

Eudaimonia: pathways to realisation

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1. A Diagnostic and Development Model



Take a moment to reflect on your experience of altitude. At what times in your career have you been at the top of your game? What words describe these times for you? To what degree did you experience calm, vitality, emotion or thinking support you? In contrast consider when you have been down. How would you describe this and can you remember the stages through which you passed?

We recommend four perspectives to support you in your search for excellence:

Insight: be able to notice where you are on the spiral

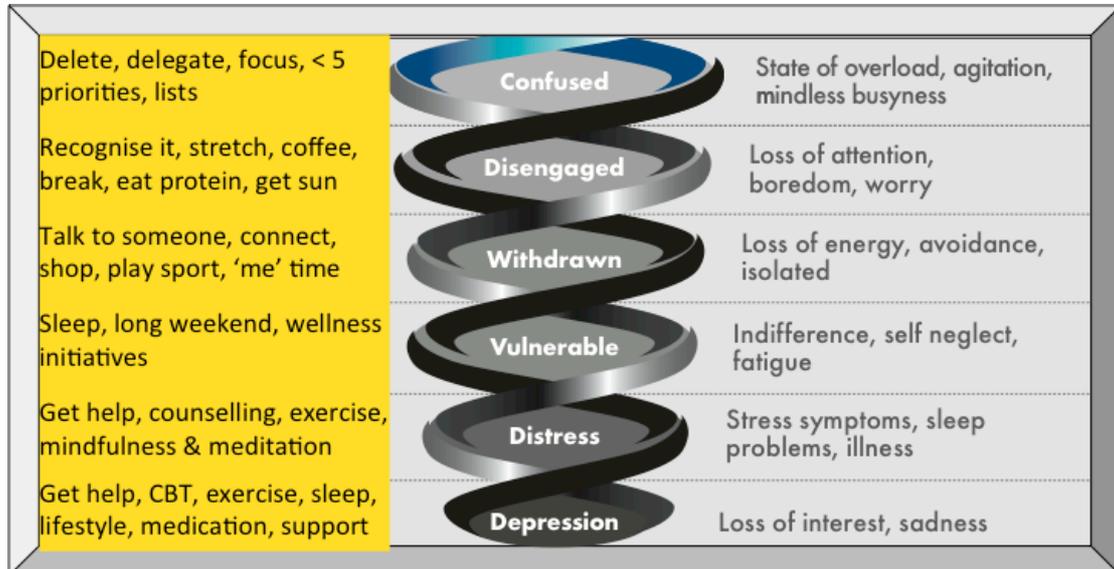
Mastery: be able to rapidly move to level where you can be effective

Empathy: be able to sense and determine where others are

Influence/Impact: to be able to effect constructive change and achievement

2. Get brilliant at Bounce Back

Understanding how Resilience fails, the stages and the steps to prevent a slide to the bottom, you can live your life with much more confidence. Further, you will be better equipped to manage periods of extreme pressure.



3. Tactical Calm (Relax)

We live in an age of hyperactivity and stretched attention. This volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) reality activates our most primal emotion – FEAR. Fear is an integrate experience that affects us physically (adrenaline, cortisol, distress symptoms, breath and muscle tightness), emotionally (fear, anxiety, panic, hyper-vigilance) and cognitively (self doubt, worry, cynicism).

Anxiety disorders affect 15 to 18%, with most of us experiencing some level of arousal and anxiety. In these states our capacity to focus attention, operate short term memory and hold empathy collapse.

We must counter this with an effective practice to reverse the destructive effects. For simplicity, we call this tactical calm. First, we need to be aware and second we must have a well-practiced routine to slow the heart and breathing, reduce adrenaline and cortisol, activate the vagus nerve, focus attention and open our minds to the perspective of others.

There are many ways to achieve this and the science is robustly supported across multiple disciplines with clear evidence for physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual benefit. In short, the physical health, emotional wellbeing, thinking and brain function of those who practice calm regularly is markedly better than those who do not.

At first, simply practice breathing out slowly through the nose
 Second, take a look at our tactical calm practice below
 Third, consider a carefully selected meditation practice and teacher

4. Sort Sleep out



Our daytime effectiveness depends on regular, disciplined and structured sleep.

- Aim for 7 to 8 hours
- Discover your circadian rhythm (owl or lark)
- Commit to regular wake up – dawn blue light
- Discharge sleep debt by going to bed early
- Powernap – 15 minutes after lunch
- Sleep quality
 - Small, early dinner, no caffeine after 2pm, limit alcohol and protein
 - Cool down phase before sleep, relax into sleep
 - Cool, dark and quiet bedroom with no technology
 - Exercise early in day – including strength/speed

5. Master Emotion

Understanding and mastering our emotions is, quite simply, an unnatural act. However, our research and that of many in the field shows clearly that emotional agility is one of the single most powerful factors driving resilience and a good life.

The first step is to understand the destructive impact of fear, sadness and anger.

The most serious obstruction to our life is the flood of destructive emotion that can follow challenging events. These are explosive reactions that generally create suffering. We refer to this style of reaction as an AMYGDALA HIJACK – defined by:

- A trigger event (may be major or minor)
- An immediate reaction (internal or external at approximately 0.3 seconds)
- Strong emotion (fear, sadness, anger)
- Subsequent feelings of regret and remorse

Impulse Control Competence

1. Learn to show restraint (Zip it)
2. Practice real-time relaxation (Breathe out)
3. Respond calmly but firmly and directly (Fierce conversation)
4. Remain calm even in crisis (No bad hair days)

6. The High Performing Mind

At our best (Flow, Peak, Expert Performance) the thinking mind is quiet. Brain scanning shows that the prefrontal cortex is peaceful or hypofrontality. When we reach our optimal states, we do not need to think but we do need to be super alert, aware and responsive. Thus, the skills we require have been learned through deliberate practice – they are intrinsic, instinctive and available under pressure.

Much of popular “brain science” is myth and not supported. For example, “learning styles”, “left /right categorization” are not supported.

At a general level the brain requires high quality support:

- a. Rest, the default mode, is critical - daydreaming, idling, reflection and meditation
- b. Sleep is critical and if compromised dramatically compromises the brain
- c. Exercise is well proven to protect and grow the brain
- d. Nutrition is an essential complement to sustained attention, thinking and deciding
- e. Emotional insight and intuition is critical for learning and decision making
- f. Motivation is essential and generally relates to personal gain or pleasing others

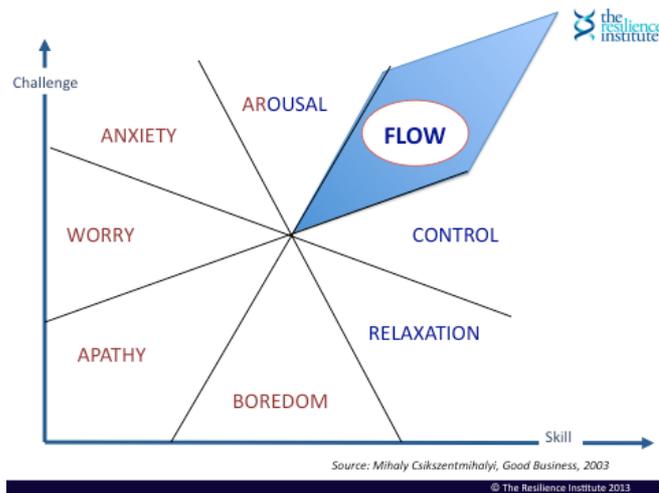
At the specific level of what can be trained and measurably improved in the brain, there is good evidence for specific practice at:

- a. Insight and self-awareness: tuning into our physiology (pulse) and emotion
- b. Bounce: recognizing resilience failure and practicing the skills of bounce
- c. Positivity: recognising and countering the instinctive pull of destructive emotion
- d. Focus: strengthening focus, concentration and clarity of attention (foundation)
- e. Situation awareness: rapid assessment of situations and response selection
- f. Empathy: paying attention to and read the physical and emotional signals of others



7. Discover your Flow

Characteristics of Flow



1. Clear goals
2. Immediate, direct feedback
3. Match challenge with skill
4. Sense of personal control
5. Focused concentration on task
6. Deep engagement or absorption
7. Quiet mind (action & awareness merge)
8. Time distortion (compression or dilation)
9. Lack of awareness of bodily needs
10. Intrinsic reward

8. Further Reading

Inside-Out

The Upward Spiral

Peak

Humans are Underrated

Presence

Altruism

Willpower

Positivity

Emotional Life of your Brain

How Children Succeed

The Rise of Superman

Stealing Fire

Against Empathy

The Undoing Project

Sven Hansen, 2015

Alex Korb, 2016

Anders Ericsson, 2016

Geoff Colvin, 2015

Amy Cuddy, 2015

Matthieu Ricard, 2015

Baumeister, Tierney, 2011

Barbara Fredrickson, 2009

Davidson, Begley, 2012

Paul Tough, 2013

Steven Kotler, 2014

Kotler S, Wheel J, 2017

Paul Bloom, 2017

Michael Lewis, 2016

Insights, articles, resources

Linked In

E-workbook

www.resiliencei.com

Sven Hansen and Resilience Institute

<http://rapt.resiliencei.com>

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