



# **The Resilient Growth™ Model for Transformational Resilience**

**A Framework for Building Psychological and Psycho-Social-Spiritual Resilience  
for the Traumas and Toxic Stresses Generated by Climate Change**

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**A Serious Ecological--Turned Mental Health--Turned Psycho-Social-Spiritual—  
Turned Humanitarian Crisis is Growing...**

**The Harmful Human Reactions to Climate Impacts!**



The Adverse Human  
Reactions to Climate Change

**Building Widespread Capacity for Transformational Resilience Can:**

- Minimize the problems
- Quickly reverse them when they appear
- Greatly increase individual, social, and ecological wellbeing



## Climate Adversities Can:

Undermine our sense of self by severely threatening or shattering our core beliefs about the world and ourselves and what gives our lives meaning, purpose, and hope.



## Helping People Learn to Grow from the Adversities is Vital To:

Develop a new sense of self – new meaning, purpose, and hope in life – that:

- Promotes healthy thinking and behaviors even in unhealthy conditions, and
- Moves people to increase their sense of wellbeing, that of others, and the condition of environment as well!



# The Resilient Growth™ Model

It Is Framed Around The Knowledge That Humans Are



Pushed by drives

and



Pulled by meaning and purpose!

(Quote by Viktor Frankl)

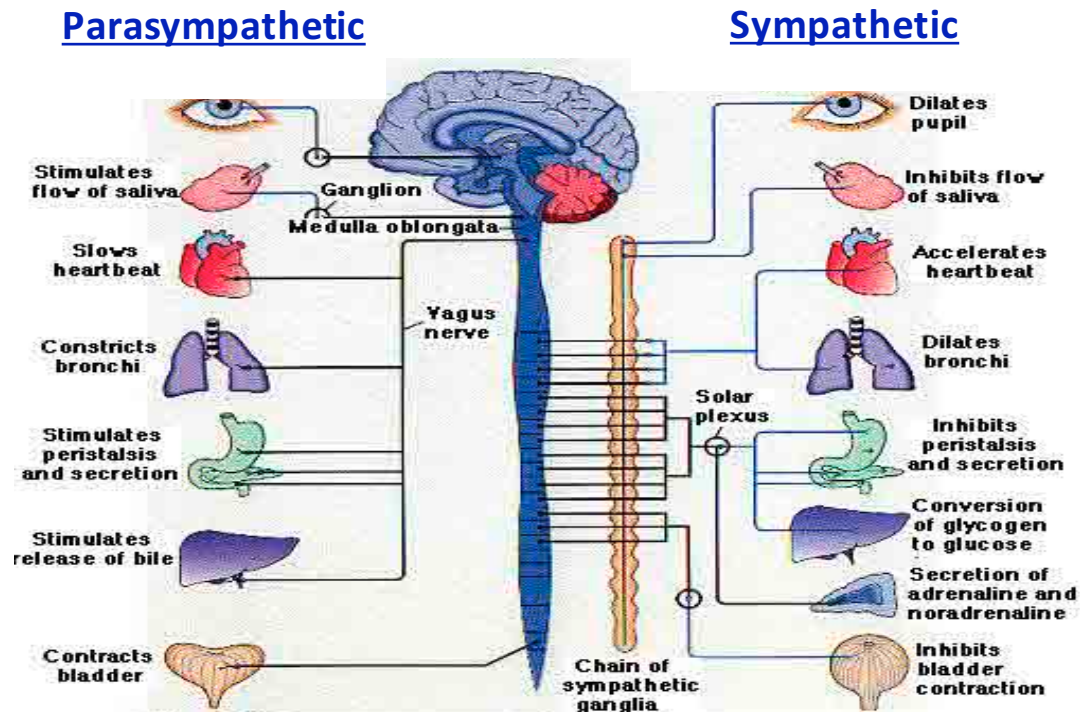
# The Autonomic Nervous System Is Key to Both Dysregulation and Resilience

- Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) operates like a *gas peddle*:

Generates burst of energy to prepare for threats by activating fight or flee reactions.

- Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) acts like a *brake system*:

Promotes rest and digest response that calms the body—and also the freeze response (helplessness and dissociation).



# The Resilient Growth™ Model

## Two Focuses

Presencing skills to calm the body and mind in adversity

Purposing skills to find meaning, direction and hope in adversity

# What Is Stress?

The word comes from the French for *Oppressed*

Stress is created from the belief that we are under threat and cannot cope.



It occurs when a gap exists between the reality we got and the reality we want.

The bigger the gap, the greater our stress & suffering

# Presenting Goals:

*Develop Skills to Moderate the "Push" of our Psychobiological Drives*

- Learn skills to stabilize our nervous system and calm the mind and body in the midst of trauma and toxic stress.
- Learn skills to create psychological flexibility by observing thoughts about the past and future non-judgmentally without being captured by them.

**The knowledge that we can manage our emotions and thoughts in any situation provides enormous confidence and peace of mind.**



# The Resilient Growth™ Model

Focus: *Presencing* skills to calm the body and mind in adversity

**G**round—and center yourself by stabilizing your nervous system.

**R**emember—your personal skills, resources, and social support network.

**O**bserve—your reactions to and thoughts about the situation non-judgmentally with self-compassion.

Focus: *Purposing* skills to find meaning, direction, & hope in adversity

**W**atch—for insight and meaning in climate-enhanced and related hardships.

**T**ap—into the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity.

**H**arvest—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.

# Ground—and center yourself by stabilizing your nervous system

## Body-Based Skills

(Trauma Resource Institute)

- Tracking
- Resourcing
- Grounding

## Breath-Based Skills

- Controlled breathing
- Six-Second breathing

## Awareness-Based Skills

- Mindfulness of breath, thoughts and emotions
- Mindful eating, walking, movement

## Culturally-Based Skills

- Music
- Dance
- Eating/food

## Combo Skills

- Reset Button

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**Trauma and toxic stress often lead to a restricted view of self.**

Not only can we **forget the skills and resources** we have to deal with adversity, we also **increase** our sense of **separation** from **our true allies** and **nature**.



Deliberately **remembering our skills, resources,** and **social** and **ecological connections** helps us overcome this tendency.

## Robust Social Support Networks Can Help You



- Determine if you are actually under threat
- If so, think through how significant it is & how to respond
- While providing vital emotional support and practical assistance when needed

# Growing Research Shows Connecting with Nature Is Also Vital

## Nature Heals Us

- Research shows that **being in nature**, or even **viewing** scenes of nature **reduces anger, fear,** and **stress** and **increases pleasant feelings**.
- Connecting with nature also **contributes to physical wellbeing**, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.
- Research in hospitals, offices, and schools has found that **even a simple plant in a room** can have a significant impact on stress and anxiety.

## Nature Soothes Us

- Humans are genetically programmed to find trees, plants, water, and other nature elements **engrossing** so are absorbed by nature scenes and **distracted from our pain and discomfort**.

## Nature Restores Us

- Studies show that time spent in nature or even viewing scenes of nature generate a **positive mood**, enhanced **psychological wellbeing**, **meaningfulness**, **hope**, and **vitality**.

## Nature Connects Us

For example, research shows people with trees and green space around their residence are more likely to:

- Know more people
- Have stronger feelings of unity with neighbors
- Be more concerned with helping and supporting each other
- Experience less street crime, violence, and aggression between domestic partners.

The experience of connection is explained by studies using fMRI to measure brain activity.

- When people view nature scenes, the parts of the brain associated with empathy and love light up.
- When they view desolate scenes, the parts of the brain associated with fear & anxiety activate.

# CIRCLES OF SUPPORT™

## Identifying the skills, resources, and social supports you have to cope with adversity

### Personal Skills

Ability to use healthy methods to stay calm, get exercise, eat well, be assertive, reach out to others

### Internal Supports

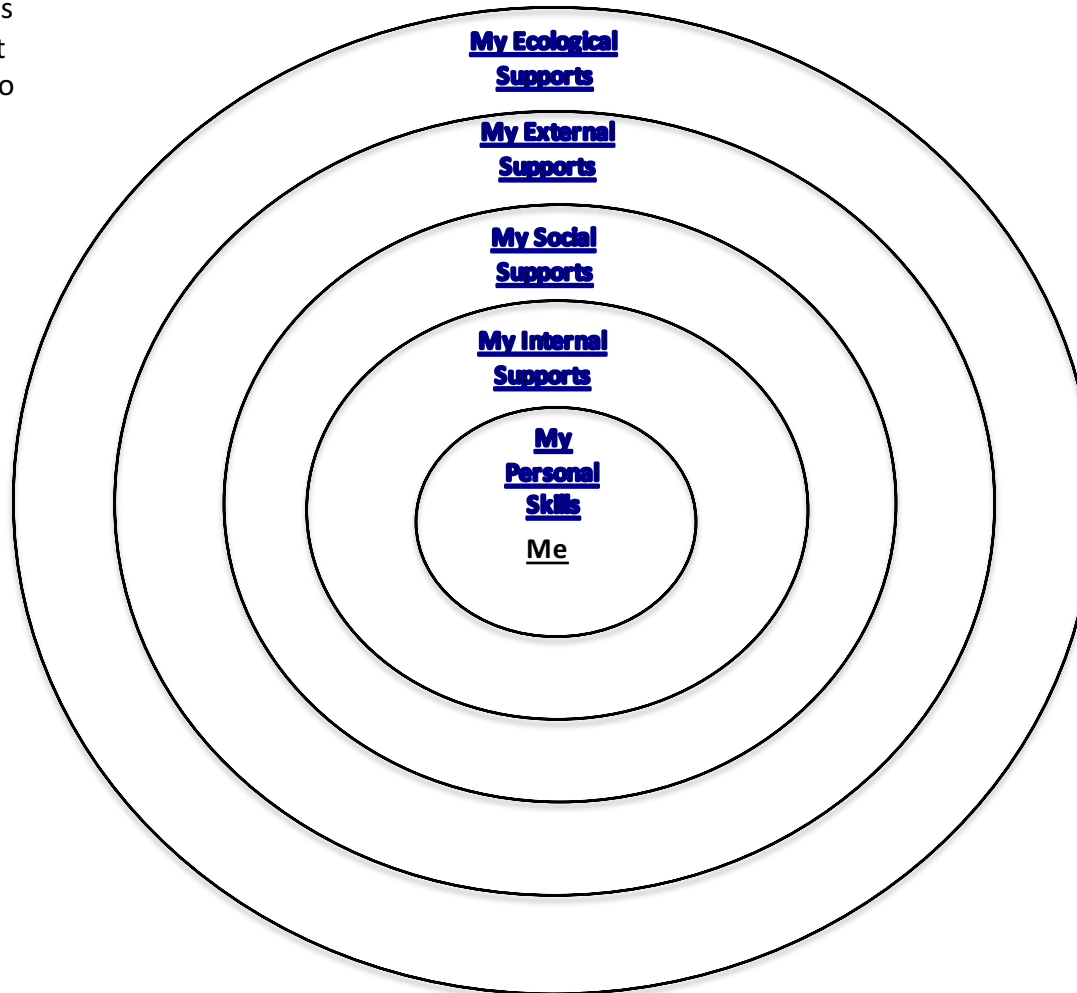
Images of experiences, places, role models that bring peace and calm

### Social Supports

Friends and family who provide unconditional emotional support or practical assistance

### External Supports

Physical places like a room in the house, garden, place in town, emergency kit, that bring peace and calm



### Ecological Supports

The sun's rays, air you breathe, water you drink

Does your residence have a:

- Yard
- Trees
- Garden
- House plants
- Pets

Does your community have:

- Green space
- Trees
- Walkways/trails
- Plants
- Wildlife
- Streams
- Watershed

**How aware are you of these & other ecological systems and species?**

**Can you find a way to connect with them?**



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**What do you see in the picture?**

**What does it mean to you that other people saw other scenes?**

Everything outside you is a reflection of your own perceptions & thoughts.  
You are the storyteller & the world you see is a projection of your own thoughts.

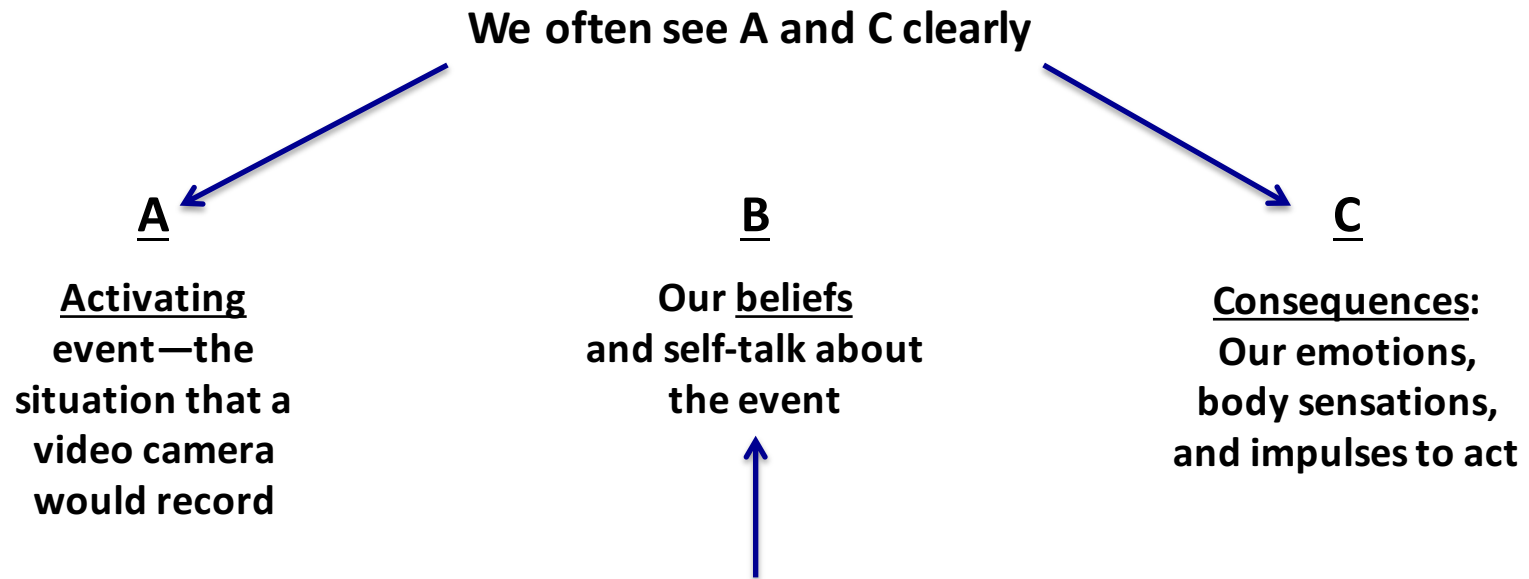


Trauma & toxic stress are often the result of attachments to  
beliefs, ideas, and desires that conflict with reality.

**Observe**—your reactions to and thoughts about the situation  
non-judgmentally

## **The ABC Model of Observing Your Thoughts and Emotions**

(G. Schiraldi)



**But We Are Often Not Aware of B: Our Beliefs and Automatic Self-Talk**

We think the event caused our reaction, when it was our *interpretation of it* that did, which usually includes some true and many erroneous beliefs and stories.

# TEN COMMON "THINKING DISTORTIONS"

- 1. Fixated on Flaws**
- 2. Dismissing the Positive**
- 3. Assuming**
- 4. Labeling**
- 5. Over-generalizing**
- 6. All-Or-Nothing Thinking**
- 7. Catastrophizing**
- 8. "Should" and "ought" statements**
- 9. Personalizing**
- 10. Blaming**

**Observe**—the situation & your views about it with clear eyes and self-compassion

## ABC Thought and Emotion Record

<u>Event</u> (Describe)	<u>Consequence</u> (For you, others or the environment)	<u>Belief</u> (Self-Talk)	<u>Is It Really True?</u> (Yes/No)	<u>Possible Thinking Distortion</u>	<u>Write An Alternative Belief/ Self-Talk</u>	<u>What Would You Be Like With The Alternative?</u>
<b><u>Example</u></b>  Worked in rush mode long after regular work hours to complete project	<b>Me:</b> bought fast food for dinner, was tense and irritable when got home, yelled at kids, ate and drank too much, felt bad about self afterwards  <b>Kids:</b> Felt like second priority, angry for being yelled at  <b>Environment:</b> needless consumption of packaging, chemicals, energy	I am the only one in the organization that can do this work.  If I don't do it climate change will grow worse.  I'm too tired and stressed to cook.	No  No  No	Personalizing  Over-generalization  Catastro-phizing	Others are skilled-- next time I'm running late I'll ask for help  I alone can't prevent CC & I'll be more effective if I care for myself and my family  I can cook a simple meal & it might relax me	More calm, thoughtful, and effective at work  A more caring parent.  More at ease with myself and the world  Feel good about less impact on the environment

## ABC Thought and Emotion Record

<u>Event</u> (Describe)	<u>Consequence</u> (For you, others or the environment)	<u>Belief</u> (Self-Talk)	<u>It is</u> <u>Really</u> <u>True?</u> Yes/No	<u>Possible</u> <u>Thinking</u> <u>Distortion</u>	<u>Write An</u> <u>Alternative</u> <u>Belief/</u> <u>Self-Talk</u>	<u>What Would</u> <u>You Be Like</u> <u>With The</u> <u>Alternative?</u>

**Observe**—your reactions to and thoughts about the situation non-judgmentally with self-compassion.

**When Observing Your Thoughts, Emotions, and Reactions  
Self-Compassion Is Essential!**

**Self-Compassion Exercise**



## My Presencing Safety Plan

### I Will Watch For These Signs That I Am Outside of My Resilient Growth Zone

#### Examples

***Physical Signs:*** rapid breathing, heart beat, or pulse; head or stomach ache; muscle tension.

***Mental Signs:*** racing mind, anxiety, fear, excessive worry, sleep troubles.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

### When I See These Signs I Will Take These Actions

#### Examples

Practice tracking, grounding, controlled breathing, mindfulness of breath, thoughts & emotions, Circles of Support, ABC Model of Thinking Distortions, Self-Compassion

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Remember, humans are not only

Pushed by psychobiological drives



**We Are Also**

Pulled by meaning and purpose!



# The Resilient Growth™ Model

Focus: *Presencing* skills to calm the body and mind in adversity

Ground—and center yourself by stabilizing your nervous system.

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Focus: *Purposing* skills to find meaning, direction & hope in adversity

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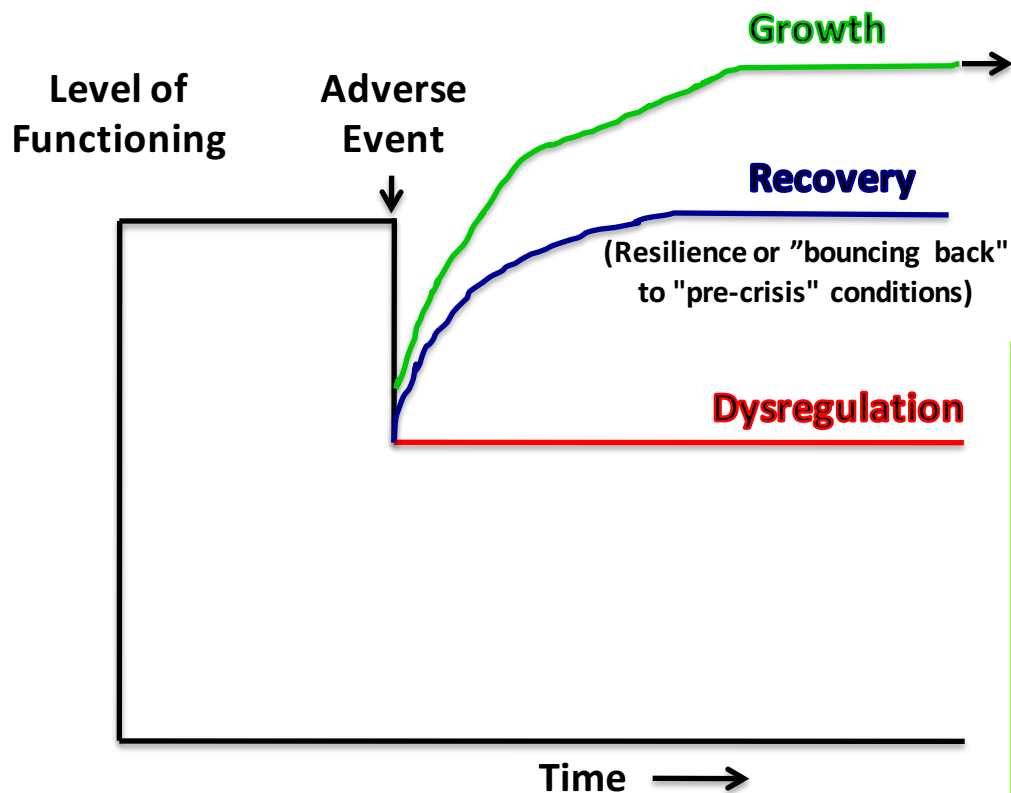
Harvest—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal,  
social, and environmental wellbeing.

# Purposing Goals

*Develop Skills To Intensify The "Pull" of Meaning and Purpose*

- Presenting is essential, but insufficient, because it doesn't guarantee a principled, vital, or meaningful life in the midst of ongoing climate traumas and toxic stresses.
- *Purposing* is about developing positive meaning, direction and hope in life by making values-based choices that enhance personal, collective and ecological wellbeing.
- Research shows that using adversity as a catalyst to adopt a mission greater than ourselves is good for others, increases our mental health, and enhances our capacity to deal with future adversities.

# The Choices We Make In Midst of Adversity Determine Our Path



Transformational Resilience:  
moving well beyond previous levels of functioning while holding the pain of trauma

Requires a Choice:

Continue to suffer, or use the experience to honestly examine and learn about the world and self  
and

find new sources of meaning, purpose and hope in life

# Famous Example: Nelson Mandela



**Spent 27 years in prison**

**Refused release because he would be required to stay silent.**

**Led transition from apartheid with empathy, equity, and strength.**

# Common Changes Seen When People Use Adversity to Learn and Grow

(Tedeschi, Calhoun, and Joseph)

- **Personal**
- **Philosophical**
- **Relational**

## Leading to These Common Benefits

- **Better mental health**
- **Improved positivity**
- **Improved physical health**
- **Shift from "Me to We"**

# Key Steps

(Adapted From *What Doesn't Kill Us*, S. Joseph; and *Transformational Resilience*, B. Doppelt)

1. Honest Appraisal
2. Seek Refuge and Support
3. Ask “What Can I learn?”
4. Tell a New Story
5. Realize You Control How You Respond



# The Resilient Growth™ Model

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**Watch**—for insight and meaning in climate-enhanced and related hardships.

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**Harvest**—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.



## Watching

for insight and meaning in climate-enhanced and related hardships

involves Honest Appraisal of both the situation and your interpretation of it.

Staying connected to your social and ecological supports is vital throughout.

## **Exercise: Learning, Growing, and Finding Meaning in Adversity**

- Describe a recent distressing situation and how you reacted to it.
- Describe how your reaction affected your mind, body and behavior, as well as other people, and also the natural environment.

### **Now, Re-imagine the Situation and Answer These Questions:**

- ✓ What insights about myself and the world could I gain if I use this as a learning opportunity rather than reacting by fighting, fleeing or freezing?
- ✓ How could I increase the wellbeing of other people and even the environment through this experience rather than diminishing them?
- ✓ How could I find new meaning and purpose in my life through this experience?

## **Creating an Ideal Vision is Helpful**

**The “Miracle Question” can help people develop a vision.**

Imagine that you go to sleep tonight and during the night something miraculous happens. When you wake up in the morning you suddenly have the ability to interpret and respond to adversity in the ideal way you have always dreamed of: The way that allows you to live with dignity, self-esteem, meaning & purpose.

**What would that ideal way of thinking and responding look and feel like?**

**What would you do differently if you applied it to the distressing situation just discussed?**

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## Tapping

**into the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity helps you honestly assess and learn from adversity, live with dignity, and tell a new story about the world and yourself.**

**Staying connected to your social and ecological supports is vital throughout.**

**Tap**—into the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity.

Values refer to Actions--- not ideals, morals, or goals.

Values are about how you act during life, not what you accomplish.



**Tap**—into the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity.

1. Go through the list of values & identify the top 3 values that would allow you to be the person you want to be and live with meaning and purpose in the midst of adversity.

**Personal responsibility**

Honesty

Fairness

Patience

Compassion

Simplicity

Protection of nature/climate

Generosity

Gratitude

Independence

Family

Community

Professional achievement

God

**Reverence for human life**

Honor

Loyalty

Social justice

Respect for authority

Humility

Self-sufficiency

Kindness

Personal safety

Rank and power

Self-awareness

Diligence

Public recognition

Love

**Social equity**

Integrity

Charity

Mercy

Respect for others

Status

Brotherhood

Selflessness

Wealth

Forgiveness

Open mindedness

Success

Insert other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Look back at the distressing event you described and consider what you might do differently if you focused on living out your core values during that time?





**When we honestly assess our situation and learn from it, surprising benefits often appear in 1 or more of these areas:**

- Awareness of new personal strengths
- Deeper connections with existing or new relationships
- New or deeper appreciation of life and new priorities
- Altered beliefs
- Seeing new opportunities or possibilities for your life

**Might you experience any of these beneficial effects if you responded to the distressing situation by living out your ideal?**

**Tap**—into your purpose & the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity.

## **Humor & Gratitude Are Key To Finding Purpose and Living Our Values**

In the midst of serious or ongoing adversity we often only see bad things.

Focusing on gratitude reminds us of positive things in our lives that are forgotten  
which creates a more complete life narrative.

We often “Play Selma’s Game”

Confessions of a Jewish Mother

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRbL46mWx9w>)



**Tap**—into the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity.

**Is there a new, more**

***Honest and Complete Story***

**you can tell now about the world and yourself?**

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## Harvesting

hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing

allows you to tell yourself a new story and take control of how you respond it.

Staying connected to your social and ecological supports is vital throughout.

**Harvest**—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.

# HARVESTING HOPE

**Researchers Have Found that Overcoming Helplessness and Finding Hope Emerges  
Most Readily When Three Closely Related Factors Are Present:**

- 1. People have a vision of a place they want to arrive at or condition they want to achieve**
- 2. A sense of initial steps they can take & an overall approach to move toward their vision**
- 3. A commitment to work with others to move toward that vision even when obstacles arise**

**Harvest**—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.

## Exercise

Can you note a time when you **helped someone else, animals, or nature**—without **any concern for yourself** or feeling of **obligation**?

**How did you feel afterwards?**

# HARVESTING HOPE

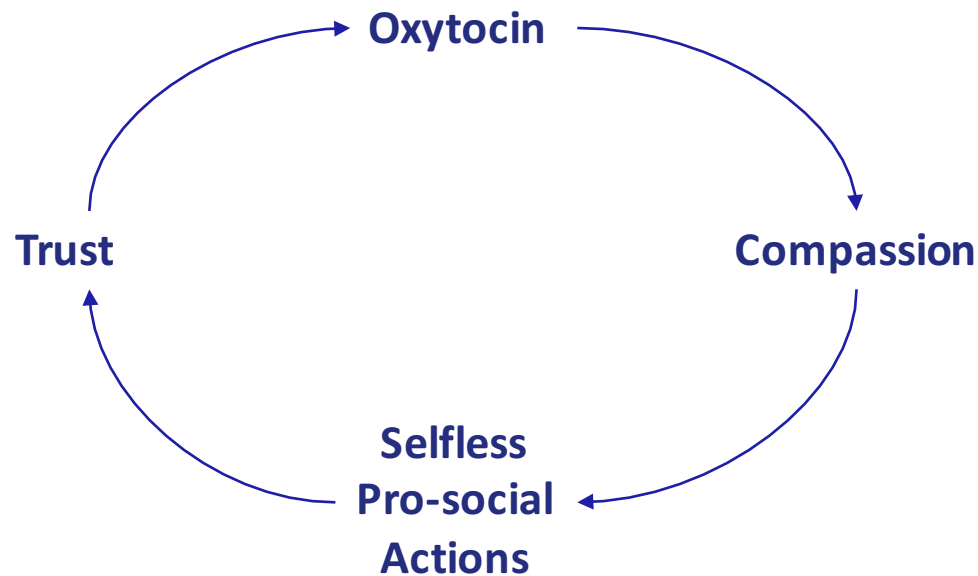
One of the best ways to harvest hope in the midst of climate adversity is to take concrete steps, with others, to help other people and nature.

This activates the release of oxytocin, which makes us more “compassionate” which produces even more “selfless pro-social actions,” which generates a virtuous cycle!



**Harvest**—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.

## The Oxytocin Virtuous Cycle



**Harvest**—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.

**Research Shows That When People Become More Empathetic & Altruistic  
They Exhibit More:**

**Honesty  
Kindness  
Love  
Gratitude  
Fairness  
Forgiveness  
Modesty  
Prudence  
Leadership skills  
Social intelligence  
Bravery  
Creativity  
Good Judgment**

**Leading To:**

**More hopeful and positive attitude; Better mental health; Better physical health;  
Extended life-expectancy; and Greater capacity to deal with future adversities.**

(From: Paul Zak, *The Moral Molecule: How Trust Works*, and many others)

**Harvest**—hope for new possibilities by making choices that increase personal, social, and environmental wellbeing.

# HARVESTING HOPE

1. What is your ideal vision of how you will respond to the traumas and toxic stresses of climate change?
2. What steps do you intend to take in the near term and what is your approach to moving toward that vision?
3. Who can you join with and what commitments are you willing to make to keep your momentum even when barriers arise ?

**This is about taking control of how you respond to adversity!**

# My Purposing Action Plan

**My Strengths and Passions:**

**My Core Values:**

**Goals To Enhance My Personal Wellbeing:**

**Goals to Enhance the Wellbeing of Other People and The Natural Environment:**

<u>Immediate Actions</u> (within 30 days) to Achieve My Goals	* Barriers I Will Experience	Strategies For Barriers	# Benefits of Action	Date(s) Done
1.				
2.				
3.				
<u>Mid-Term Actions</u> (within 3 Months) To Achieve My Goals	Barriers	Strategies for Barriers	Benefits of Action	Date(s) Done
1.				
2.				
3.				

\* Barriers include internal challenges as well as external barriers.

# The Resilient Growth™ Model Involves Cultivating a *Resilient Mindset*

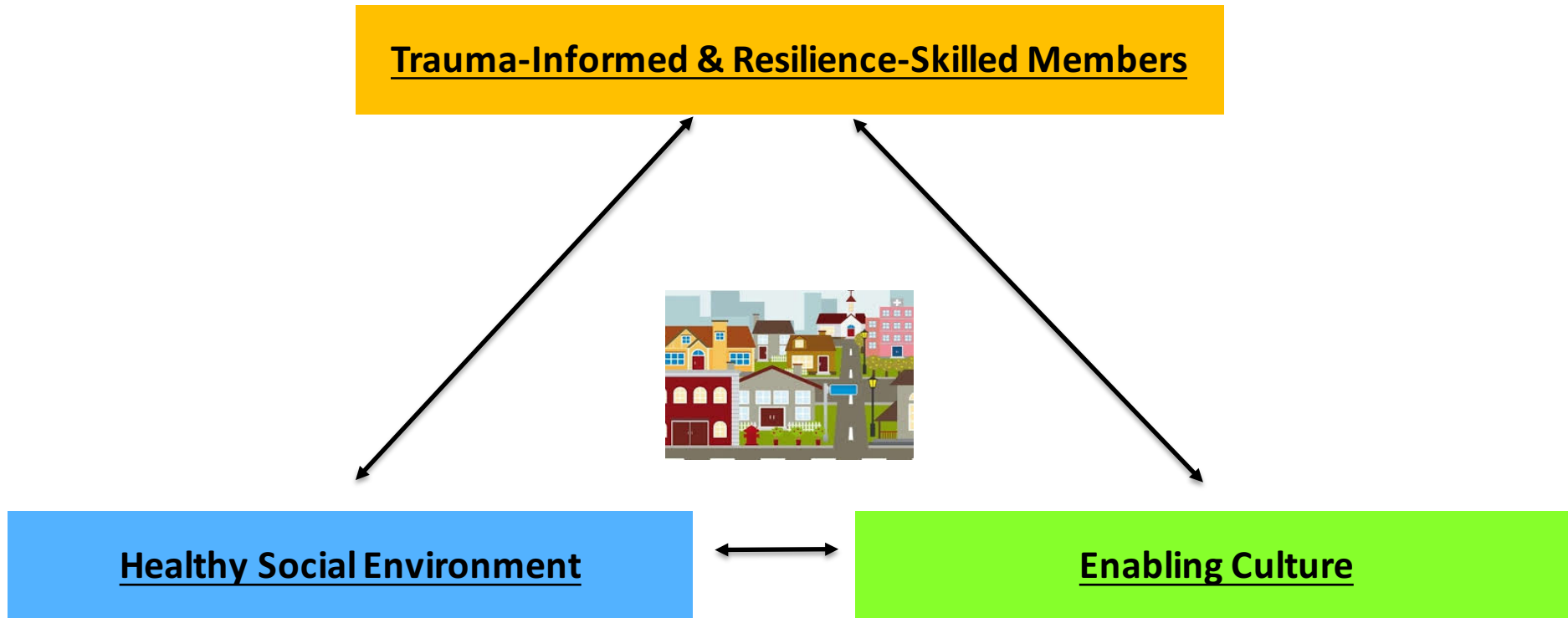
I understand how **trauma and toxic stress** can affect **my mind & body**  
(I'm trauma-informed)

I have **skills, social & ecological supports,** and **other resources**  
I can use to **calm my mind & body** and **think and act in healthy ways**  
even in **unhealthy conditions**  
(Presencing skills)



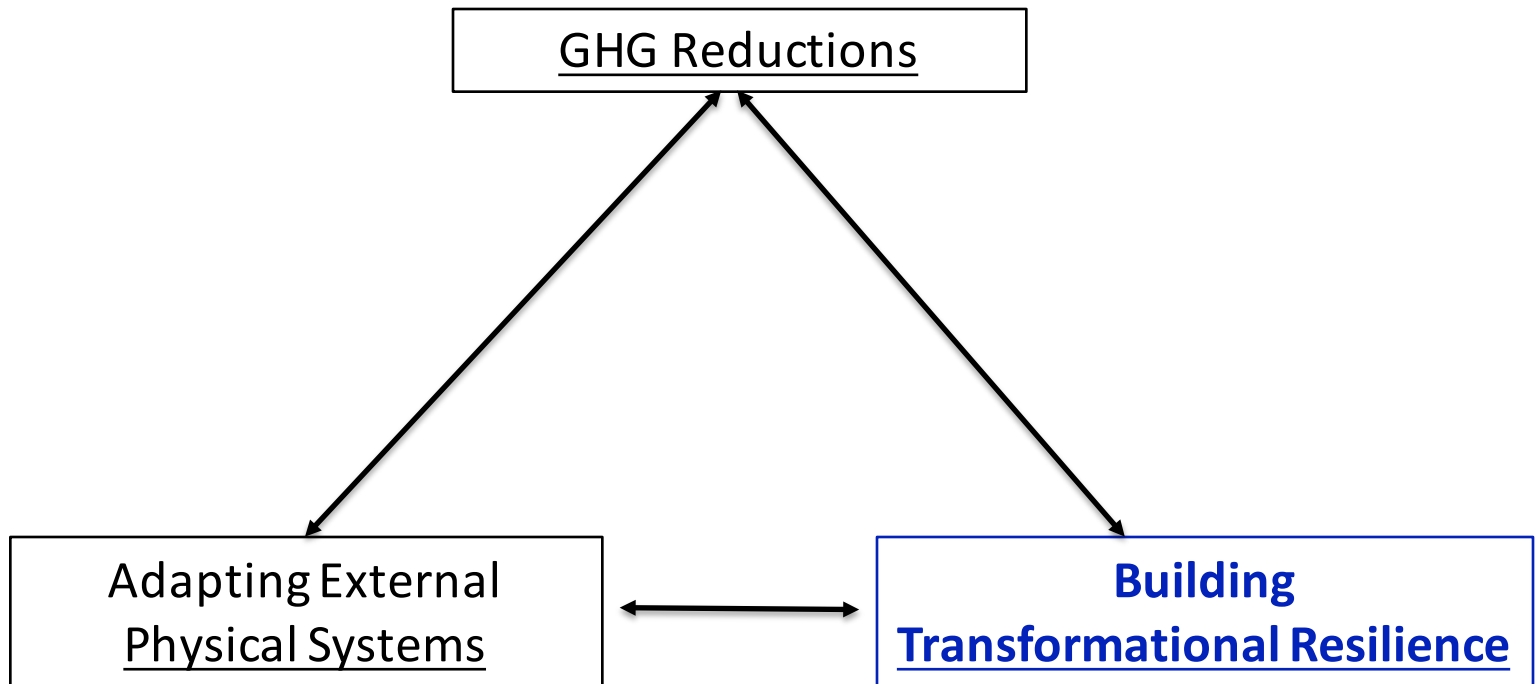
I have **skills** to use adversities as **catalysts** to **learn, grow,** and find **meaning and hope**  
by **joining with others** to **help people** and **nature**  
(Purposing skills)

# The Three Pillars of Transformational Resilience in Organizations and Communities



See ITRCLibrary on the website for research basis of this model.

# Climate Solutions Must Include Building Transformational Resilience!



Every adult and youth should have the opportunity to learn  
**Presencing and Purposing skills!**



## **The Resilient Growth™ Model**

- **Is evidence-based and emphasizes prevention---**  
not therapy, but can be very therapeutic
- **Is based on the biology of our nervous system---**  
not mental or moral weakness
- **With practice, can be instantly self-administered--**  
and skills are dose-based--the more you practice the greater the effects



## About the Presenter

Bob Doppelt founded and coordinates the International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC). He is the director of The Resource Innovation Group (TRIG), which is affiliated with Willamette University. He also teaches part time at the University of Oregon. He is trained as a counseling psychologist and in environmental science. He is a mindfulness teacher (Spirit Rock Meditation Center), and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Instructor (U. Mass. Medical School Center for Mindfulness).

His book *Transformational Resilience* (Greenleaf Publishing 2016) describes these and other “Presencing” and “Purposing” skills for building personal and psychosocial resilience.

The book is available at Amazon.com, Greenleaf Publishing, and many online book sellers.

