

# How To Thrive and NOT Just Survive

***“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”***

***— Maya Angelou***

# Introduction

Remember back to your childhood when your main academic concern was learning the “3 R’s” of Reading, wRiting, and ‘Rithmetic?

Two leadership coaches, Jeff Thoren and Sally Starbuck Stamp of Gifted Leaders, who specialize in customized programs for corporate clients, have brought that concept into the present. They believe to find success in both one’s personal and professional life, the NEW “3 R’s” must be embraced: Responsibility, Relationships, and Resilience.

In the following pages, I will address how you can incorporate the NEW “3 R’s” into your life to help you reach your life goals.



# The OLD vs the NEW “3 R’s”

**R**eading



**R**esponsibility



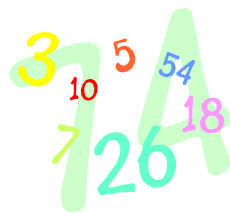
**wR**iting



**R**elationships



**'R**ithmetic



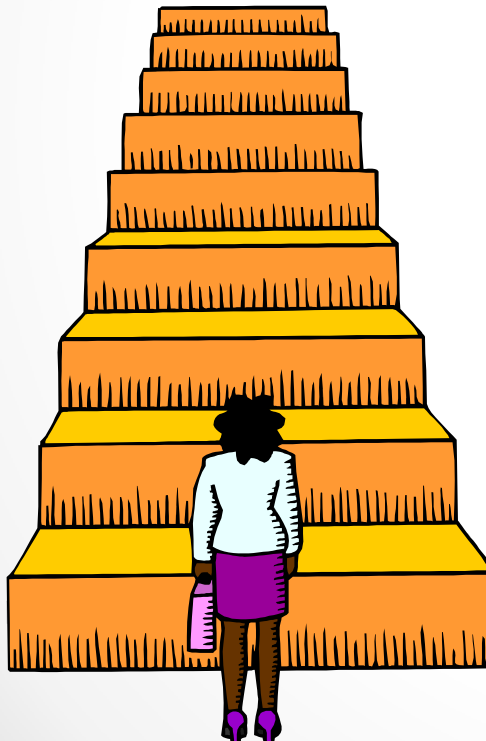
**R**esilience



**What's Your First Step?**

# Take A Baby Step

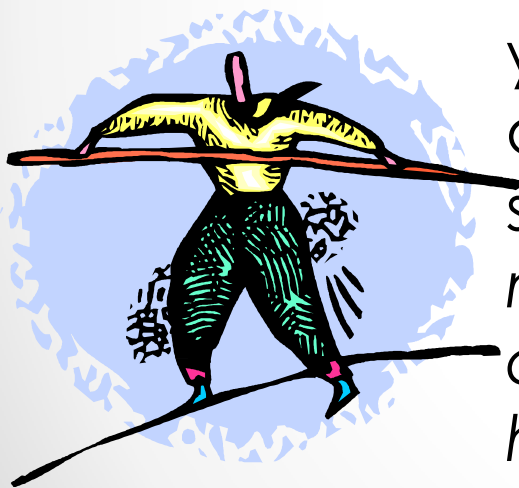
Stepping out of your comfort zone and trying something new can be both exhilarating and frightening at the same time.



To keep your fear in check as you embrace the new *Three R's*, take baby steps forward. Pat yourself on the back and celebrate each success. Any success, no matter the size or consequence, **IS** a success and should be treated as such.

# Muster Up Your Courage

We are all afraid, but as Mark Twain said, “Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear.”



It is in these fearful circumstances that you can learn the “stuff” of which you are made. Martin Luther King, Jr. wisely said, “*The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.*”

# The First “R”: Responsibility

## Definition

re-spon-si-bil-i-ty – noun

The state or fact of being responsible.

Synonyms: answerability, accountability



***“We have the Bill of Rights.  
What we need is a Bill of Responsibilities.”***

*~Bill Maher*

# To Whom Are We Responsible?

First and foremost, we are responsible to ourselves.

***Take your life in your own hands, and  
what happens?***

***A terrible thing: no one to blame.***

~Erica Jong



***When you blame others,  
you give up your power to change.***

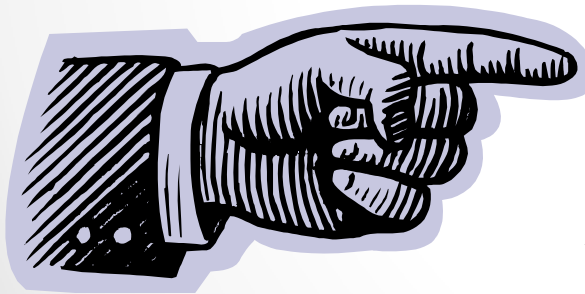
~Author Unknown

# Responsibility

## Responsibility:

***A detachable burden easily shifted to the shoulders of God, Fate, Fortune, Luck or one's neighbor.***

*~Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary, 1911*



Blaming “others” or the unknown abdicates your responsibility. You are doomed to repeat the same pattern until you examine your actions and change the things that hampered your success. As Albert Einstein said, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over again and expecting different results.





# Responsibility



***“A man sooner or later discovers that he is the master-gardener of his soul, the director of his life.”***

*~James Allen*

***“If you mess up, ‘fess up.”***

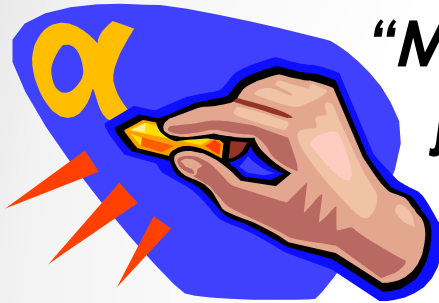
*~Author unknown*



Make an Action Plan to move you forward. If you are blocked by one avenue, try another. If you encounter defeat, admit it and continue on your quest to reach your goals.

# Responsibility

## Words of Wisdom



***“Most of us can read the writing on the wall; we just assume it's addressed to someone else.”***

*~Ivern Ball*

***“The best years of your life are the ones in which you decide your problems are your own. You do not blame them on your mother, the ecology, or the president. You realize that you control your own destiny.”***

*~Albert Ellis*



# Responsibility

## More Words of Wisdom



***“God has entrusted me with myself.”***

*~Epictetus*

***“We have not passed that subtle line between childhood and adulthood until we have stopped saying “It got lost,” and say “I lost it.”***

*~Sidney J. Harris*

***“When a man points a finger at someone else, he should remember that four of his fingers are pointing at himself.”***



*~Louis Nizer*

# **It's Your Choice:**

## **Will You Be Victorious or**

## **Will You Play The Role of Victim in Your Life?**



**You can remain a victim in your life by always blaming others, making excuses for your behavior or the circumstances that have befallen you, or by denying personal responsibility.**

**CONVERSELY**

**You can take ownership of your actions by being accountable and accepting responsibility.**



# The Second “R”: Relationships

## Definition

re-la-tion-ship – noun

A connection or association; the condition or fact of being related or interrelated; an emotional attachment or other connection between people.

Synonyms: dependence, alliance, kinship, affinity



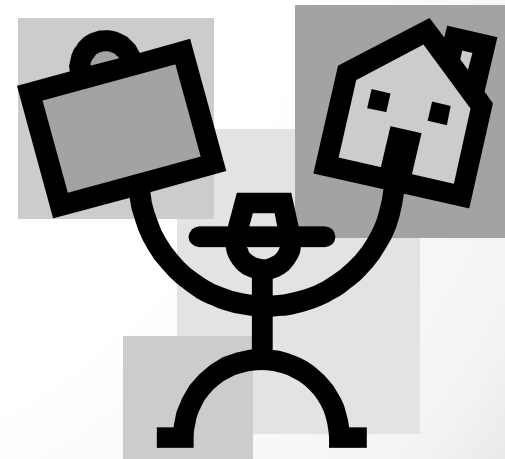
***If you were going to die soon and had only one phone call you could make, who would you call and what would you say? And why are you waiting?***

*~Stephen Levine*

# What Is Most Important in Life?

At the time of your death, your wealth, your possessions, and even your accomplishments won't matter. It will be your relationships – the people that surround you with love as you move through the door to the next world.

Relationships matter most! Don't forsake building them in your search for material satisfaction. Find the balance in your life between personal and professional obligations.



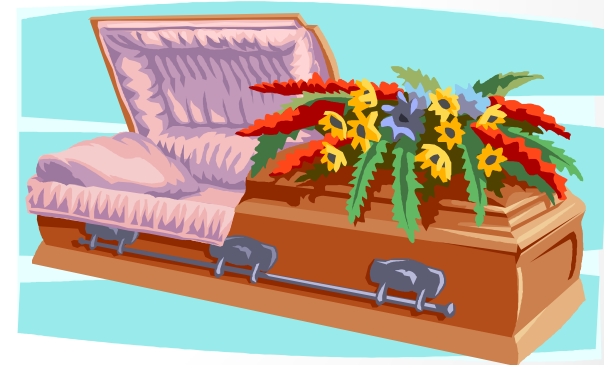
# Relationships

***“Present your family and friends with their eulogies now - they won't be able to hear how much you love them and appreciate them from inside the coffin.”***

*~Anonymous*

Additionally, as an exercise, write your own eulogy. Have a trusted friend or family member read it back to you as you lie on your back in a darkened room.

If you are not happy with how you would leave this world, you always have another chance to change your life.



# Relationships

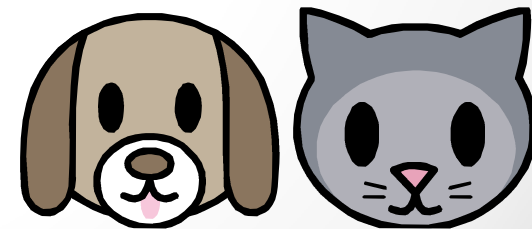
***“Having someone wonder where you are when you don't come home at night is a very old human need.”***

*~Margaret Mead*

***“Someone to tell it to is one of the fundamental needs of human beings.”***

*~Miles Franklin*

Relationships come in all different shapes and sizes and do not have to be romantic in nature to fulfill the aforementioned and essential needs.



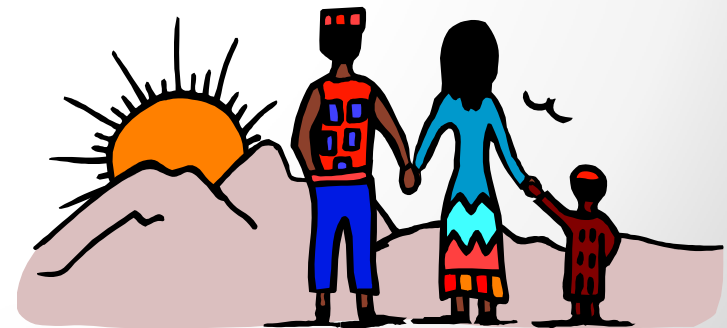


# Relationships

***“There's one sad truth in life I've found  
While journeying east and west -  
The only folks we really wound  
Are those we love the best.  
We flatter those we scarcely know,  
We please the fleeting guest,  
And deal full many a thoughtless blow  
To those who love us best.”***

*~Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

We tend to treat our family members with less care than our friends. This is usually because we know we will be loved no matter what our behavior. This concept needs rethinking. After all, shouldn't we treat the ones we love the best with the most care?



# Relationships

***“Remember, we all stumble, every one of us.  
That's why it's a comfort to go hand in hand.”***

*~Emily Kimbrough*

When we share our burdens with another, they don't seem insurmountable.

Friends and loved ones can offer a different, and perhaps a more objective, perspective to assist you on your path.



# Relationships

***“Oh, the comfort - the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person - having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together; certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.”***

*~Dinah Craik, A Life for a Life, 1859*

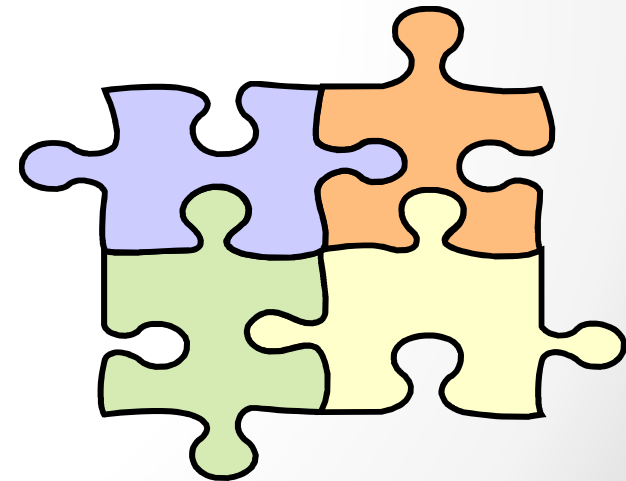


# Relationships

***“When something is missing in your life,  
it usually turns out to be someone.”***

*~Robert Brault*

A romantic relationship cannot complete you. You first must be a complete person before you bind yourself to another. Instead, you need to search for your complement. This is a person who fits all the nooks and crannies of your life; you are two puzzle pieces who fit snugly together. You enhance each other's lives. You help your partner become the best version of him or herself, and he/she does the same for you.



# Relationships

***“Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.”***

*~Flavia Weedn*

Not all relationships are “forever relationships.” People constantly move in and out of our lives. Some touch us for a moment, some for longer. As we learn to welcome and let go our fellow travellers, we build our tolerance to loss.

For those who leave us early, we remember the good times and/or the lessons learned by our brief interludes.



# Relationships

***People change and forget to tell each other.***

*~Lillian Hellman*

The landscape of our lives is ever-changing. As with nature, we must adapt, change or die.

Sometimes when two people are in a romantic relationship, one may grow more quickly than the other. To keep the relationship alive, you must offer your hand to your partner to help him or her make the leap to higher ground.



# The Third “R”: Resilience

## Definition

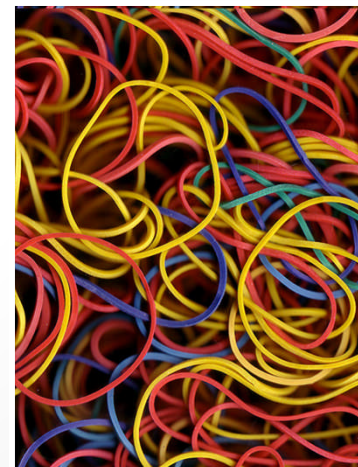
re-sil-i-ence – noun

The power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; act of springing back; the ability to recover readily from illness, change, depression, adversity, misfortune, or the like; buoyancy

Synonyms: flexibility, pliancy, elasticity

***“He’s a million rubber bands in his resilience.”***

*~Alan K. Simpson*



# How To Develop Resilience

**Assess your adaptability and willingness to implement change.**

**Learn to reframe Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) into positive statements.**

**See obstacles or change as opportunities.**

**Live in gratitude about what you do have rather than bemoan what is missing.**

**Start smiling at the world, and you'll be surprised at who smiles back!**





# Resilience

***“Man never made any material  
as resilient as the human spirit.”***

**~Bern Williams**

We each have the ability to “recover” from a bad situation. In actuality, every event in life is neutral. It is only the individual who assigns an emotion to it and thus makes it “good” or “bad.”



# Resilience

***“In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life.”***

*~Albert Bandura*

If man never encountered struggle, he would tend towards complacency and stagnation.

Although struggles are difficult to manage, they also promote spiritual growth and afford man the opportunity to reach for his greatness.



# Resilience

***“Because, you know, resilience - if you think of it in terms of the Gold Rush, then you'd be pretty depressed right now because the last nugget of gold would be gone. But the good thing is, with innovation, there isn't a last nugget. Every new thing creates two new questions and two new opportunities.”***

***~Jeff Bezos***

There are unlimited opportunities in the world. Man places his own boundaries on his success. Remember ... all greatness is born from one's imagination.



# Resilience

***“You all know that I have been sustained throughout my life by three saving graces - my family, my friends, and a faith in the power of resilience and hope. These graces have carried me through difficult times and they have brought more joy to the good times than I ever could have imagined.”***

*~Elizabeth Edwards*

Elizabeth Edwards is a shining example of grace under pressure and the power of resilience and hope.



# Utilizing The NEW “Three R’s”

If you have experienced loss of any type (loss of a relationship, home, job, etc), you have started a journey from darkness to light. This journey will require you to examine your very existence. It is at this moment that you can DECIDE to just **SURVIVE** by going through the motions of life without the emotions, OR you will **DECIDE to THRIVE**.

**THE DECISION IS YOURS.** You can decide whether you want to *react reflexively* or *respond reflectively* to your circumstances. Utilizing the NEW Three R’s, Responsibility, Relationships, and Resilience, can help you with your decision making processes.

Accept and take **responsibility** for the part you played in bringing you to this point in time. Foster **relationship** building to bridge your feelings of isolation to a place where you can have meaningful interactions with others. Lastly, reach down into your well-spring of strength/**resilience** and change your perspective about your situation in life. Instead of fearing the obstacles with which you are confronted, tell yourself, “Oh goody! Another problem to solve!”

Walk with your eyes wide open to opportunity wearing a smile on your face, and the world will open its bounties to you!



## Author Bio

Ellen Gerst is a Grief and Relationship Coach who helps clients to change their perspective in order to move gracefully through life circumstances to find renewal. She feels it is important to make the mind/body wellness connection to facilitate forward moving action towards one's goals.

Recently, she has become a Distributor of ***It Works! Marketing***, a company that sells products to promote physical wellness. Feeling physically healthy and fit most usually translates into mental agility too.

As a **Special Bonus**, if you purchase any product from Ellen's "It Works" website, she will send you two free e-books, *Love After Loss: Writing The Rest of Your Story* and *If You Want To Be Terrific, You Need To Be Specific!* (a \$20+ Value) Simply e-mail her at [ellengerst@gmail.com](mailto:ellengerst@gmail.com) with proof of purchase, and she will forward them to you.

For more information, please visit her websites:

<http://www.ellengerst.itworks.net>

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Thanks to Jeff Thoren and Sally Starbuck Stamp for their contribution. For more information on their services, please visit their website at

<http://giftedleaders.com>