

## ADDITIONAL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SOUL RESILIENCE

Adapted from *The First Responder Healing Manual* by Chris & Rahnella Adsit<sup>1</sup>

**Resilient** [ri-'zil-yənt – adjective]: capable of withstanding shock without permanent deformation or rupture; tending to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

– Merriam-Webster's Deluxe Dictionary

"...capable of withstanding shock..." A first responder career is full of many shocking events. You've experienced this – sometimes daily. And you may have even experienced some "deformation or rupture." But it doesn't have to be permanent. This course is designed to help repair those ruptures, and prepare you to be more resilient in the future.

Most people in the "helping professions" (such as first responders) tend to put the needs of everyone else ahead of their own. It's honorable to do so, courageous, the epitome of humility, and also very short-sighted. Combat medics have this philosophy drilled into them throughout their training: **"You MUST take care of yourself first, because you are no good to anybody dead."** Society desperately needs what first responders provide. But if you are sidelined and unavailable due to debilitating stress, what service can you provide?

A man once asked Jesus, "Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?" Jesus gave him two for the price of one – not only the most important, but the second most important too:

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.*

– Matthew 22:37-40

You may not have noticed that Jesus actually speaks of *three* who should be loved in this passage: God, your neighbor, and *yourself*.

Note the standard of measurement Jesus placed on *"love your neighbor."* How are we to love them? *In the same way we love ourselves.* For many people, that's not a very high standard – especially for those who are experiencing depression, stress and anxiety. Their self-esteem and sense of worth are often in the toilet. They feel they are failing on many fronts. "Besides," they reason, "The needs of other people are greater than mine. If I don't meet their needs, who will?" So their own needs go unmet, and before long they're stressed out, running on fumes, and sitting on the bench.

The solution is that we need to see ourselves and value ourselves as God does. Give yourself the same dignity, worth and respect that God affords you. How worthy does *He* think you are? Worthy enough to die for. Worth every drop of blood He shed for you. Worth turning your body into His temple. Worth calling you friend. Worth adopting. Worth living with forever. He wants you to take care of yourself.

Following are nine suggested disciplines that you should consider adopting that will contribute to your soul resiliency...

### 1. Pay attention to your soil

In Week 2, we talked about how important it is to make sure our roots are imbedded in good soil if we are interested in producing good, healthy fruit. Does your life's dirt have the right components?

In the Week 2 Participants Portal there is an article there entitled *GOOD DIRT*. In it, five elements of a healing environment are mentioned:

- Element #1 – A Relationship With God
- Element #2 – The Bible
- Element #3 – Prayer
- Element #4 – The Christian Community
- Element #5 – Service

These may seem deceptively simple, but don't let that fool you. If you aren't being intentional about making sure these basic elements are present in the soil of your life, very little good fruit will be produced, and your soul resilience will be minimal. See the article in the Week 2 Participants Portal for more on these elements.

## 2. Connect with God daily

The essence of eternal life is *to know God*. We can begin to know Him right here, right now. We can learn things about Him that will deepen our relationship with Him and prove to be vital to our spiritual resilience. How important is this? Read the Apostle Paul's opinion on the subject:

*More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.*

– Philippians 3:8

Two Main Objectives in a daily "Quiet Time":

1. To build a deeper relationship with God, which requires *communication* (prayer).
2. To learn about the things of God and His Kingdom, which requires *education* (Bible study).

## 3. Keep forgiveness issues up to date

There will be more on this in Week 9. Who do you need to forgive? From whom do you need to seek forgiveness? What might you need to forgive *yourself* for?

## 4. Focus on who you are in Christ

There will be more on this in Week 11. This is your *true* identity. The world wants to define you. The devil wants to define you. Even your fallen nature wants to define you in ways that will make you weaker and less resilient. Find out how God defines you, and focus on *that*!

## 5. Keep a prayer journal

Ask God to give you scripture promises, write them down, pray and meditate on them. Write down the things you ask of God, what you are praying for yourself and others. Write down answers to your prayers, no matter how small or insignificant they might seem. These become faith-builders.

## 6. Read inspirational books

Ask a trusted friend who has a strong walk with God what he/she has been reading lately, or what they might suggest for you. As your Firstline group leaders, or other members of the group.

## 7. Enlist prayer intercessors

Put your best prayer warriors on active duty. Stay in close contact with them and let them know regularly what you need prayer about.

## **8. Schedule personal R & R**

Calendarize some time to re-charge your soul's batteries. If you do, you'll feel better, act better, react better and be better able to meet the needs to which you are called. Set aside personal time on a daily basis – a quarter-hour to read the Bible or a good book, pruning your roses, polishing your Harley – whatever turns *your* crank. Take a half-day or a day to do something you love – or nothing at all. Schedule a personal retreat of three to five days each year. Relax. Get your emotional tanks filled and topped off.

## **9. Check out something beautiful**

God is a creative being and He's put within each of us a profound appreciation of creation and creativity. Schedule some "Beauty Appointments" to places where they keep the beautiful things: art galleries, museums, parks, churches, the ocean side, the mountains. Absorb the beauty, appreciate the uniqueness of each creation, the genius, the detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Adsit, Chris & Rahnella, *The First Responder Healing Manual* (Eugene, OR: Branches of Valor, Int'l, 2015). pp. 138-144