Resilience
Resilience
The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges
SECOND EDITION

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Preface

The cover image of this book is taken from a painting by the great American artist Winslow Homer. *The Life Line*, painted in 1884, depicts an unconscious woman being rescued from a shipwreck by a courageous man during a treacherous storm. Homer’s painting is a portrait of resilience complete with adversity, stoicism, and profound courage. The viewer’s eye is drawn to the center of the painting where a red wind-blown scarf obscures the face of the rescuer. By choosing to keep the rescuer anonymous, Homer presents an act of selfless heroism: where the act, and not the actor, seems most important. In the authors’ experience, veterans, first responders, firefighters, and police officers often adopt a similar stance. They don’t like to be called heroes. They believe that their acts of bravery are simply part of their job and are directed toward someone in need and not toward honor and praise for themselves.

But resilience is not reserved for soldiers or first responders. Most of us are far sturdier than we know. Even though we may never be called upon to rescue someone at sea, we will be challenged again and again during our lives, and – like the anonymous rescuer – we can choose to step up and squarely face adversity with heart and soul.

Further Reading

Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the generous contributions of the many inspiring individuals who granted us permission to interview them and share portions of those interviews with our readers. These courageous men and women told us about extremely painful and trying experiences in their lives. Talking with us in depth about these experiences was extraordinarily difficult, but they chose to speak so that their stories and their insights might help others. Their stories and their advice make up the heart and soul of this book. It has been an honor and a privilege for us to interview and learn from these remarkable individuals. They have become our role models just as we hope they will become yours. They have taught us to look for light at the end of the tunnel; to view adversity as an opportunity for growth and wisdom; to live by our own highest moral and ethical standards; to foster strong personal relationships in which we both give and receive support; to rigorously train our physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual selves; and to assume responsibility for our own growth and resilience. They have shown us how to seek the very best in ourselves, and they have taught us that we are each far stronger and more resilient than we think.

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