



# **Introduction to 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 Very Dangerous Ecological--Turned Mental Health—  
Turned Psycho-Social-Spiritual—Turned Humanitarian Crisis—  
is Rapidly Growing...**

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



**The Adverse Psychological & Psycho-Social-Spiritual  
Reactions to Climate-Enhanced Traumas & Toxic Stresses**



# The Climate Crisis is Unlike Any Modern Society Has Faced!

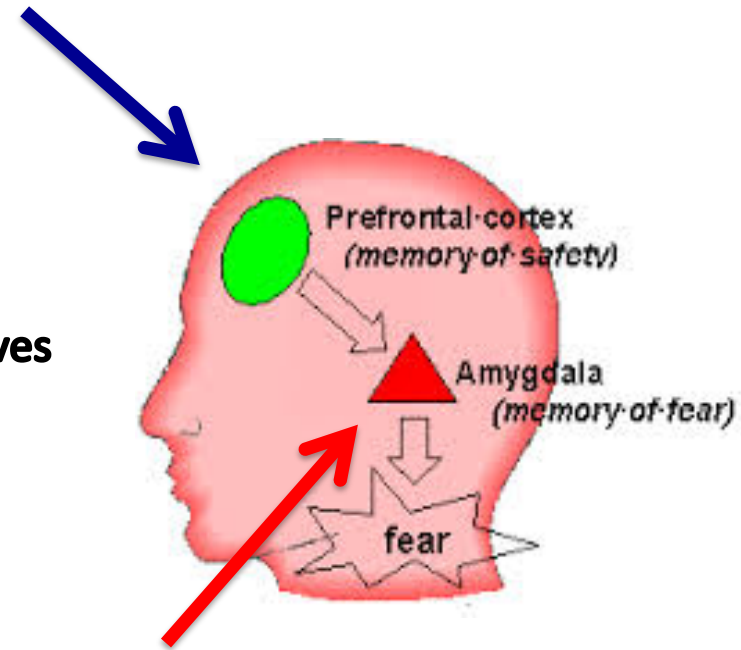
## Even With Aggressive Emissions Reductions:

- It will worsen for decades and increasingly intermix fast-growing disasters with ongoing and intense or toxic stresses offering less & less time for recovery.
- It will aggravate racism & other systemic oppressions, disrupt social support networks & other critical protective systems, & magnify many health inequities
- The resulting psychological and psycho-social-spiritual maladies might be as bad as the physical impacts and could stall or derail efforts to cut emissions.

# What Happens When Humans Experience Trauma and Toxic Stress?

## Prefrontal-Cortex: "Executive Center"

- Can direct, but not control, the Fear & Alarm Center.
- Rationally sorts out real & false threats & decides how to respond—but can also prevent discharge of hyperarousal.
- Develops beliefs about the world and self that give our lives meaning and direction



## Amygdala: The "Fear and Alarm Center"

- Fear-based survival reaction occurs automatically when senses threat and release neurochemicals into the body to prepare us to fight, flee, or if overwhelming freeze.
- Works like smoke detector—a false alarm is better than mistake— but can lead to dysregulation.



# But the Climate Crisis Also Offers The Opportunity for Profound Transformation!

It is a primal truth that, as painful as it can be, adversity is often our greatest impetus for learning, growth, and transformation.



# **Building Widespread Levels of Transformational Resilience Can Prevent Many of These Problems and Dramatically Increase Wellbeing!**

**The ability to constructively cope with climate and other adversities and use them as catalysts to learn, grow, and increase personal, social, and ecological wellbeing substantially above pre-crisis levels.**

From *Transformational Resilience*, B. Doppelt  
(Greenleaf Publishing 2016)

# The Resilient Growth™ Model Offers a Path Forward

**It Strengthens Key Personal Protective Factors and  
Is Framed Around The Knowledge That Humans Are**



**Pushed by drives**

**and**



**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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Presencing Goals:

*Strengthen Vital Protective Factors of Internal Locus of Control, Social Supports, and Self-Efficacy to Moderate the "Push" of our Psychobiological Drives*

- Learn knowledge and 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.**

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## **Step 1: Help People Become “Trauma-Informed”**

Use age and demographically-appropriate information, graphics, and tools to help all adults and youth develop a basic understanding of:

- How **trauma and toxic stress affect their body, mind and behavior**--and the **behaviors of groups** (the neurobiology of trauma and toxic stress)
- **How to identify symptoms of traumatic stress in their body and mind** (physical reactions, mind racing etc.)
- **The long-term effects of trauma & stress on mental & physical health** (affects on child brain development, adult disorders, & many cancers, heart diseases etc)

# Ground—and center yourself by stabilizing your nervous system

## Step 2: Teach Simple Skills to Calm the Mind and Body When Distressed

### 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 together

### Combo Skills

- Reset Button



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## Remembering and using your personal Skills & Resources Helps Calm the Nervous System

### 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



# Research Shows Connecting with Nature Is Also a Vital Resource

## Nature Calms Us

- Research shows that being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature reduces anger, fear, and stress and contributes to physical wellbeing by reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.

## 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.

## Functional MRIs Explain These Responses

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

# CIRCLES OF SUPPORT™

**To identify the skills, resources, and social supports people have to cope w/adversity**

## Personal Skills

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

## Internal Supports

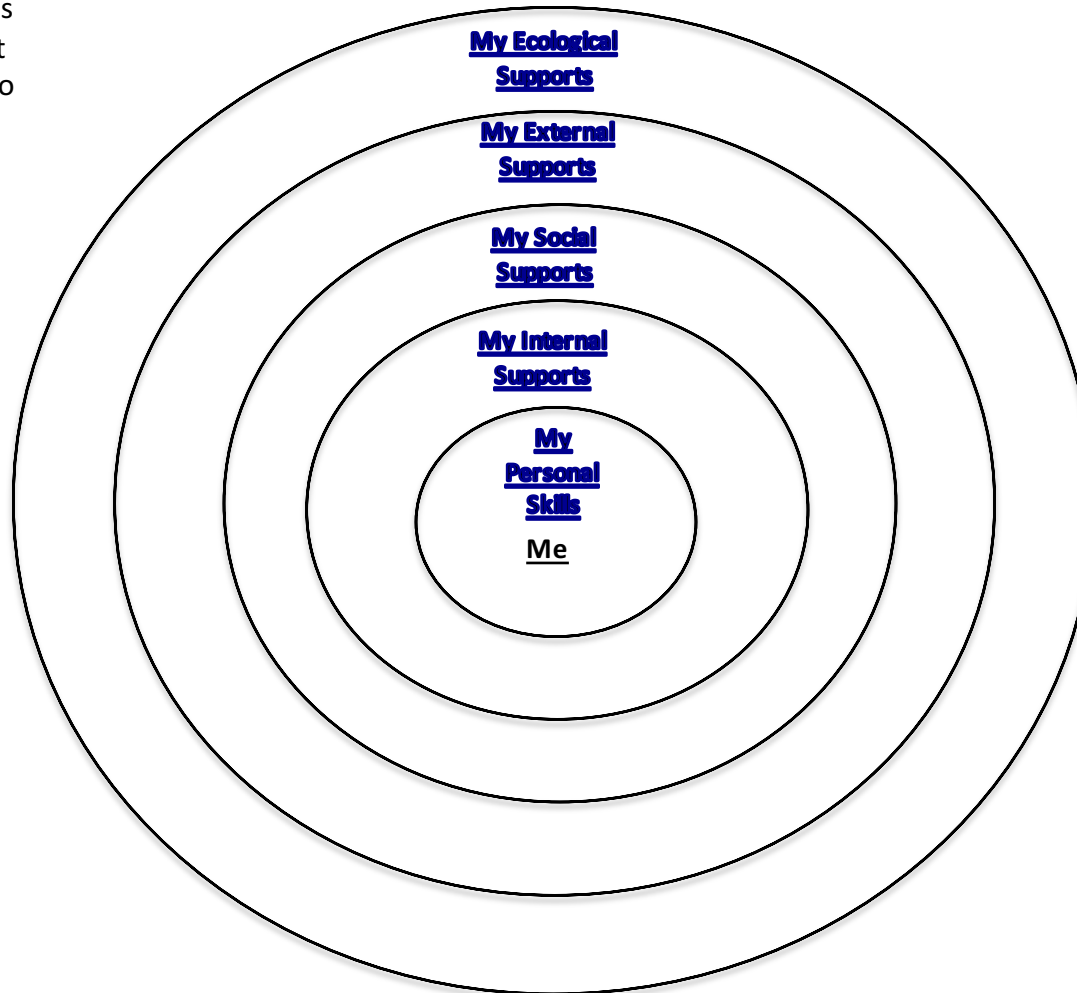
Images of experiences, places, role models that bring peace and calm

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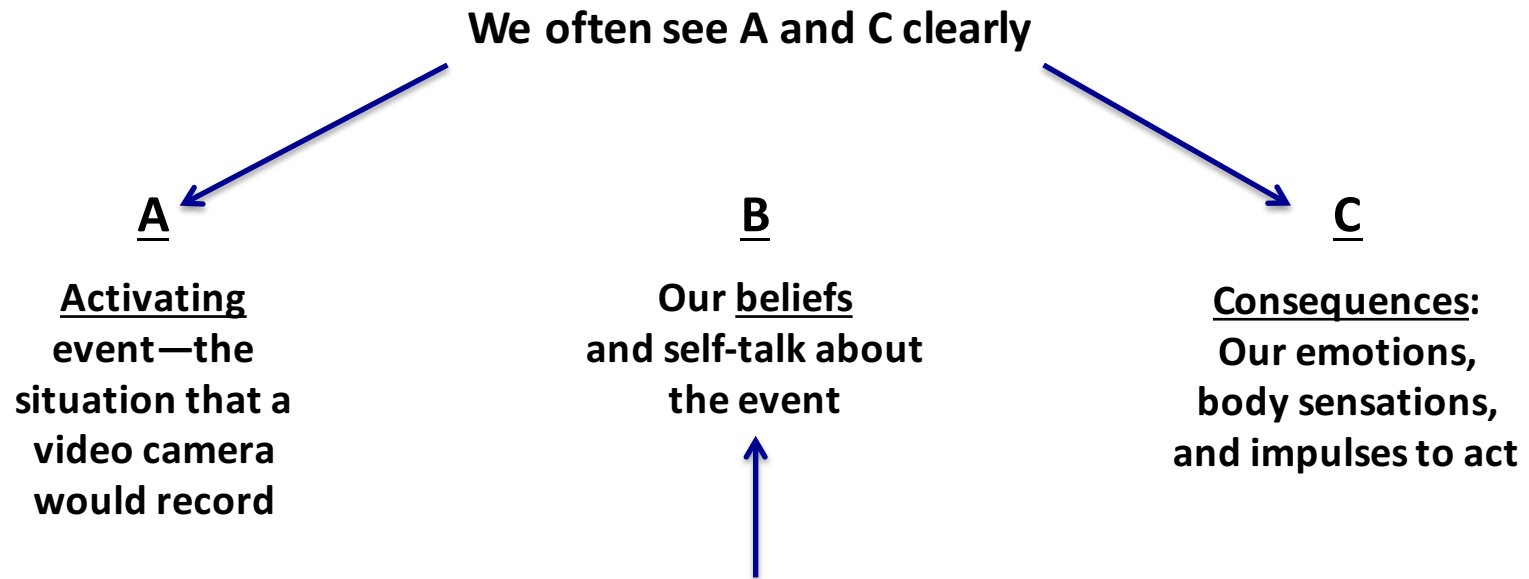
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**Observe**—your reactions to and thoughts about the situation  
non-judgmentally

## **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



**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!**

**Engage People in an Age and Culturally Appropriate  
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!



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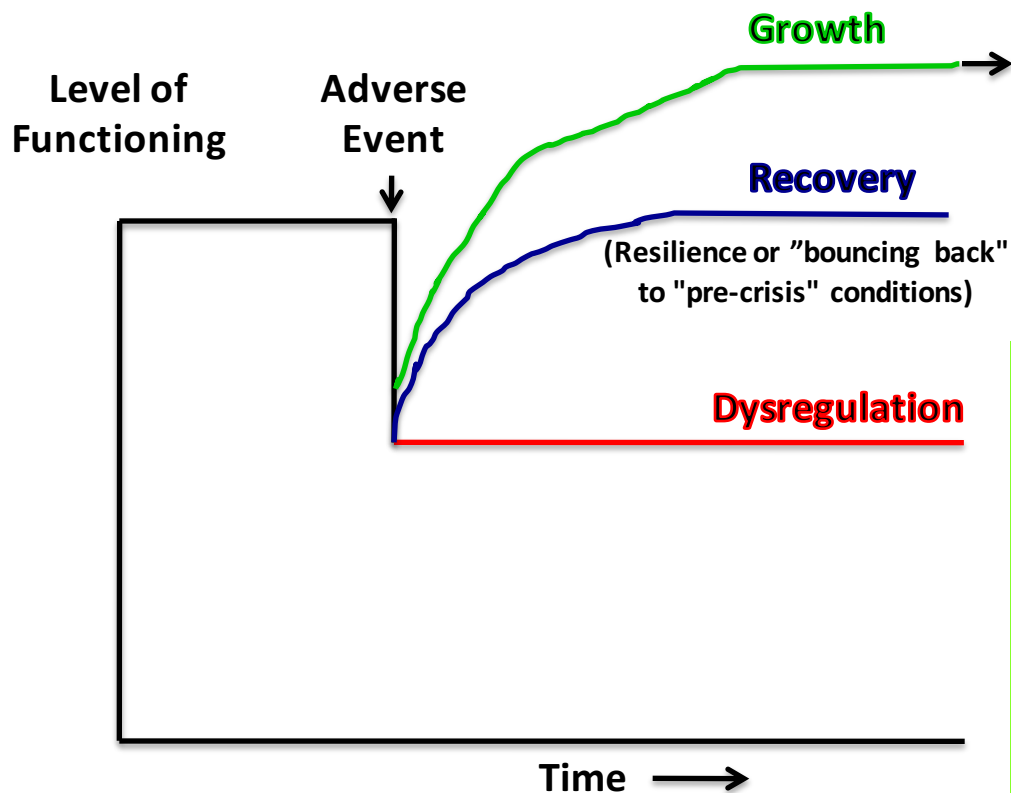
# Purposing Goals

*Strengthen Vital Protective Factors of Meaning, Direction, and Hope in Life To Intensify The "Pull" of Purpose*

- Presencing 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 (self-transcendence) not only helps others, it also increases our mental health and 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

# **5 “Purposing” Steps Embedded Within the Resilient Growth™ Model**

**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**

# Purposing Examples: MADD Founders



Candy Lightner turned her grief into a higher purpose by starting Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) after her 13-year-old daughter Cari was killed by a drunken driver walking to a church carnival.



Beckie Brown channeled her suffering into a new mission in life by establishing the first MADD chapter in Northern Florida after her son Marcus was killed at age 18 in a car crash involving a 19-year old drunk driver.

## Both Women:

- Turned toward and honestly assessed what happened
- Were consoled by family and friends—and remembered they had skills and resources they could use to respond
- Kept asking what lessons they could learn from the tragedy
- Told themselves a new story about the world and themselves and found new meaning and purpose in life
- Realized they could continue to suffer, or take control of their response-- and decided to help others as a way to help themselves, and in doing so found great hope.



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## Watching

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

# Watch for Insight and Meaning In Climate-Enhanced Adversities

## Step 1: Honest Appraisal

1. Describe a distressing experience you recently had and how you reacted to it.
  - How did it affect your body?
  - How did it affect your mind?
  - How did it affect your behavior?
2. Describe how your reaction likely effected the people involved & those who observed
3. Describe how your reaction might have affected the natural environment.
4. If others were involved or observed, how would they have described the situation?
5. Can you describe the distressing situation any differently now depicting all aspects?

Watch for Insight and Meaning In Climate-Enhanced Adversities

Step 2: Seek Refuge and Support

Help people use their “Circles of Support” to find refuge and support in others and use their skills and resources



## Watch for Insight and Meaning In Climate-Enhanced Adversities

### Step 3: Ask "What Can I Learn?"

Thinking about adversity in different ways — reframing it — can help you find meaning in it rather than simply reacting to it.

Learning is an ornament in prosperity, a refuge in adversity, and a provision in old age.

Aristotle

Asking "What I can learn from the situation?"

is a very powerful way to reframe our thinking about distressing events!

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## Tapping

into the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity helps you tell a new story about the world and yourself.

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

## **Step 4: Tell a New Story**

**Creating a vision of your Best Possible Self helps you tell a new story!**

### **Ask People to Answer the “Miracle Question”**

Imagine that you go to sleep tonight and something magical happens: You are suddenly able to think and respond to distressing events in the ideal way you would like to respond: the way that helps you to avoid harming yourself, others, or the natural environment, and allows you to live with dignity and pride.

When you wake up in the morning you find yourself in the exact difficult situation as before:

- 1. How would you respond to the difficult situation now in the ideal?**
- 2. How could you bring that ideal response to fruition?**



Living out the Values We Hold Dear in the midst of adversity increases our self-esteem and helps us move toward our ideal self and Tell a New Story

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

- |                              |                          |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Personal responsibility      | Reverence for human life | Social equity      |
| Honesty                      | Honor                    | Integrity          |
| Fairness                     | Loyalty                  | Charity            |
| Patience                     | Social justice           | Mercy              |
| Compassion                   | Respect for authority    | Respect for others |
| Simplicity                   | Humility                 | Status             |
| Protection of nature/climate | Self-sufficiency         | Brotherhood        |
| Generosity                   | Kindness                 | Selflessness       |
| Gratitude                    | Personal safety          | Wealth             |
| Independence                 | Rank and power           | Forgiveness        |
| Family                       | Self-awareness           | Open mindedness    |
| Community                    | Diligence                | Success            |
| Professional achievement     | Public recognition       | Insert other _____ |
| God                          | Love                     | _____              |

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

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

## Step 4: Tell a New Story

If you can envision yourself responding in the ideal way you desire, might you learn any of the following:

- “You are stronger than you thought?” : New *personal strengths* you are not previously aware of.
- “Friends can become family?” : Deeper or new *relationships*
- “Life is a precious gift?” : Greater appreciation of *being alive* and/or of the *natural environment*.
- “What is truly important in your life?” : New *priorities* such as *different jobs, profession* or *spirituality*
- “New doors are open to you?” : New *opportunities* or *possibilities* in your life.

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

## Step 4: Tell a New Story

Is there a **New Story** you can tell yourself now about **other people**, the **world**, or **yourself** as a result of this adversity?



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

## **Harvesting Hope**

**for new possibilities allows you to overcome hopelessness and helplessness**

**and**

**Take Control of How You Respond**

**Step 5: by Taking Control Of How You Respond**

**Research has found that 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 the initial steps they can take and an overall approach to move toward their vision.
3. **A commitment to work with others to move toward that vision even when obstacles arise**

## Harvesting Hope for new possibilities

### Step 5: by Taking Control Of How You Respond

Identify a recent time when you did something helpful for another person— or nature without a sense of obligation or expected payoff.

How did you feel afterwards?

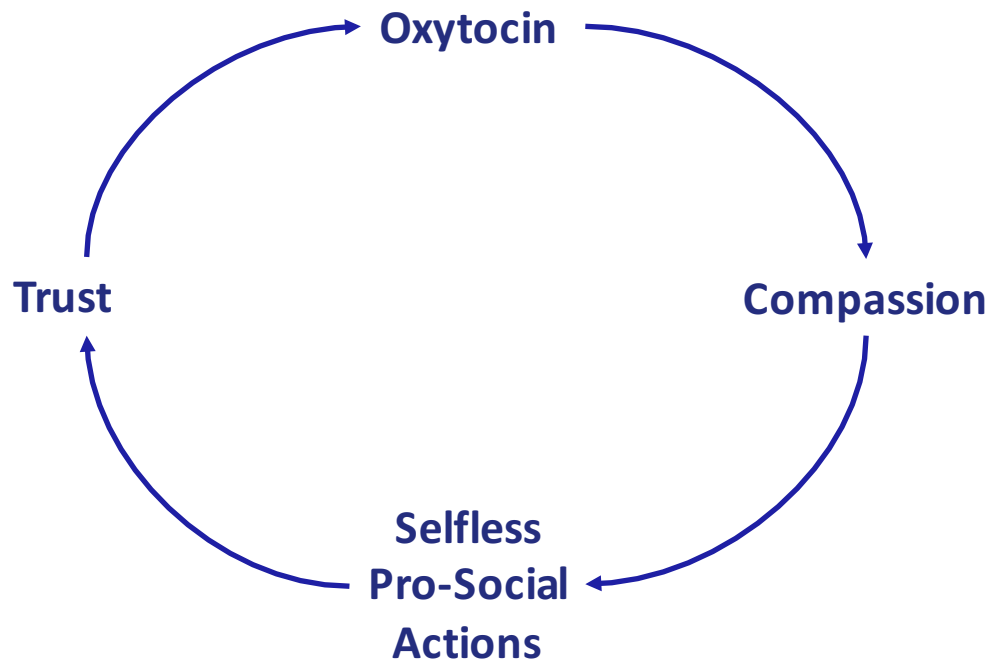


When we do good things for others—or help the world be a better place—without obligation (engage in selfless pro-social behaviors)

We enhance our Self-Esteem

# The Oxytocin Virtuous Cycle

Selfless pro-social actions **feel good** ... which triggers the **release of oxytocin**... which generates **more compassion** ... which drives **more selfless behaviors** ... which **inspires more trust**... which causes the release of **more oxytocin** .... producing a **virtuous cycle!**



- This is not about being nice or moralism
- It is an expanded notion of self-interest



## Harvesting Hope for new possibilities

### Step 5: by Taking Control Of How You Respond

Research Shows That When People Become More  
Compassionate & Selfless They Exhibit Greater:

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
- Greater capacity to deal with future adversities

**Step 5: by Taking Control Of How You Respond**

**Help People Craft a Hope Action Plan!**

1. Create a vision of a place they want to arrive at or condition they want to achieve.
2. Identify the initial steps they can take and an overall approach to move toward their vision.
3. Make a commitment to work with others to move toward that vision even when obstacles arise

# 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.

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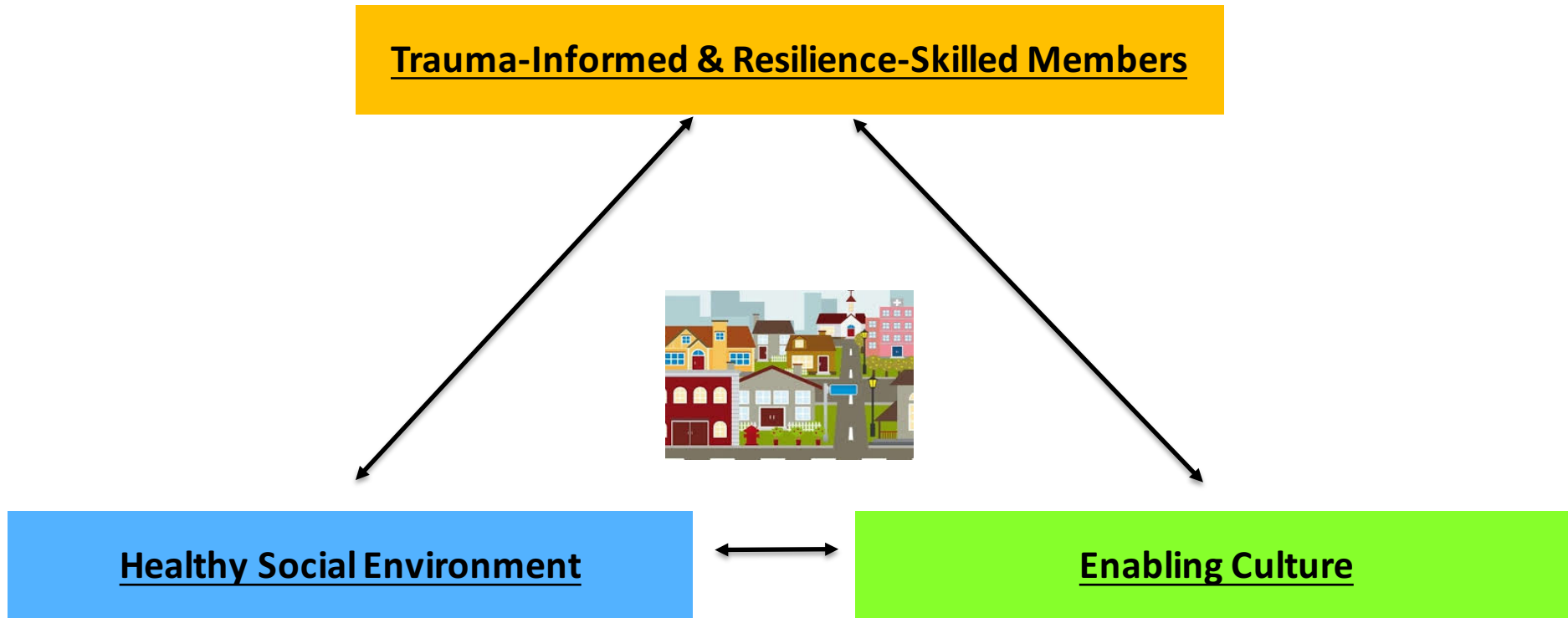
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## **The Resilient Growth™ Model**

- **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

# The Resilient Growth Model™ Supports the Three Pillars of Transformational Resilience in *Organizations* and *Communities*



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

**Let's Use the Resilient Growth Model™ to Launch a Movement to Make The U.S. and All Other Nations...**



**Trauma-Informed  
Human Resilience-Enhancing Societies for  
Climate Traumas & Toxic Stresses!**

## 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).

Bob is the author of a number of best-selling books on the process of systems-based individual, organizational, and community change.

His most recent 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.

