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978-1-009-29974-9 — Resilience

Steven M. Southwick, Dennis S. Charney, Jonathan M. DePierro

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“The *Resilience* book is an extraordinary manual that combines theory and practice, biology, psychology, spirituality, and social sciences to offer the complete science and knowledge of not just survival in times of suffering and tragedy but learning to thrive and find higher purpose. Our brains are created by genes but sculpted by experiences. This book covers both the science of epigenetics and neuroplasticity, and shows that our biological organism can be redesigned for joy and optimal integration of body, mind, and spirit.”

Deepak Chopra, MD, FACP, FRCP, *New York Times* bestselling author

“To paraphrase the bumper sticker, ‘stuff happens,’ and it is how we respond to adversity that matters. Steven Southwick, Dennis Charney, and Jonathan DePierro show us how, provide an expert’s guide to the science, and offer practical advice for navigating life’s challenges. In this deeply personal book, replete with juicy and often harrowing details of extraordinary hardships faced by both themselves and others they know, they provide living examples that will inspire. *Resilience* is a beautiful book that will benefit everyone.”

Richard J. Davidson, PhD, author of the *New York Times* bestseller
The Emotional Life of Your Brain

“This superb third edition has everything. It is chock full of graphic anecdotes about people who successfully overcame overwhelming challenges. It provides a comprehensive explication of the ten key elements of resilience. It describes the latest behavioral and neuroscientific research underlying each of these elements. And it provides very practical and doable tips that should enable each reader to practice resilience and thereby enrich their own life. What makes this book so special is that it succeeds at presenting a huge amount of information in an engrossing conversational style accessible to all readers. The authors even share some very personal experiences to illustrate important points. This extraordinary volume ends with a moving tribute to the late Steve Southwick, for whom the book is the capstone to a remarkable career.”

Matthew J. Friedman, MD, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry,
Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth; Emeritus Executive Director,
National Center for PTSD; Emeritus Director, National PTSD Brain Bank, US
Department of Veterans Affairs

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“Sometimes it seems like trauma defines our age. This book reminds us that resilience is an equal and opposite force. Blending personal stories, cutting-edge science, and clinical insights, *Resilience* provides a comprehensive and rigorous tour of how we recover from trauma, whether that trauma is from a pandemic, a terrorist attack, or a personal tragedy. For anyone interested in a deep understanding of how humans can triumph over profound adversity, *Resilience* is an essential text.”

Thomas Insel, MD, Cofounder and Executive Chair, Vanna Health; former Director of US National Institute of Mental Health; author of *Healing: Our Path from Mental Illness to Mental Health*

“*Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges* encapsulates beautifully the literature on the psychological, biological, and neuroscientific perspectives on stress and the individual’s response to it. Written by accomplished clinical investigators, this edition highlights and integrates what we know about resilience, and what we still need to know in order to enhance what we clinicians offer those exposed to unimaginable adversity. This book belongs in the library of every clinician, investigator, and teacher committed to understanding what paths one might take when traumatic events occur.”

Terence M. Keane, PhD, National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Behavioral Science Division, and Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine

“*Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges* presents distilled lessons from three pioneers of the study of human resilience and psychological traumatization. Its messages are simple, profound, and easy to integrate into one’s personal coping style. The third edition of this outstanding book is expanded and updated. It is also a wonderful memorial to one of its authors, Steven Southwick, MD. He was a beloved and respected figure in the world of stress research.”

John Krystal, MD, Chair of Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine

“There is no resilience without adversity. Unfortunately, we live in a dangerous world. This book, written by world leaders on the science of resilience, is a must-read for everyone. Certainly, professionals who help others through stressful or traumatic experiences would profit from the knowledge shared, but every single person will learn how to manage challenges better. The

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authors include very easy-to-read, clear suggestions backed by decades of neuroscience research and from the stories of multitudes of resilient survivors. Every clinician from novices to experienced clinicians has something to learn from this gem. The lessons in this book are what we should teach our children.”

Barbara Olasov Rothbaum, PhD, ABPP, Director of the Emory Healthcare Veterans Program and the Trauma and Anxiety Recovery Program; Paul A. Janssen Chair in Neuropsychopharmacology; Department of Psychiatry, Emory University School of Medicine

“Southwick, Charney and DePierro have written a moving and inspiring book with practical suggestions for achieving resilience that are supported by the latest research. The book is dedicated to one of the authors, Dr. Steve Southwick, who dealt so heroically with an aggressive cancer that took his life before this book could be published. The last chapter provides a beautiful tribute to Steve’s scholarship and humanity. But Dr. Charney, as well, speaks of his own journey to resilience after being shot by a former faculty member who had been terminated for academic misconduct. The book reminds us that we all have to reckon with challenge at some time, and that such reckoning is facilitated by attitudes and skills that we can develop. It is a book that teaches stories and science. Given the challenges of the last few years, including a global pandemic that resulted in a massive sea change, it is a welcome salve.”

Rachel Yehuda, PhD, Mount Sinai Professor in Psychiatry and Neuroscience of Trauma

Resilience

Life presents us all with challenges. Most of us at some point will be struck by major traumas such as the sudden death of a loved one, a debilitating disease, or a natural disaster. What differentiates us is how we respond. In this important book, three experts in trauma and resilience answer key questions such as: What helps people adapt to life's most challenging situations?, How can you build up your own resilience?, and What do we know about the science of resilience?

Combining cutting-edge scientific research with the personal experiences of individuals who have survived some of the most traumatic events imaginable, including the COVID-19 pandemic, this book provides a practical resource that can be used time and time again. The experts describe ten key resilience factors, including facing fear, optimism, and relying on role models, through the experiences and personal reflections of highly resilient survivors. Each resilience factor will help you to adapt and grow from stressful life events and will bring hope and inspiration for overcoming adversity.

Steven M. Southwick, MD, was Glenn H. Greenberg Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, PTSD, and Resilience at Yale University Medical School and Medical Director Emeritus of the Clinical Neuroscience Division of the National Center for PTSD of the US Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Southwick was one of the world's leading experts in psychological trauma and human resilience. His collaborations with Dr. Dennis Charney led to foundational discoveries about the biology and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, and factors that support resilience. His own resilience while fighting advanced prostate cancer for five years was an inspiration to his friends, colleagues, and family. He passed away on April 20, 2022, and this book, which he worked on through his final weeks, is dedicated to his life and legacy.

Dennis S. Charney, MD, is Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and President for Academic Affairs for the Mount Sinai Health System. Dr. Charney is a world expert in the neurobiology of mood and anxiety disorders. He has made fundamental contributions to our understanding of the causes of anxiety, fear, and depression, and among his discoveries is use of ketamine for the treatment of depression – a major advance in the past fifty years of clinical care. He also focuses on understanding the psychology and biology of human resilience, which has included work with natural disaster survivors, combat veterans, and COVID-19 frontline healthcare workers. He has over 600 publications to his name, including books, chapters, and academic articles. In 2016 he was the victim of a violent crime that tested his personal resilience.

Jonathan M. DePierro, PhD, is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Associate Director of Mount Sinai's Center for Stress, Resilience, and Personal Growth. Dr. DePierro, a clinical psychologist, is an expert in psychological resilience and the treatment of trauma-related mental health conditions. After many years working with individuals impacted by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he now focuses on supporting the mental health needs of healthcare workers. Having experienced extensive bullying throughout his childhood, he learned important lessons about resilience that continue to inform his clinical and research work.

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Jonathan M. DePierro, PhD

Resilience

The Science
of Mastering
Life's Greatest
Challenges

Third Edition

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Many friends and colleagues helped us as we formulated ideas about resilience for this new edition. We wish to thank Deb Marin, Vansh Sharma, Craig Katz, Adriana Feder, Eric Nestler, and Robb Pietrzak, all of whom provided guidance on specific chapters. Sydney Starkweather provided invaluable editorial assistance.

Our families have been a tremendous support. Jonathan would like to thank his wife, Vivian Khedari-DePierro, for providing vital comments on the text.

We wish to thank the many professionals at Cambridge University Press who edited and published the book, including Catherine Barnes and Lori Handelman. Jessica Johnson provided all the original artwork new to this third edition.

Finally, this book is dedicated to the memory of Steven Southwick, MD. We thank Bernadette Southwick for inspiring us to write the best book possible and enabling us to keep Steven in our

Acknowledgments

hearts and minds. Bernadette provided important background information, particularly for the epilogue. Dr. Steven Southwick was a role model to so many, a towering figure in the field of resilience research, and will never be forgotten for his kindness and caring for all who came to him in time of need. Gone too soon.

DSC and JMD