

# Resilience

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-44166-7 — Resilience  
2nd Edition  
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# Resilience

The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges

**SECOND EDITION**

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108441667](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108441667)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781108349246

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First published by Cambridge University Press 2012  
Second edition Cambridge University Press 2018

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Southwick, Steven M., author. | Charney, Dennis S., author.  
Title: Resilience : the science of mastering life's greatest challenges / Steven Southwick, Yale University School of Medicine, Dennis Charney, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine.  
Description: Second edition. | Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.  
Identifiers: LCCN 2017061573 | ISBN 9781108441667 (alk. paper)  
Subjects: LCSH: Resilience (Personality trait) | Adaptability (Psychology)  
Classification: LCC BF698.35.R47 S68 2018 | DDC 155.2/4–dc23  
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017061573>

ISBN 978-1-108-44166-7 Paperback

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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

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Khan Academy. Homer, *The Life Line* (video). A conversation with Kahn Academy's Dr. Beth Harris and Dr. Steven Zucker. Accessed February 2, 2018 at [www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/us-art-19c/realism-us/v/winslow-homer-the-life-line-1884](http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/us-art-19c/realism-us/v/winslow-homer-the-life-line-1884)

# 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.

We also wish to thank the editors and writers who helped to shape this book. Specifically, we acknowledge and express thanks to Lisa Berger, who partnered us in our early efforts to write about resilience. Lisa is an outstanding writer and editor. In addition, Cathy Shufro, Kara Baskin, and Marcia Southwick provided expert guidance in writing style and editing. We were also very fortunate to work with Elsa Peterson, who is an extremely talented scholar, writer, and editor. Elsa made enormous contributions to every aspect of the book – research, writing, and editing.

Many of our friends and colleagues helped us as we formulated ideas about resilience. They also reviewed drafts of the book and provided valuable suggestions and edits. We wish to thank Jeanne Stellman and Christina Baker, who reviewed and edited the book. Paul Morrissey, Ron Duman, Eric Jackson, Jo Ann Thorp, Robb Pietrzak, Ann Graber, Catherine Chiles, Brian Iacoviello, Eric Nestler, and Lori Davis provided guidance and edits on specific chapters. We extend special thanks to Bernadette Lowthert for her depth of insight and for her creative approach to conceptualizing, organizing, and integrating all sections of the book.

Finally, we wish to thank the many professionals at Cambridge University Press who edited and published this book.

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