



THE 3 PILLARS OF
RESILIENCE

THE 3 PILLARS OF RESILIENCE™

PHILOSOPHY, NEUROSCIENCE, EPIGENETICS

CRYSTAL LENGUA-ROWELL

HOW WE OFTEN VIEW RESILIENCE

Toughness/grit your teeth and bear it.

- Becomes synonymous with endurance, self denial and never breaking down

As an aftermath of trauma

- Something that you earn only after being shattered

resilience

[reezzilyints]-noun

The capacity of a person to maintain their core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances, the ability to not only overcome setbacks but to also move forward.



RESILIENCE

Resilience is not the absence of pain.
It is the ability to come back to neutral.
What makes us resilient is not avoiding
struggle, but how quickly we recover and
what we learn from it



MY SEMINAR INSPIRATION



Survival kept me alive. Resilience taught me how to grow,

SURVIVAL VS RESILIENCE

SURVIVAL	RESILIENCE
Endures the storm	Rebuilds after it
Reacts instinctively	Reframes intentionally
Keeps you alive	Brings you back to yourself.

Survival is instinct and resilience is skill. Skills can be learned and practiced.

THE 3 PILLARS OF RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

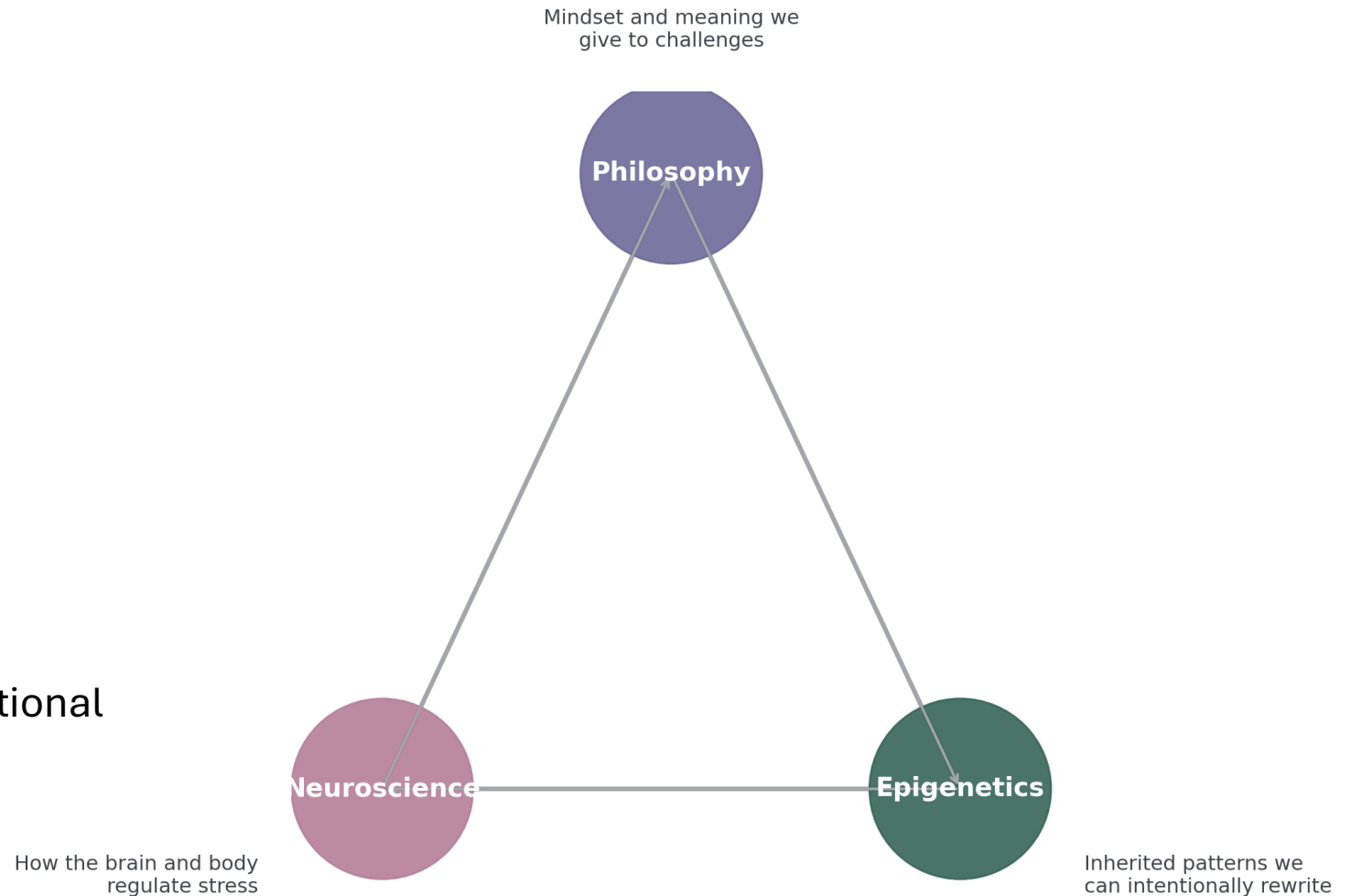
Philosophy • Neuroscience • Epigenetics



A NEW WAY OF UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE: THE *WHY*, THE *HOW*, AND THE *BEYOND YOU*.

The 3 Pillars of Resilience Framework™
Created by Crystal Lengua-Rowell

- i. Philosophy
 - 1. For the soul/personal
 - 2. The why of resilience
- ii. Neuroscience
 - 1. For the self (universal)
 - 2. The how of resilience
- iii. Epigenetic for your story
 - 1. Understanding your past/generational
 - 2. The beyond you of resilience





PHILOSOPHY



PHILOSOPHY


THE WHY OF RESILIENCE

- Soul framework – questioning & seeking
- Helps us understand or reflect on adversity
- Can create meaning out of suffering
- Reclaims ownership of our story
- Anchors identity beyond circumstances
- Asks: who am I now that this happened? What do I do with what I've been through?

WHO AM I NOW THAT THIS HAPPENED?

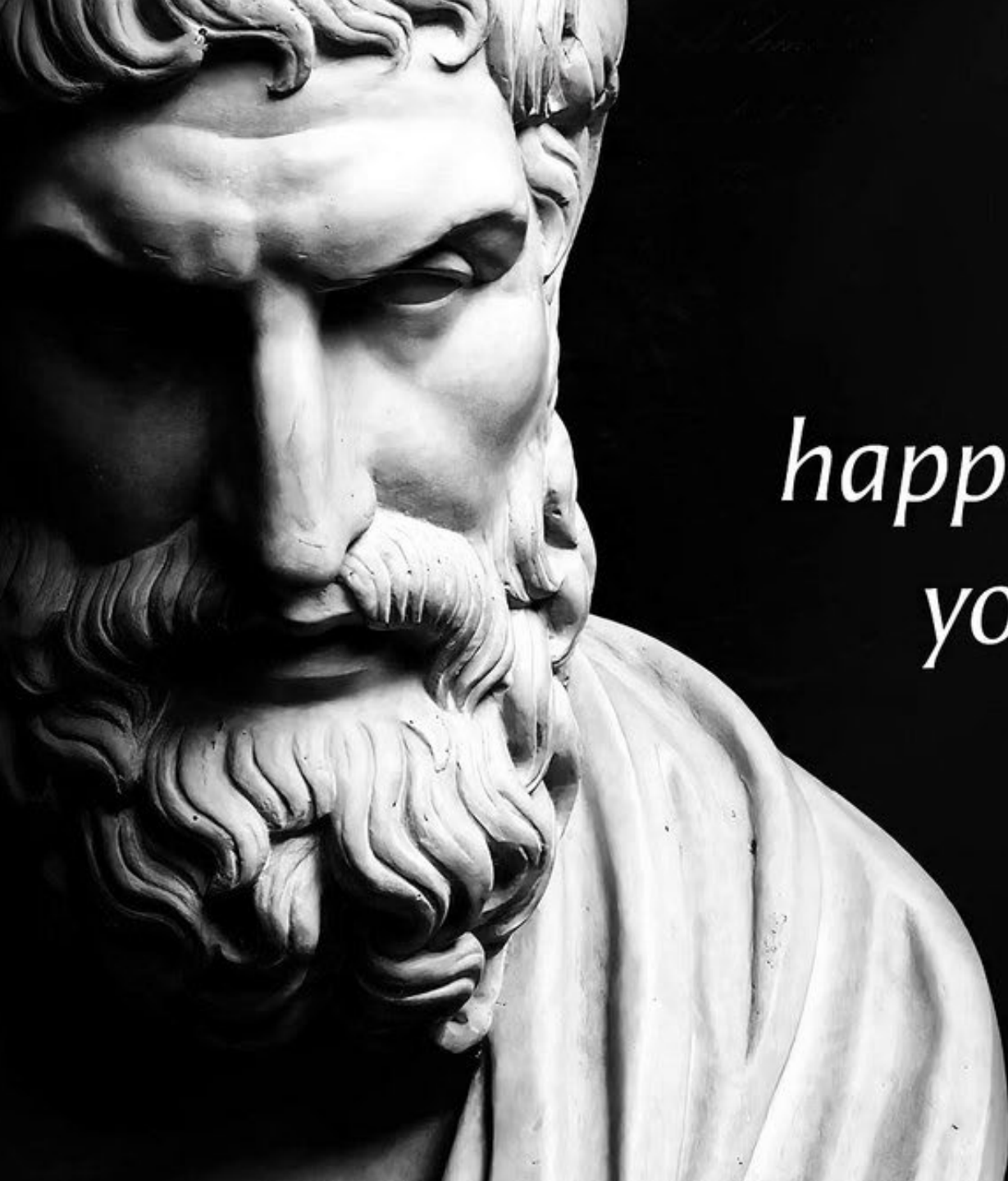
Finish this sentence

I used to be _____, but now I'm _____.



TRADITIONS OF PHILOSOPHY RELATIVE TO RESILIENCE

Stoicism & Existentialism



*"It's not what
happens to you, but how
you react to it that
matters."*

— EPICTETUS

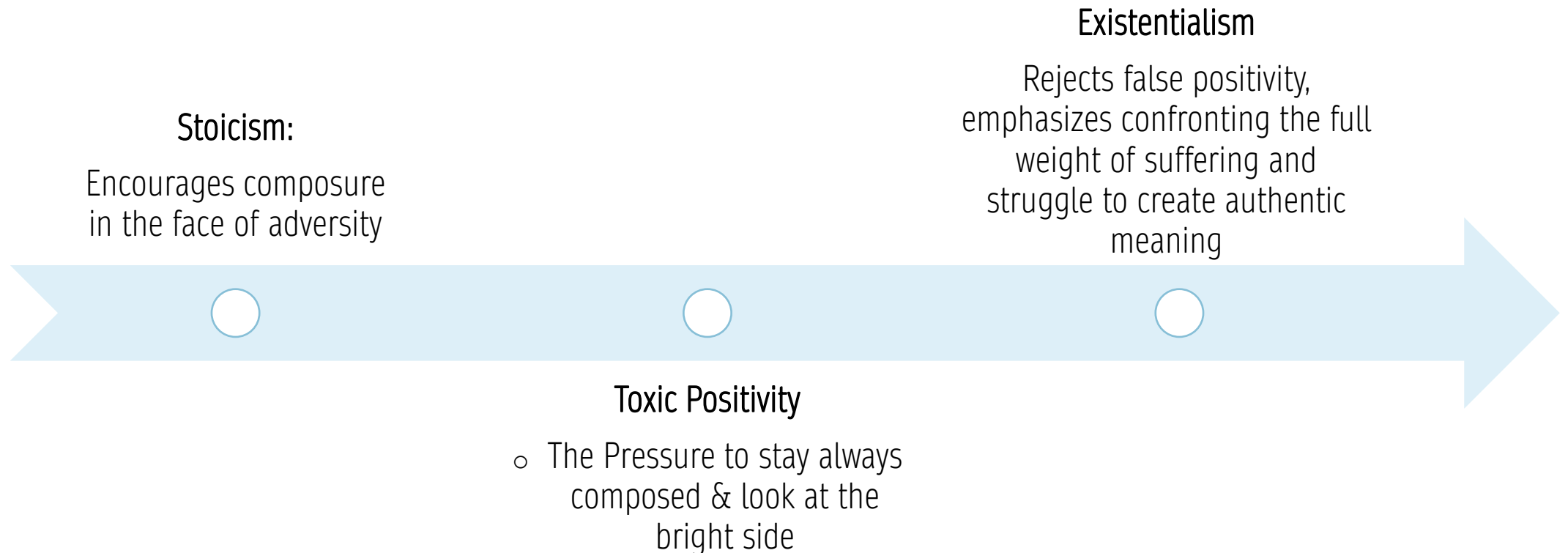


OTHER FAMOUS STOIC QUOTES



STOICISM AND A POSITIVE MINDSET

- Stoicism teaches positivity in adversity, but taken too far it can become toxic positivity — feeling pressured to stay positive even through real hardship





“WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER”

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844–1900)

- German philosopher, cultural critic, poet
- Struggled with chronic illness & was edgy in his work/thoughts so not everyone was a fan.
- Work later misused by Hitler & Nazis (and his sister)
 - Though he opposed nationalism & anti-semitism
- **Philosophy:** confronting suffering and embracing life fully, even in its darkest moments. He is often considered a bridge into existentialism— asks us not to deny pain, but to face it head-on and create meaning through it.

HIS BREAKDOWN

In 1889, witnessed a horse being whipped in Turin, Italy and Collapsed after embracing the horse in distress & never recovered mentally

Shows that “what doesn’t kill you” can also overwhelm and break you eventually



PHILOSOPHY- EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism emerged as a major movement after World War I, in response to chaos, devastation, and loss of certainty. It re-emerged in popularity in WWII

What is it?

We are free to define ourselves, even in chaos.

Core ideas

You are not your past — you are your choices.

Meaning is not found — it is created.

Not about toxic positivity or pretending things are fine.

It's about recognizing that while we cannot control chaos, we can control our response

Stoicism

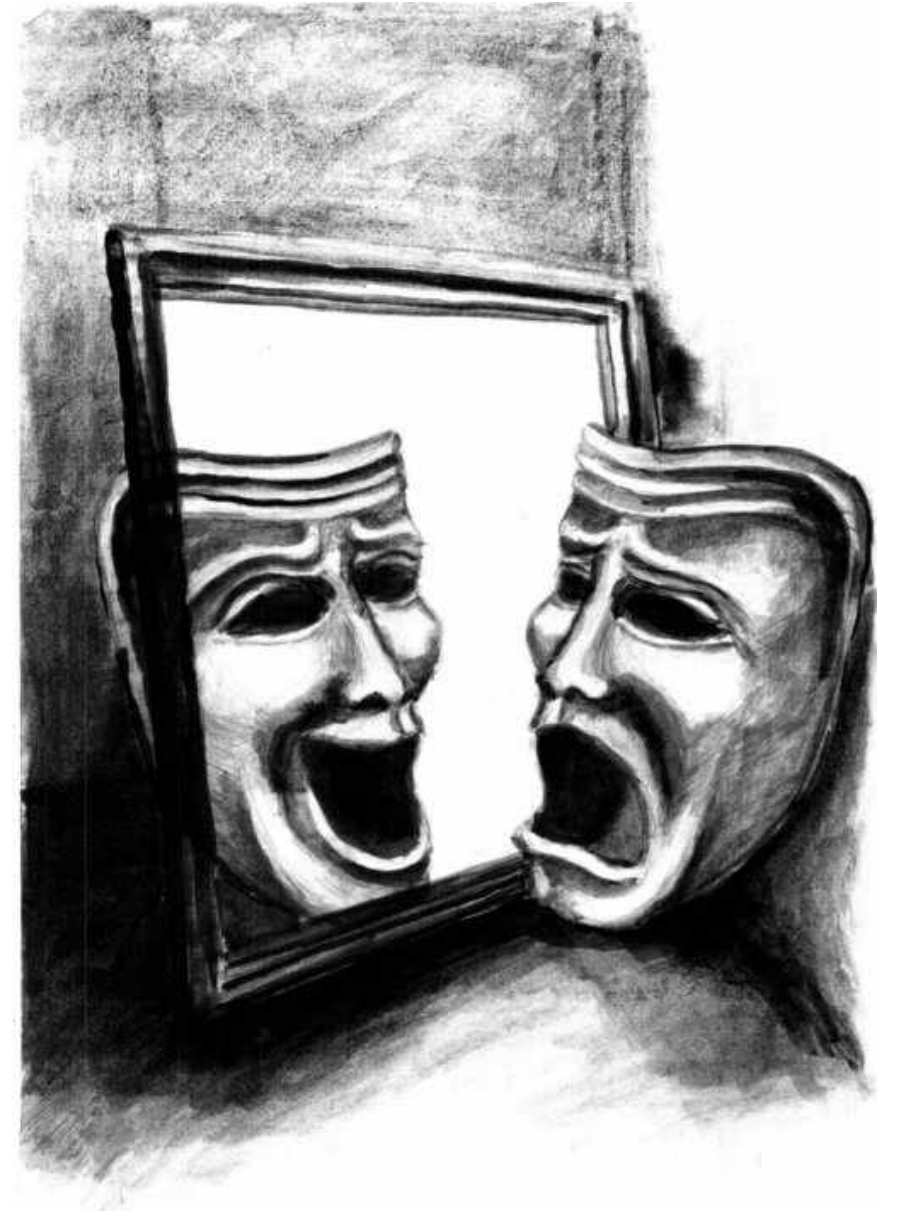
Emphasizes detachment from chaos.

Existentialism

Emphasizes engagement with chaos.

HOW EXISTENTIALISM COUNTERS TOXIC POSITIVITY

- **All Emotions Matter** – Validates sadness, anger, and fear instead of suppressing them.
- **Meaning in Suffering** – Hardship can be a catalyst for growth and self-discovery.
- **Responsibility** – We create our own purpose, not society.
- **Authenticity** – Live in alignment with your true values and beliefs.
- **Uncertainty** – Accept that life is unpredictable and still find meaning within it.





FAMOUS EXISTENTIALIST VIKTOR FRANKL HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR | LOGOTHERAPY

- Life's meaning as a driver of resilience
- In concentration camps, survival wasn't about strength—it was about having a why.
- A sense of meaning became an anchor in unthinkable conditions.
- Resilience = deciding life still matters, even in suffering.
- Meaning fuels mental and emotional health.
- “Those who have a WHY to live can bear almost any HOW.”

HIS WHY

- Love for his wife
- Faith in purpose beyond suffering
- Still Had work to do: Logotherapy (his psychological theory about meaning)

EXISTENTIALISM → LOGOTHERAPY

EXISTENTIALISM:

THE BROADER PHILOSOPHY — WE CREATE MEANING EVEN IN CHAOS.

LOGOTHERAPY:

VIKTOR FRANKL'S APPLIED THERAPY MODEL THAT GREW FROM
EXISTENTIALISM.

WHAT IS LOGOTHERAPY?

Logos = “meaning” or “reason” in Greek.

FOCUS:

Helping people find meaning in life, especially through suffering.

Shifts the question: “Why me?” to “What now?”

Finding meaning as a path to healing.




LOGOTHERAPY IN REAL LIFE.

- Rebuilding after divorce, job loss, or grief.
- Parenting with purpose after a painful childhood.
- Turning personal struggles into strength — using your story to help someone survive theirs by channeling hardship into advocacy, activism, or community service



HOW DO WE PRACTICE LOGOTHERAPY?

- Through creative work : What can I build, create or contribute
 - Starting a business or project that reflects your values
 - Volunteering or mentoring
 - Through Experiencing love or beauty- Deep relationships (children, friends, pets)
 - Nature, art, music, yoga
 - Spiritual moments – being a part of something bigger
 - Through your attitude towards suffering : Contingency Suffering
 - Refusing to be a victim or letting the trauma define you
- 



JOURNAL EXERCISE

We don't need trauma of war or a concentration camp to lose our sense of self- we just need a season that breaks our narrative.

1. What is something painful that I have experienced and what am I ready to make of it?
2. What WHY kept me going when I wanted to quit?



NEUROSCIENCE

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Philosophy helps us ask better questions about who we are. But what about the body we live in—the machine that carries those questions? That's where neuroscience comes in.

- Logotherapy reminds us: healing comes through meaning.
- Neuroscience explains why: Our brains are wired first to survive—that's why stress hormones like cortisol flood the system.
- Resilience doesn't mean avoiding stress; it means learning how to pause, regulate, and return to calm after the spike.
- This is where Polyvagal Theory helps us understand the nervous system: why we get stuck in "fight, flight, or freeze," and how we can train ourselves back into safety and connection.



POLYVAGAL THEORY & THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Dr. Stephen Porges (polyvagal theory) and Dr. Dan Siegel (window of tolerance, 1999) created accessible frameworks to explain how our nervous system reacts to stress.

OUR NERVOUS SYSTEM MOVES BETWEEN STATES WHEN WE ARE FACED WITH ADVERSITY

Hyperarousal (Gas pedal slammed – “We are NOT safe. Act now!”)

- **Fight:** snapping, defensiveness, jaw clenching
- **Flight:** anxiety, avoidance, overscheduling, need to fix everything, busy brain at night

Hypoarousal (Brakes slammed – “Too much. Shut down to survive.”)

- **Freeze:** numb, stuck, blank mind, dissociation (scrolling, zoning out)
- **Fawn:** people-pleasing, over-apologizing, saying yes to keep peace

Window of Tolerance (Neutral zone):

- The optimal state where we can think clearly, stay present, regulate emotions, and lead with resilience.

ALL OF THESE ARE NOT PERSONALITY FLAWS
THEY ARE NERVOUS SYSTEM RESPONSES AND
ANCIENT SURVIVAL STRATEGIES THAT ARE
OUTDATED.

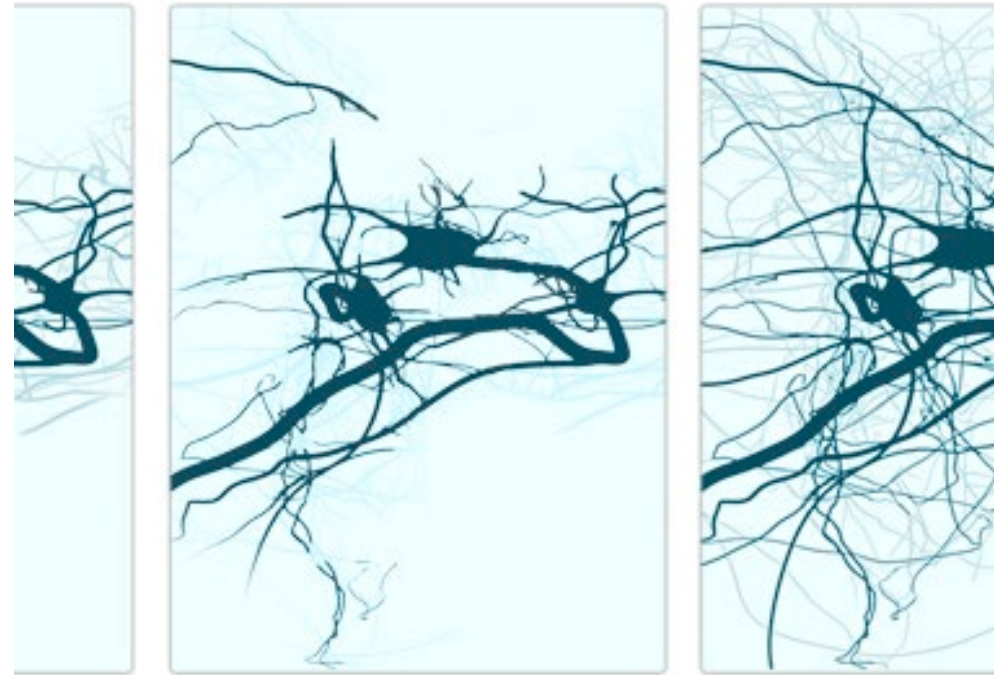
NOTICING THEM IS THE PATH TO RESILIENCE
AND GETTING **BACK TO NEUTRAL**.

WHICH IS OUR SAFE SPACE.

OUR RESILIENT SPACE.

NEUROPLASTICITY

- Our brain is always learning.
- Our brains adapt to experiences, environment, repetition
- Neurons that fire together, wire together-Donald Hebb
- You can rewire your brain with repetition, awareness and reflection
- What we practice thinking; we become better at.



AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS & NEUROPLASTICITY

Our first thoughts aren't always facts—they're quick, automatic reactions wired by experience.

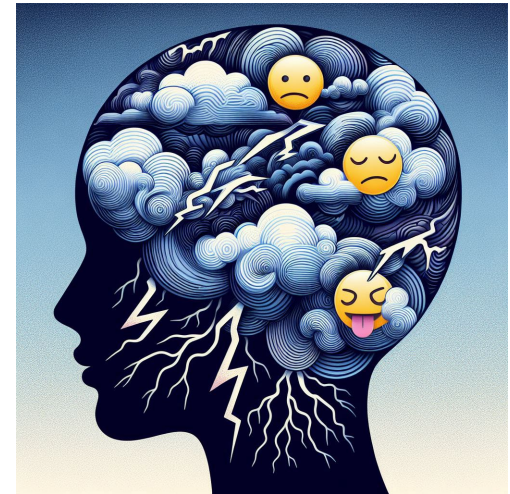
Neuroplasticity means those pathways aren't fixed. With awareness and repetition (name the thought → regulate breath → reframe), we lay down new routes.

Over time, the reflex shifts from “It's hopeless” to “I've handled worse—I've got this,” speeding your return to neutral.

They are frequently negative and can significantly influence emotions and behaviors.
(Negative Bias)

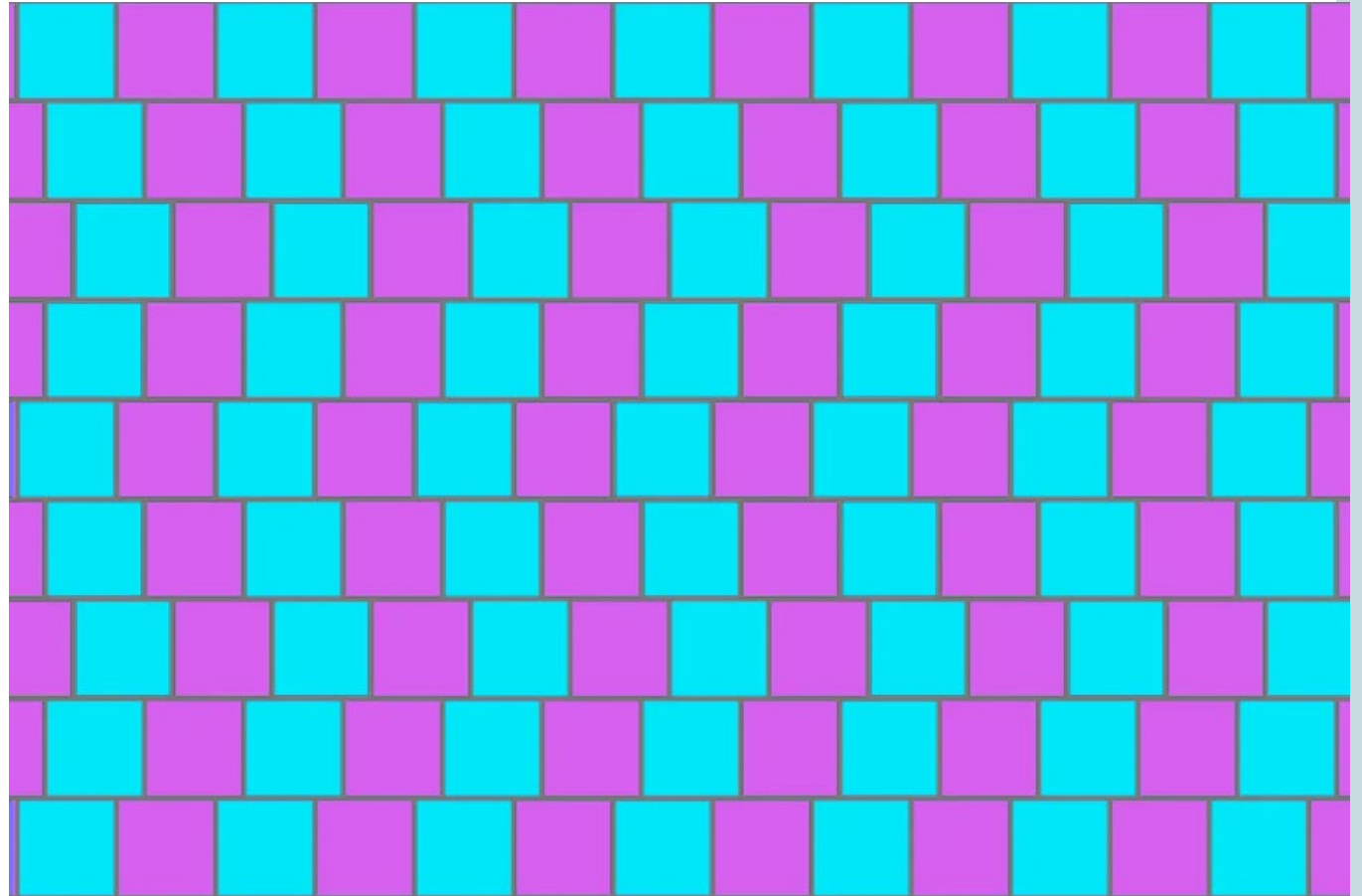
Understanding and managing automatic thoughts is a key aspect of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

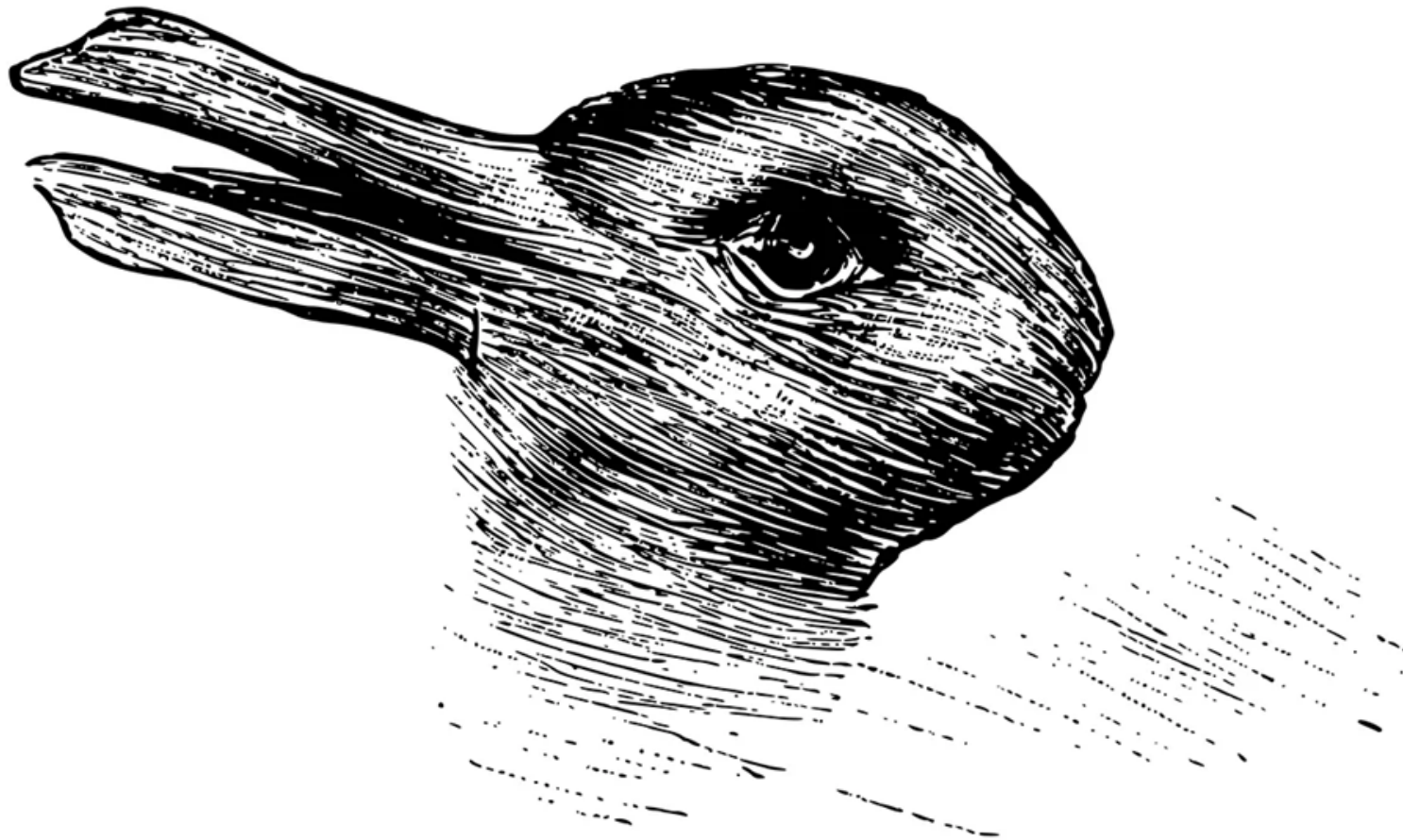
Catch → Check → Change → Choose (an action).
(Catch the thought, Check for distortions, Change the narrative, Choose one constructive step.)



AUTOMATIC PERCEPTIONS

- If your brain can bend lines, it can bend stories—**pause and check the lines** to help rewire what isn't true (for you)
- Resilience is pausing to *check the lines* and ask: “is this true, or an illusion?”





Your brain files patterns instantly—like seeing a bunny or a duck.
Neural Snapshots will show us what files your brain pulls first.

NEURAL SNAPSHOTS EXERCISE



1. Your boss emails you: *"We need to talk."*
2. A client pressures you for a discount you can't give.
3. A colleague takes full credit for your idea in a meeting.
4. You're running late and hit unexpected traffic.
5. Someone tells you: *"You're overreacting—calm down."*
6. You're unexpectedly asked to present in front of leadership.
7. A friend cancels plans with you at the last minute.
8. You catch a glimpse of yourself in the mirror before an important event.
9. You receive constructive criticism on something you thought was excellent.
10. Someone congratulates you on a success in front of others.

Review Your Automatic Thoughts

Quick scan: tone • evidence • impact

Resilient / Neutral

- ✓ “I’ll figure it out.”
- ✓ “Traffic happens.”
- ✓ “I can handle this.”
- ✓ “One step at a time.”
- ✓ “What’s my next best move?”

Stuck / Threat

- “I’m in trouble.”
- “I always mess up.”
- “Why me?”
- “It’s hopeless.”
- “I’m not cut out for this.”





EPIGENETICS



WHAT IS EPIGENETICS?

- GENES = THE SEEDS YOU'RE GIVEN.
 - You don't pick the starter seeds.
- EPIGENETICS = THE SUNLIGHT, WATER, AND WEEDS.
 - Life adds conditions that change how much each seed grows—or doesn't.
- RESILIENCE = THE GARDENER'S CARE.
 - Learning how to tend the garden, pull weeds, and keep things balanced so plants can thrive.

BIOLOGY OF RESILIENCE

•Your thoughts aren't only "yours"—they're shaped by experience **and** inherited patterns.

•**Epigenetics:** how past generations handled stress can tune how our stress genes express.

•Automatic reactions may be **echoes** from before you.

•Notice your nervous system → pause → reframe.

•Each interruption rewires you—and softens what you pass on to the next generation. **BREAK GENERATIONAL CURSES**

Generational Trauma Explained

@kjhartwell | licensed therapist

1st generation: Grandparents and prior

- PTSD
- War
- Alcoholism
- Slavery
- Immigration
- Colonization
- Unemployment
- Refugees
- Unresolved grief
- Physical/emotional abuse
- Untreated mental illness
- Emotion repression

2nd generation: Parents

- Physical/emotional abuse
- Untreated mental illness
- low self-esteem
- Substance abuse
- ptsd / c-ptsd
- Financial stress
- Emotion repression
- Racism
- Sexism
- fearfulness
- lack of trust of others

3rd generation: You

- anxiety
- depression
- low self-esteem
- self-destructive coping
- ptsd/ c-ptsd
- shame
- hyper-vigilance
- dissociation
- people pleasing
- dysregulated nervous system
- extreme reactivity to stress
- intrusive thoughts
- emotion repression

Noticing and interrupting old stress patterns is how you heal yourself—and your lineage.



MINDFULNESS WITH RESILIENCE:HELP THE PAUSE

WE'VE EXPLORED THE 3 PILLARS OF RESILIENCE

PHILOSOPHY — THE WHY: MEANING, VALUES, DIRECTION

NEUROSCIENCE — THE HOW: REGULATE, REFRAME, REWIRE

EPIGENETICS — THE PAST: WHAT WE INHERIT AND CAN INTERRUPT

Resilience interrupts the old pattern; confidence writes the new one.





CONFIDENCE

- It is about knowing in your bones that you have been through all the hard things before and you've survived 100% of the things you thought you wouldn't and trusting that you will get through the next thing quicker than you did the last time until your state is in more of a calm control--- a faster 'back to neutral'
- It's about being both the engine and the mechanic → Parts fail but you can fix them or order new ones
- It's about breaking the barriers of letting our nervous systems dictate or our unhealthy thoughts guide us



**RESILIENCE IS HOW WE CHOOSE TO RISE, ADAPT AND LEAD IN SPITE OF IT.
RESILIENCE IS COMING BACK TO NEUTRAL & REMEMBERING WHO YOU ARE.**

MIRROR MOMENT

Look yourself In the eyes of the version of you that has been through everything you've survived. The version of you that you are proud of.

You are proof that resilience is real.



I am strong.

I am worthy.

I trust myself.

I will return to neutral.

I will remember who I am.



THANK YOU



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