

## Resilience Resources: Books

- [\*The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma\*](#) by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.<sup>1</sup>

Trauma is a fact of life. Veterans and their families deal with the painful aftermath of combat; one in five Americans has been molested; one in four grew up with alcoholics; one in three couples have engaged in physical violence. Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the world's foremost experts on trauma, has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he uses recent scientific advances to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers' capacities for pleasure, engagement, self-control, and trust. He explores innovative treatments—from neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga—that offer new paths to recovery by activating the brain's natural neuroplasticity. Based on Dr. van der Kolk's own research and that of other leading specialists, *The Body Keeps the Score* exposes the tremendous power of our relationships both to hurt and to heal—and offers new hope for reclaiming lives.

- [\*Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma\*](#) by Peter Levine

*Waking the Tiger* offers a new and hopeful vision of trauma. It views the human animal as a unique being, endowed with an instinctual capacity. It asks and answers an intriguing question: why are animals in the wild, though threatened routinely, rarely traumatized? By understanding the dynamics that make wild animals virtually immune to traumatic symptoms, the mystery of human trauma is revealed.

*Waking the Tiger* normalizes the symptoms of trauma and the steps needed to heal them. People are often traumatized by seemingly ordinary experiences. The reader is taken on a guided tour of the subtle, yet powerful impulses that govern our responses to overwhelming life events. To do this, it employs a series of exercises that help us focus on bodily sensations. Through heightened awareness of these sensations trauma can be healed.

- [\*In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness\*](#) by Peter Levine

In this culmination of his life's work, Peter A. Levine draws on his broad experience as a clinician, a student of comparative brain research, a stress scientist and a keen observer of the naturalistic animal world to explain the nature and transformation of trauma in the body, brain and psyche. *In an Unspoken Voice* is based on the idea that trauma is neither a disease nor a disorder, but rather an injury caused by fright, helplessness and loss that can be healed by

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<sup>1</sup> This is a foundational work in the field of resiliency, and has been recommended by multiple #AfghanEvac members!

engaging our innate capacity to self-regulate high states of arousal and intense emotions. Enriched with a coherent theoretical framework and compelling case examples, the book elegantly blends the latest findings in biology, neuroscience and body-oriented psychotherapy to show that when we bring together animal instinct and reason, we can become more whole human beings.

- **[Widen the Window: Training Your Brain and Body to Thrive During Stress and Recover from Trauma](#) by Elizabeth Stanley**

This groundbreaking book examines the cultural norms that impede resilience in America, especially our collective tendency to disconnect stress from its potentially extreme consequences and override our need to recover. It explains the science of how to direct our attention to perform under stress and recover from trauma, exploring how our survival brain and thinking brain react to traumatic situations differently.

By directing our attention in particular ways, we can widen the window within which our thinking brain and survival brain work together cooperatively. When we use awareness to regulate our biology this way, we can access our best, uniquely human qualities: our compassion, courage, curiosity, creativity, and connection with others. By building our resilience, we can train ourselves to make wise decisions and access choice - even during times of incredible stress, uncertainty and change.

With stories from men and women Dr. Stanley has trained in settings as varied as military bases, healthcare facilities, as well as her own striking experiences with stress and trauma, she gives readers hands-on strategies they can use themselves, whether they want to perform under pressure or heal from traumatic experience, while at the same time pointing our understanding in a new direction.

- **[The Compassion Fatigue Workbook](#) by Françoise Mathieu**

In addition to a comprehensive description of compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization, The Compassion Fatigue Workbook leads the reader through experiential activities designed to target specific areas in their personal and professional lives. It provides concrete strategies to help the reader develop a personalized plan for identifying and transforming compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization.

- **[Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others](#) by Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky and Connie Burk**

*Trauma Stewardship* is written for anyone who is doing work with an intention to make the world more sustainable and hopeful—all in all, a better place—and who, through this work, is exposed to the hardship, pain, crisis, trauma, or suffering of other living beings or the planet itself.