



SEPTEMBER 2017

THE OTHER FIRST AID KIT

After days of anticipation, Hurricane Irma finally came and went. Being in the risk management industry, we were as prepared as one can be with water, non-perishable food, flashlights and all of the other necessities of hurricane survival. But how many of us had packed that other first aid kit --the one that provides boosts of energy, focus, and drive in the moment?

In periods of extreme threat such as a hurricane, the thinking part of the brain or the pre-frontal cortex (PFC) can become hijacked by its more primitive parts. This results in an APB inside the body that narrows vision, heightens hearing, increases heart rate and blood pressure, and suppresses unnecessary functions so that the body can run or fight. This primitive response was critical in our hunter gatherer days when reactions to danger were a matter of life and death. Today, however, this life-saving response inclines us toward negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and anger when what we need are such PFC skills as reflection, analysis and creativity. Awareness of this potential emotional highjacking is the first step in moderating it. Building the other first aid kit, the one that creates capacity in the moment, is the subject of *Micro-Resilience*, by Bonnie St. John and Alan Haines. An amputee since age five, St. John went on to become an Olympic athlete and a Rhodes Scholar. She earned her resilience chops firsthand. She and Alan Haines, her husband and co-author, made it their mission to condense the science of her hard-earned resilience into small actionable steps that we ordinary people can apply in our everyday lives.

Building a micro-resilience first aid kit is highly personal. It involves selecting and practicing a few minor behavior shifts throughout the day. Because the changes involve reframing problems to retrain hardwired thinking patterns, the authors classify them into five "frameworks" that include:

<p><i>resetting</i></p>  <p>PRIMITIVE ALARMS</p>	<p><i>reframing</i></p>  <p>YOUR ATTITUDE</p>	<p><i>refreshing</i></p>  <p>YOUR BODY</p>
<p><i>renewing</i></p>  <p>YOUR SPIRIT</p>	<p><i>refocusing</i></p>  <p>YOUR BRAIN</p>	

While the following tidbits of wisdom from *Micro-Resilience* are far from comprehensive, they are immediately actionable.



RESETTING YOUR PRIMITIVE ALARMS

Because the sense of smell goes directly to the deep primitive brain, certain scents can halt an emotional hijacking in its tracks. Cinnamon, vanilla and nutmeg are particularly effective. Drinking a cup of chai is my particular favorite.



the supplement

FACILITATING VITALITY



REFRAMING YOUR ATTITUDE

Our hunter gatherer ancestors developed rapid reactions to negative or potentially threatening events because it was a matter of survival. Positive stimuli didn't require the same intensity and developed slowly. Unfortunately, our facility to recognize negative stimuli is much more acute than our ability to recognize positive ones. By consciously focusing for as little as five minutes each day on what went well (WWW), we are less likely to view obstacles as personal, permanent or pervasive.



REFRESHING YOUR BODY

The quickest way to refresh the body is to drink water. Because the brain is over 70% water and the remainder of the body hovers between 60-65%, you may not even feel thirsty until your brain is already partially dehydrated. Time your hydration so that you drink the majority of your water during the most challenging part of the day.



RENEWING YOUR SPIRIT

If you were building a cathedral and a passerby was to ask you what you were doing, how would you respond?

- a. I am laying bricks.
- b. I am building a wall.
- c. I am constructing a cathedral.
- d. I am worshipping God.

Every one of the responses is valid, but only one taps into the power of purpose. Knowing your purpose transforms even the most mundane activity into a contribution.



REFOCUSING YOUR BRAIN

Because the demand for PFC brain function is higher than ever, vulnerability to decision-fatigue affects even the most highly-trained professionals. Drug-seeking addicts know this all too well and take advantage of doctors who are more likely to prescribe unnecessary medications at the end of the day. Judges, with all other circumstances being equal, are more likely to grant parole earlier in the day or after food and rest. To avoid decision-fatigue:

- Make important decisions early in the day.
- Take breaks for refreshment and rest.
- Save decision-making energy by using checklists for repetitive tasks and simplifying your workday wardrobe.

Being in the risk management industry, one might say that we sell insurance. And yes we do sell insurance. But I prefer to look at it as my late colleague Scott Robertson did. He believed that our purpose was to be there on people's worst day. Irma and Harvey came and went, but we're here-- with all of our first aid kits.



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 19 years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

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