
 - Resilient people believe they can directly influence the events that occur in their lives and translate their beliefs into actions—in other words, they believe they are in control.
 - Resilient people also score higher on measures of engagement or commitment to what they are doing. For them, work is not just work -it’s a source of meaning in their lives.
 - And they are more likely to see change as an opportunity for growth rather than as a stressor.

Using Calming Techniques to Minimize Stress

- To be more resilient, you need to be able to handle stress well. You can learn to prevent or minimize the amount of stress you experience by changing the way you think when confronted with stressors. But let’s face it; you’re not going to be able to avoid stress completely, so you also need a way to calm yourself down once stress overtakes you.
- As you would expect, most of the stress-busting techniques hinge on increasing your ability to control how your body and mind responds to stress by teaching you how to bring yourself back into a state of relaxation.
- The power of relaxation is quite simple: The body cannot simultaneously be in a state of relaxation and in a state of stress—they’re incompatible. So, if you learn how to relax, you will be able to control the amount of stress you experience.
- As you read, it’s important to remember that you don’t have to use each technique to see improvement in how you respond to stressors. View these techniques as a menu from which you can sample. Some techniques will work better for you than others.
- CONTROLLED BREATHING - When you are feeling stressed and the anxiety is building, what happens to your breathing? Most people find that they begin to take shallow, quick breaths. When you breathe from your diaphragm, your body feels different. The breaths are deeper, slower, and fuller.
- PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION – Another relaxation strategy that you can use in combination with controlled breathing when you start to feel stressed is to systematically relax the muscles throughout your body. When you are feeling stress, your body becomes tight. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a process of tensing, then relaxing, individual muscle groups. It helps you to identify what your muscles feel like when they are tense compared to when they are relaxed.
- POSITIVE IMAGERY - The third calming exercise is positive imagery. You can use it in all the same situations where you use controlled breathing or PMR. The more detailed and vivid your visualization is, the more powerful it will be in helping you to relax. The more you practice visualization, the easier it becomes because your mind begins to associate the imagined scene with being in a state of relaxation. You are, in fact, conditioning your body to relax in association with the image.
- After using the technique for several weeks, you may find that your body begins to relax as soon as you begin to think about the scene you have created.

- Keeping your body calm despite the chaos that surrounds you is an important part of being resilient, so we encourage you to use the calming techniques whenever you feel stress spread through your body. The more you use them, the easier it will be for you to stop stress from taking control of your life.

Using the Focusing Techniques to Combat Intrusive Thoughts

- A number of techniques are quite useful in stopping thoughts that are pulling you off task or causing you to ruminate. These techniques are called focusing techniques. Just like the calming techniques, try all of them and then stick with those that work best for you.
- **MENTAL GAMES** The purpose of mental games is to shift your attention away from the non-resilient beliefs so that you can continue with the task before you. For these games to work, they need to be challenging but not so difficult that you become frustrated and negative. They also should be fun so that your mood shifts from anxiety, anger, or sadness to a more pleasant emotion. Finally, they need to be relatively quick.

Using Calming and Focusing Techniques to Regain Control of Your Emotions

- If you often lose control and feel overwhelmed by your emotions, then your resilience is severely compromised. You will have significant problems in your interpersonal relationships, and you may have a reputation at work as being “difficult.” For you, learning the Calming and Focusing techniques is crucial.
- If you favor focusing techniques over the calming techniques, use the strategy of reciting song lyrics; it is one of the easiest focusing techniques to do, and hearing the song in your head can have a big impact on your mood.

Skill 7: Real-time Resilience

- The value of Calming and Focusing are that they are fast, portable, and powerful. But the techniques do not challenge the beliefs that contributed to the stress, intruded on your work, or triggered the flood of emotion.
- Skill 7, Real-time Resilience, is as fast as Calming and Focusing but it works by changing your counterproductive beliefs the moment that they occur. As you develop your skill, you’ll notice that you have fewer counterproductive thoughts and that when they do pop up, they are less potent.
- You can use Real-time Resilience in the same situations that you would use the focusing techniques. In fact, ultimately most people find Real-time Resilience more powerful. It is particularly helpful in situations when your emotions are so strong that they threaten to overwhelm you.
- Real-time Resilience works by taking the key ingredients of Challenging Beliefs and Putting It in Perspective and packaging them in a way that allows you to use them immediately.
- Real-time Resilience is not replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. Just like with Challenging Beliefs and Putting It in Perspective, the goal is accuracy. The mission is to change your non-resilient thoughts so that they are more accurate and powerful enough to send the counterproductive beliefs packing.

How to Use Real-time Resilience: Three Tag Lines

- You can use three tag lines to help structure your responses as you learn Real-time Resilience. Once you've mastered the skill, you won't need them anymore.
- ALTERNATIVES: A MORE ACCURATE WAY OF SEEING THIS IS....the goal is to come up with just one other way of explaining the situation that is more accurate than your initial belief. The phrase *A more accurate way of seeing this is...* will help structure your thinking.
- EVIDENCE: THAT'S NOT TRUE BECAUSE Using evidence to test out the accuracy of your beliefs is the second strategy. Help focus your thinking and fight the confirmation bias by starting your response with *"That's not true because ..."* The goal is to be as specific and detailed as possible. The more concrete your evidence, the more effective your response.
- IMPLICATIONS: A MORE LIKELY OUTCOME IS ... AND I CAN ...TO DEAL WITH IT In Real-time Resilience, all you need to do is identify one of the most likely outcomes and one step you can take to deal with it. This is easier if you start your response with *"A more likely outcome is ... and I can..."*
- These tag lines are a great way to practice Real-time Resilience, but as you become more adept at the skill, you won't need them anymore.

Mistakes You Will Make as You Practice Real-time Resilience

- When people are first learning this skill, they make certain systematic mistakes that if uncorrected, do indeed facilitate illusions of blamelessness and deny any cares or concerns. But once people are alerted to these common pitfalls and are taught how to correct them, the mistakes are short-lived and the skill leads to dramatic shifts in resilience.
- MISTAKE 1. USING POLLYANNA OPTIMISM - when you replace your negative thought with an unrealistically optimistic belief. As you practice Real-time Resilience, remind yourself that the goal is accuracy, not optimism. When your response is real, you'll feel it in your gut.
- MISTAKE 2. DISMISSING THE GRAIN OF TRUTH – The challenge is to acknowledge the truth and then to offer yourself a strategy for changing it for the better.
- MISTAKE 3. THE BLAME GAME - .A common beginner's mistake is to refute a belief by simply changing the direction of the pointing finger. Mindlessly redirecting blame won't help you take control of the situation.
- MISTAKE 4. MINIMIZING - What you don't want to do is simply minimize the importance of the situation. The goal is to figure out what's most likely, and then save your energy for coping with that scenario.

Pointers for Using Real-time Resilience in Your Own Life

- With each of the resilience skills, the more you practice, the better they will work for you.
- The following tips are helpful in guiding people's development of Real-time Resilience.
 - Practice skills 4 and 5 first. . Don't use Real-time Resilience until you feel comfortable with Challenging Beliefs and Putting It in Perspective.
 - Use the tag lines
 - Be detailed and concrete
 - Stick with what works best

- Check for mistakes
- Choose effectiveness over speed.
- Practice daily

Remember, Fast Is Not Always Better

- As you become proficient at Skills 6 and 7, you may find that you rely on them to the exclusion of the other skills. But most of the problems we face day-to-day do not require immediate responses.
- In fact, the majority of the challenges in our lives require thorough and thoughtful analysis, considered solutions, and planning. Understanding what is going wrong in a relationship and how to fix it, deciding whether to change jobs, identifying the root cause of a team's poor performance require analysis and time.
- Resilience sometimes requires immediate action, but often it does not.

Recommendation: Part Three focuses on handling major life challenges in all of the important areas in your life: relationships, parenting, work, and reaching out. Read the book for more specific assistance in dealing with these different parts of your life if this book resonates with you.

For more summaries like this, go to www.100MustReads.com

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Frumi has a passion for inspiring leaders to look to the future, take decisive action and maintain momentum to build profitable and sustainable companies. In a customized immersion format Frumi accelerates the creation of strategic initiatives and an action plan to implement them. She is the Trusted Advisor to call for facilitation needs.

Frumi is inspired by two colleagues – Simon Sinek, author of *Start With Why* and John Strelecky author of *The Why Café*. She can guide you to align your company's "Why" with that of your company leaders and employees so that everyone understands the clarity of WHY you do what you do, the discipline of HOW you do what you do and the consistency of WHAT you do.

Dr. Frumi is the author of *A CEO's Secret Weapon: How to Accelerate Success* available on Amazon in both Kindle and paperback formats.

**To schedule a free *Continuing with WHY* consultation email
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Appendix - Take the RQ Test

Do not spend too much time on any one item; it should take you only about ten minutes. Please rate each item for how true it is of you, using the following scale.

- 1 = not at all true
 - 2 = sometimes or somewhat true
 - 3 = moderately true
 - 4 = usually true
 - 5 = very true of me
1. When trying to solve a problem, I trust my instinct and go with the first solution that occurs to me. ____
 2. Even if I plan ahead for a discussion with my boss, a coworker, my spouse, or my child, I still find myself acting emotionally. ____
 3. I worry about my future health. ____
 4. I am good at shutting out anything that distracts me from the task at hand. ____
 5. If my first solution doesn't work, I am able to go back and continue trying different solutions until I find one that does work. ____
 6. I am curious. ____
 7. I am unable to harness positive emotions to help me focus on a task. ____
 8. I'm the kind of person who likes to try new things. ____
 9. I would rather do something at which I feel confident and relaxed than something that is quite challenging and difficult. ____
 10. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing. ____
 11. I give in to the urge to give up when things go wrong. ____
 12. When a problem arises, I come up with a lot of possible solutions before trying to solve it. ____
 13. I can control the way I feel when adversity strikes. ____
 14. What other people think about me does not influence my behavior. ____
 15. When a problem occurs, I am aware of the first thoughts that pop into my head about it. ____
 16. I feel most comfortable in situations in which I am not the only one responsible. ____
 17. I prefer situations where I can depend on someone else's ability rather than my own. ____
 18. I believe that it is better to believe problems are controllable, even if that is not always true. ____
 19. When a problem arises, I think carefully about what caused it before attempting to solve it. ____
 20. I have doubts about my ability to solve problems at work or at home. ____
 21. I don't spend time thinking about factors that are out of my control. ____
 22. I enjoy doing simple routine tasks that do not change. ____
 23. I get carried away by my feelings. ____
 24. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do. ____
 25. I am good at identifying what I am thinking and how it affects my mood. ____

26. If someone does something that upsets me, I am able to wait until an appropriate time when I have calmed down to discuss it. ____
27. When someone overreacts to a problem, I think it is usually because they are just in a bad mood that day. ____
28. I expect that I will do well on most things. ____
29. People often seek me out to help them figure out problems. ____
30. I feel at a loss to understand why people react the way they do. ____
31. My emotions affect my ability to focus on what I need to get done at home, school, or work. ____
32. Hard work always pays off. ____
33. After completing a task, I worry that it will be negatively evaluated. ____
34. If someone is sad, angry, or embarrassed, I have a good idea what he or she may be thinking. ____
35. I don't like new challenges. ____
36. I don't plan ahead in my job, schoolwork, or finances. ____
37. If a colleague is upset, I have a pretty good idea why. ____
38. I prefer doing things spontaneously rather than planning ahead, even if it means it doesn't turn out as well. ____
39. I believe most problems are caused by circumstances beyond my control. ____
40. I look at challenges as a way to learn and improve myself. ____
41. I've been told I misinterpret events and situations. ____
42. If someone is upset with me, I listen to what they have to say before reacting. ____
43. When asked to think about my future, I find it hard to imagine myself as a success. ____
44. I've been told that I jump to conclusions when problems arise. ____
45. I am uncomfortable when meeting new people. ____
46. It is easy for me to get "lost" in a book or a movie. ____
47. I believe the old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." ____
48. In most situations, I believe I'm good at identifying the true causes of problems. ____
49. I believe I have good coping skills and that I respond well to most challenges. ____
50. My significant other and/or close friends tell me that I don't understand them. ____
51. I'm most comfortable in my established routines. ____
52. Think it's important to solve problems as quickly as possible, even if that means sacrificing a full understanding of the problem. ____
53. When faced with a difficult situation, I am confident that it will go well. ____
54. My colleagues and friends tell me I don't listen to what they say. ____
55. If I decide I want something, I go out and buy it right away. ____
56. When I discuss a "hot" topic with a colleague or family member, I am able to keep my emotions in check. ____

Scoring:

Emotion Regulation			
Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 13		Item 2	
Item 25		Item 7	
Item 56		Item 23	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is you Emotional Regulation score			
Above Average: A score higher than 13			
Average: A score between 6 and 13, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than 6			

Impulse Control			
Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 4		Item 11	
Item 15		Item 36	
Item 42		Item 38	
Item 47		Item 55	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is you Impulse Control score			
Above Average: A score higher than 0			
Average: A score between -6 and 0, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than -6			

Optimism			
Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 18		Item 3	
Item 27		Item 33	
Item 32		Item 39	
Item 53		Item 43	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is you Optimism score			
Above Average: A score higher than 6			
Average: A score between -2 and 6, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than -2			

Causal Analysis

Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 12		Item 1	
Item 19		Item 41	
Item 21		Item 44	
Item 48		Item 52	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is your Causal Analysis score			
Above Average: A score higher than 8			
Average: A score between 0 and 8, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than 0			

Empathy

Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 10		Item 24	
Item 34		Item 30	
Item 37		Item 50	
Item 46		Item 54	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is your Empathy score			
Above Average: A score higher than 12			
Average: A score between 3 and 12, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than 3			

Self- efficacy

Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 5		Item 8	
Item 28		Item 17	
Item 29		Item 20	
Item 48		Item 22	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is your Self- efficacy score			
Above Average: A score higher than 10			
Average: A score between 6 and 10, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than 6			

Reaching Out

Add your scores on the following items:		Add your scores on the following items:	
Item 6		Item 16	
Item 8		Item 35	
Item 14		Item 45	
Item 40		Item 51	
Positive Total		Negative Total	
Positive Total Minus Negative Total = This is your Reaching Out score			
Above Average: A score higher than 8			
Average: A score between 4 and 9, inclusive			
Below Average: A score lower than 4			