

- Why Read *Resilience*? -

“Resilience is the virtue that allows you to move through hardship and become better. No one escapes pain, fear, and suffering. Yet from pain can come wisdom, from fear can come courage, from suffering comes strength – if we have the virtue of resilience.”

“Leadership isn’t a set of techniques or tricks. Like resilience, it’s a way of being. ... You can’t fake any of it. If you want to lead, get yourself right first.”

Resilience is a book about how to be resilient in life and leadership. There’s a lot here: It tackles hard topics on personal and professional levels. It’s a book that you should read slowly, and think hard about, as almost every sentence is loaded with deep thoughts on how to live a more resilient life.

So why should fire leaders of all levels read this? At its core, it’s a book on self-leadership, and leadership truly begins with leadership of self. Self-improvement should be a constant goal of any leader, and the pursuit of resilience is core aspect of that goal. Even if we don’t lead anyone but ourselves, we should put in the work to be a better person, personally and professionally.

There are several videos about the book available online, some of which could be used for short training moments around the office or fire cache. Find some of them at the links below or by searching for “Eric Greitens Resilience video” in any internet-based search engine.

Brian Johnson - 5 Big Ideas from Resilience (11 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7auriAoTNO>

Eric Greitens– What Are You Responsible For? (3 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM61dt2z8r0>

2016 WFSTAR – Stress Preparedness and Resilience (15 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAPlc5-QFLs>



For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

2017 Wildland Fire National Leadership Campaign - Leading Authentically

<https://www.fireleadership.gov/toolbox/campaign/index.html>

Blog:

<http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

Professional Reading Program:

https://www.fireleadership.gov/toolbox/PRP_library/pro_reading_program.htm

Main WFLDP page:

<https://www.fireleadership.gov>

- Resilience Discussion Questions -

Letter 1 – Your Frontline

What was your definition of resilience, before you read this chapter? Was it the same after reading it? If it changed, why? What challenges are you facing?

Letter 2 – Why Resilience

What do you think about philosophy? Do you view it as an active way of thinking and acting, or as a more abstract idea? What do you think about the Thoreau quote at the end of section 8?

Letter 3 – What is Resilience

What do you think about the Hemingway quote that opens letter 3? Does it hold true in the fire world? What do you think about the idea of not being able to “bounce back?”

Letter 4 – Beginning

How can humility empower your team and those around you? (For more ideas on humility in teams check out https://www.nifc.gov/wfstar/library_HumanFactors.html#Seahawks) How do you harness the positives of being competitive with while accepting and mitigating the negatives?

Letter 5 – Happiness

What do you think about joy being a byproduct of activity, and not something to strive for in and of itself? What’s your take on the three kinds of happiness talked about in this chapter?

Letter 6 – Models

Why is it a good idea to have good role models, especially as leaders at any level? How do you emulate your role models? Can you learn from the mistakes of others without repeating them?

Letter 7 – Identity

How can the way you act impact the way you feel? Why is it important to ask “who do we want to be?” What’s the difference between “feeling” something and “being” something (section 3)?

Letter 8 – Habits

What do you think about habits and “big” decisions? How can habits “free our minds to focus on what matters most?” How can habits make us more resilient?

Letter 9 – Responsibility

What do you see as the relationship between resilience and responsibility? How can the fear that can accompany responsibility be a good thing? How do you deal with excuses?

Letter 10 – Vocation

How do you create purpose in your life? What is your vocation? Is your vocation different than your job? Do you know the vocation of the people around you, on your crew, in your organization?

Letter 11 – Philosophy

Why is it a good idea to combine thinking and action, instead of separating them? Have you ever seen yourself or others acting without thinking? How does realism influence resilience?

Letter 12 – Practice

Why is it important to practice practice? What's the author's difference between education and training? Why might that be an important point to make in the fire world?

Letter 13 – Pain

What are your thoughts on pain, Stoicism, and the "premeditation of evil?" How can the practice of evaluating worst-case scenarios be beneficial as a leader? How are pain and tension a part of a "well-lived life?"

Letter 14 – Mastering Pain

Do any of the ways of mastering pain that the author mentions seem familiar to you? How can something as simple as breathing make you more resilient? How can practicing gratitude make you more resilient?

Letter 15 – Reflection

Are there tasks in wildland fire that offer opportunities for reflection? What do you think of using the four questions in section 10 for situational awareness?

Letter 16 – Friends

What do you think of the idea of fellowship? Does it apply in the fire setting? What's your take on the four kinds of knowledge mentioned in section 5?

Letter 17 – Mentors

Who are your mentors? Who do you mentor? What's the author's difference between good coach and a bad coach? What do you think about the child vs. warrior section toward the end of the letter?

Letter 18 – Teams

Have you been part of a team that flourished under shared purpose and hardship? How about a team that failed under pressure? How do you define a resilient team?

Letter 19 – Leadership

When you think of resilient leaders, who comes to mind? What do you think of the quote "If you want to lead, get yourself right?"

Letter 20 – Freedom

What's the difference between "freedom from" and "freedom to?" What do you think about the author's ideas on work-life balance? Do you agree? Disagree? Why or why not?

Letter 21 – The Story

How has your story shaped you? How have you placed meaning on your story?

Letter 22 – Death

What are you doing today to "hurry up and live?"

Letter 23 – Sabbath

Do you set aside time to "simply be?" How do you make time to stop the "grind" and find joy and rest?