

FROM GRIEF

TO

RESILIENCY



**10 Tools for Living Well
with an Ostomy**

**Resources for Ostomates,
Caregivers & Support Groups**

by Susie Leonard Weller, M.A.

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From Grief to Resiliency: 10 Tools for Living Well With an Ostomy

**(Support Resources for Ostomates,
Loved Ones & Caregivers)**

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Introduction: EXPLORE R.E.S.I.L.I.E.N.C.Y.

*“What the caterpillar calls the end of the world,
the master calls a butterfly.”* Richard Bach

Loss happens.

Whether you are mourning the loss of a body part, altered body image or living with a chronic health condition, it can feel devastating to embrace all of the changes.

It may be just as difficult for your loved ones and care providers to know how to cope with your grief, as well as their own challenges.

At some point in your life, there will be an event that is beyond your control to change. When your world is falling apart, you are faced with two basic choices:

React in FEAR and shut down by contracting your world.
Respond in TRUST and accept the new reality by expanding your capacity to be resilient.

Greater challenges require increased skills. *Resiliency is more than just bouncing back. It includes a tenacity of spirit and a willingness to be positively changed at your core through the experience.*

Just as you can train your body to become physically stronger, you can also train your mind and enhance mental flexibility. Learn to respond to stressors in new ways that empower you to feel calmer, clearer and capable to cope more easily—especially when life is not gentle.

This booklet is designed to support you, your loved ones and members of an Ostomy Support Group, to strengthen

your ability to live well, and to thrive—even in the midst of difficulties. It blends practical tools with personal examples as well as questions for individual reflection, and group discussion. You will be invited to not only read about new tools, but to *practice* them by taking the action steps listed at the end of each chapter.

The 10 tools spell out a different aspect of the word: **R.E.S.I.L.I.E.N.C.Y.** My hope is that you will find them helpful in your journey to live well with your ostomy.

My world fell apart 11 years ago at age 52. I struggled to cope with the permanent side effects from an unexpected diagnosis of Stage III Colorectal Cancer. Despite my best efforts to prevent it, my temporary ostomies (a colostomy and an ileostomy) became permanent. At first, I could not talk to anyone about my colostomy without crying.

Then, I joined the Spokane, Washington Ostomy Support Group. I met a man water-skiing in his 80's with a colostomy. Others introduced me to practical resources, such as the *Phoenix Magazine* and the United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA). Together, they inspired me to write this booklet.

In addition, I am very grateful to my husband, Mark, and our adult children, Katie and Daniel, who support me. Thanks to their encouragement, I have transformed my cocoon of sorrow and grief. I am learning on a daily basis to become like the resilient butterfly on the cover. You can, too!



Susie Leonard Weller, M.A.

Spokane UOAA Ostomy Support Group Co-Facilitator &
2017 Affiliated Support Group Leadership Award Winner

Chapter 1: R = RECOGNIZE



Recognize and Accept the Reality of Grief

Grief is in two parts. The first part is loss.

The second is the remaking of life. Anne Roiphe

Grief is a normal and natural reaction to any type of loss. Ostomy surgery can be traumatic because it involves such a major physical change to your body and often results from a life-threatening diagnosis or a serious circumstance—such as an accident.

Compared to those living with chronic bowel diseases, people who never anticipated needing an ostomy tend to take a longer time to adjust to their surgery.

Although individuals express grief in various ways, *The Grief Recovery Handbook* by John W. James and Russell Friedman describes 5 typical symptoms:

1. Reduced concentration
2. A sense of numbness
3. Disrupted sleeping patterns
4. Change in eating habits
5. Roller coaster fluctuations in emotions

Although grief and depression can appear similar, they are different. Grief is a reaction to a specific loss or circumstance. Depression is a set of symptoms with a consistent low mood that does not get better with time.

If feelings of sadness and grief are interfering with your daily life—or you think about harming yourself and others—it is time to get professional support. Talk with your doctor for extra support resources.

Although everyone responds differently, there are distinct phases as ostomates integrate their new lifestyle. Lisa Caraffa, Ph.D., a psychologist and ileostomate, describes **5 psychological phases for moving forward**. They are:

1. Shock or Disbelief

Many people experience numbness, crying, anxiety or wide mood swings. Some withdraw in silence; others become overly talkative, or forgetful. Most feel they are on overload and are unable to take in more information.

2. Increase in Activity

A positive sign is when ostomates feel energized enough to begin re-taking control of their life. They resume normal activities and often want to learn more about their medical condition. Some seek a second medical opinion. Many consider joining a support group.

3. Emergence of Anger, Sadness and Fear

Although uncomfortable feelings might get buried for awhile, they do not go away. Unresolved feelings of grief can re-surface in surprising ways. Ostomates might become more irritable and ask questions such as: *Why me?* Others may emotionally retreat and isolate themselves to mourn their loss. Some feel lonely knowing that loved ones will never fully understand their experience. Many feel anxious about the unknown.

4. Expansion of New Coping Skills

One signal of coping well is being able to enjoy daily life with a renewed hope for the future. You might attend an Ostomy Support Group meeting and discover that you are

not alone. It could be resuming activities that you previously took pleasure in— such as swimming or biking.

5. Acceptance and Integration of What Has Happened

Integration includes a distinct shift in attitude. Although your ostomy is an important part of you who are, it is no longer the sole focus in your life. You move forward to live as fully as you can. You recognize that although acceptance is an on-going process, your life goes on.

The process of acceptance and integration is similar to the transformation of the caterpillar into a butterfly.

Caterpillar Stage: The caterpillar cruises along eating and growing. It continues to eat until it becomes so bloated that it hangs itself up to sleep.

Chrysalis (Cocoon) Stage: The caterpillar skin hardens into a chrysalis. However, tucked into pockets within the dormant body of the caterpillar are *imaginal cells* encoded with an image of a butterfly.

Imaginal Cells: Scientists hypothesize their purpose is to *imagine* the new that is about to emerge. These cells remain dormant until the crisis of breakdown allows them to develop. At first, the caterpillar's immune system tries to fight and destroy these imaginal cells as if they were foreign objects. Eventually, enough of the imaginal cells are released and the caterpillar stops struggling. It surrenders to the process of transformation.

Digestive Enzymes Break Down the Caterpillar Body Into a Type of Goo: From this chaos of decay emerges a new creation. The caterpillar has to let go of its previous form in order to fulfill its highest potential as a butterfly.

Butterflies Soar: The process of struggling to get out of its cocoon actually strengthens wings of butterflies to fly.

I felt inspired when I read the *Butterfly Story* by Elizabeth Sahtouris, an evolutionary biologist. Despite being stuck in the cocoon of loss—similar to a Dark Night of the Soul— her explanation of the caterpillar’s transformation provided hope. She invited me to have faith that even in the midst of the darkness, I have *imaginal* cells encoded within, waiting to emerge and to transform my experience of being an ostomate.

Living a **good** life includes digesting a lot of **goo!**

It means trusting that all the *goo* in life can serve a higher purpose. Instead of continuing to harden myself with anger and complaints: *Why is this happening?* I shifted my attitude. I explored new resources to increase my confidence that I could I live fully with my ostomy.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. How would you describe your experience of grief?
2. In what ways would recognizing the 5 common phases of grieving assist you to be a better ostomy visitor or support person?
3. Where are you in the journey towards acceptance? Do you identify with a particular stage of transformation—similar to the caterpillar becoming a butterfly?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Demonstrate compassion towards yourself and others wherever you are in your journey.
- ❖ Give thanks. Be grateful for something that originally felt like *goo*, but has now become a source of *good* in your life.

Chapter 2: E = Expand

Expand Your Coping Skills

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. Albert Einstein

Increased stress can be a catalyst to practice new skills. Resiliency is not just a personality trait, but a *learned* process for training the brain to cope more effectively.

Cerebral Cortex



Your brain has three distinct layers and operates like a set of gears. Here's an overview of how your brain switches gears to handle stressful situations in resilient ways.

(Graphic reprinted by permission from Parenting Press, publisher of *Why Don't You Understand: Improve Family Communication with the 4 Thinking Styles* by Susie Leonard Weller, ©2009)

1. The **Survival Brain** is your *lowest gear*. It protects and defends you from harm by reacting quickly.
2. The **Emotional Processing Center** is the *gear shifter* that determines if you are feeling threatened. If triggered by fear, it *downshifts* to the Survival Brain. However, if you feel safe and secure, it will *upshift* to your Higher Thinking Brain. *How you think about the event influences what you experience—fear or flexibility.*
3. The **Higher Thinking Brain** is the most flexible and complex gear. It includes four unique aspects to think *logically, make practical decisions, relate effectively and explore creative solutions to problems.*

We need all three layers to fully function! Practicing resiliency skills strengthens your ability to shift gears with greater ease and to respond appropriately.

Within our monthly Ostomy Support Group, I have observed a wide range of abilities to handle grief and trauma. Some members wonder what all the fuss is about. They are very matter of fact about living with an ostomy. Their choice seemed simple—either get the necessary bag and make the best of it—or die without one. They quickly engage their Higher Thinking Brain to handle whatever happens with grit and grace.

Gus, a colostomate, had his right leg amputated due to complications from earlier nerve damage. He celebrated his 80th birthday by water skiing with his artificial leg! In contrast, others complain bitterly and refer to their ostomy as a *dirty, disgusting bag*. Worried they might have an embarrassing accident, they rarely leave home.

Somewhere in the middle are those who initially struggled with living with an ostomy but are now willing to learn new skills to enjoy a satisfying life.

I wondered: *What makes the difference between those who remain stuck in prolonged grief and those who become resilient and thrive?* As a result, I began researching tools that help to re-wire the Emotional Brain's set point and response to stress.

One group of evidence-based tools, validated by the Duke Clinical Research Institute, is called **7 Pillars4Life**. It is a skills-based resiliency training program that empowers individuals and their families to successfully manage anxiety, improve decision-making, mobilize support and to fully engage in life.

Listed below is a brief summary of the 7 pillars, or building blocks of resiliency.

1. Hope: *I Focus On What Empowers Me*

I develop a realistic optimism by choosing the best feeling-thoughts that I can in the midst of my stressors. This means clarifying what is *in*, as well as what is *out* of my control. I seek balance between hoping for the best while also making peace with the situation—even if the circumstances do not change.

2. Balance: *I Take Control for How I Spend My Time*

I learn to balance the roles and responsibilities in my life. This means setting boundaries about how I spend my time and energy. I set aside a specific part of my day when I do NOT think about my challenges. I re-prioritize what gives me joy and I do what matters most to me.

3. Inner Strengths: *I Access My Best Qualities*

I identify the qualities that support me being my best self in stressful situations. I shift from focusing on my worries to exploring my wishes. Rather than complain, I practice using solution-based thinking to create what I really want.

4. Self Care: *I Make My Needs a Priority*

I examine my beliefs about taking care of myself. Instead of feeling guilty or selfish, I re-frame it as *self-care*. I listen and act upon the desires of my body, soul and spirit.

5. Support: *I Give and Receive the Love I Need*

When I am feeling nurtured through self-care, it is easier to be there for others without becoming resentful. I commit

to re-evaluating and prioritizing my relationships. I discern which ones truly provide mutual support, and those that drain my energy. Unfortunately, well-intentioned family members and friends can be controlling, suffocating or emotionally unavailable. I clarify realistic expectations.

6. Spirit: *I Connect to My Source of Inner Peace*

Even if I am not a religious person or I don't believe in God, I can still discover what helps to comfort and soothe myself in times of adversity. I identify what brings meaning and joy into my life. I explore what Spirit means to me and I connect to my Source of inner peace. I expand my capacity for compassion and inner wisdom.

7. Life Story: *I Find Value in All of My Experiences*

I gain perspective on the important events in my life by putting them in context with my entire life story. I reflect on the lessons and skills I have learned—both in times of hardship and happiness. I write new chapters in my life story and author a life worth living.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What supports you to use your entire brain?
2. Which of the 7 Pillars4Life is easiest to practice?
3. Which of the 7 Pillars4Life needs more attention?

Action Steps:

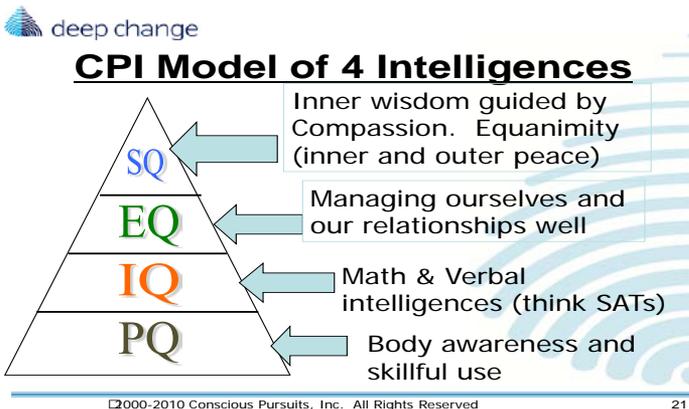
- ❖ Notice when your brain is shifting down or up. Make choices to shift from fear to flexibility.
- ❖ Choose to strengthen one of the 7 Pillars4Life

Strengthen Your Spiritual Resources

Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) is the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion while maintaining inner and outer peace—regardless of the circumstances.

Cindy Wigglesworth, Creator of an SQ Assessment

In addition to treating the medical and physical dimensions of living with an ostomy, it is also important to explore the resources that serve and restore the *whole person—emotionally, mentally, socially and spiritually*. Research on resiliency demonstrates that a person's spirituality can positively increase their well-being.



People are often skittish and react when they hear the word *spirituality*. Many confuse it with religion. Although they are related, you can be spiritual without being religious. *Spirituality seeks meaning and purpose in life guided by values—such as the well-being for all—universal spirit or God*. Religion is a specific pathway with a particular social structure and accompanying beliefs, practices and rituals.

Rather than avoid this vital topic due to its possible pitfalls, consider how spirituality can increase resiliency. Healthy forms of spiritual expression have been linked to *lowering* depression and physical complaints while *increasing* greater happiness, life satisfaction, optimism and expanding social networks for support.

Obviously, it is crucial that individual beliefs are respected and no one feels judged or pressured to change their viewpoint. At the same time, tapping into your spirituality can become a helpful tool for coping with challenges. My goal is to share supportive tools that are both *faith-friendly*, yet also *faith-neutral*, to strengthen resiliency.

The *Tool Box Kit* for building compassionate communities, developed by the International Charter for Compassion, includes a description of *spiritual qualities and assets*. It defines Spiritual Assets as: *the qualities that enable us to do what is right and good—for ourselves and for others*.

Consider these assets as the type of qualities that you would want to expand within yourself, as well as in your Ostomy Support Group.

The Spiritual Assets include:

Showing Kindness toward Others and Ourselves

Being Compassionate

Expressing Appreciation and Gratitude

Spreading Hope

Sharing Hospitality

Practicing Humility

Deepening Patience and Endurance

Showing Tolerance and Acceptance

Demonstrating Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Advocating for Justice

Listed below are 3 examples how an Ostomy Support Group might apply these Spiritual Assets:

Spread hope: encourage new ostomates through the Ostomy Visitor Program. Demonstrate compassion and acceptance for *all* types of feelings.

Share hospitality: be a welcoming Ostomy Support Group by introducing new ostomates and their loved ones to other members and resources. Explore the UOAA/ASG Mentor Program for additional assistance.

Advocate for justice: include advocacy issues as part of the support group's agenda to promote policies that benefit *all* those with chronic health conditions.

On a personal note, even though I have a Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry and am certified as a Life and Spiritual Coach, I needed to *upgrade* my spiritual assets when my temporary colostomy became permanent.

At first, I felt abandoned by God. I felt despair that no matter how hard I, and others, prayed for my recovery—nothing seemed to help. I wondered if I had done something wrong that interfered with my healing. I needed to re-examine my core beliefs about myself, my life's purpose, and how I understood God.

My minister tried to reassure me that *breakdown often precedes breakthrough*. She suggested I view this time of heart-break as a necessary phase for letting go of what used to be in order to create space for new possibilities.

Although my first response was: *Yeah, right!* I felt desperate enough to try a new approach. While attending

a retreat, I discovered the power of letting go of outcomes through the Sufi story of the *Stream in the Desert*.

An inner wise voice whispered: *Let go of trying to cross the desert as a river. Allow yourself to be absorbed by the wind to be carried to your destination. Trust the breeze to embrace the water and carry it over the desert. Surrender. Have faith the rain will fall to create a new stream.*

Trusting the wind meant releasing all my expectations. This meant no more bargaining with God to *make a deal* for a different outcome. I let go of clinging to how my body used to be B.C.—Before Cancer & Before Colostomy or A.D.—After Diagnosis.

By embracing the mystery and paradox of surrender, I stopped trying to control things beyond my power to change. Instead, I focused on what I *could* do.

I began facilitating monthly Ostomy Support Group meetings and deepened my empathy for others struggling with loss. By creating a healthier spiritual foundation, I nurtured greater inner peace.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. How could spirituality strengthen your resiliency?
2. Which spiritual asset(s) do you most appreciate?
3. What supports your inner peace when distressed?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Choose a Spiritual Asset to reinforce.
- ❖ Find ways to be more compassionate and wise.

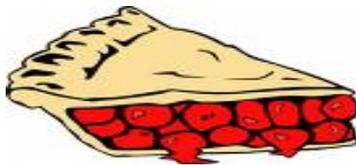
Chapter 4: I = Integrate

Integrate a Sweeter Life with P.I.E.S.—Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual Intelligences

Wellness encompasses a healthy body, a sound mind, and a tranquil spirit. Enjoy the journey as you strive for wellness. Laurette Gagnon Beaulieu

Grounded in the research and consulting they have done with the world's greatest athletes, Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz wrote: *The Power of Full Engagement*. Their first principle is: *Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual*. Our capacity is expanded whenever the limits of our endurance are stretched.

You never know how resilient you are until you are experiencing the heat of the kitchen. Create your own recipe for a sweeter life. Blend together the following ingredients known as the *four intelligences*. They are summarized in the acronym of **P.I.E.S.**



P = Physical *Treat your body with the respect it deserves*

I = Intellectual *Pay attention to how and what you think*

E = Emotional: *Relate to yourself and others with respect*

S = Spiritual *Nurture the source of your well-being*

Physical Intelligence (PQ) focuses on noticing what my body needs and I taking good care of it. Yes, you and I have heard it all before: eat nutritious foods, exercise regularly, maintain a healthy weight, get quality sleep and avoid any chemical addictions. But why is this so important for resiliency?

Bodies do not heal as quickly when they are not getting the nutritious fuel and movement they need to function well. Ostomates especially need to pay attention to what they eat to prevent blockages, diarrhea, constipation or dehydration. The United Ostomy Associations of America at uoa.org has a great reference chart for which foods are more likely to cause blockages or gas. It also lists which foods to eat to manage loose or thick output.

Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) understands the power of thoughts to influence my feelings and behavior. How I view what happens changes everything. Small shifts create a positive ripple effect. Eliminate phrases such as: *I have to*. Instead, say: *I choose to*.

Whatever I focus on increases, because that is where I am spending my energy. Even tiny changes in attitude can add up to big gains in resiliency. The *20/80 Rule* states: *20% of my efforts provide 80% of the benefits*. Therefore, small successes in how I handle difficulties add up. They boost my ability to cope with future stressors.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) pays attention to feelings as important *sources of information*—not as excuses or justifications for poor behavior.

- Could *anger* be a signal that I need to set better boundaries?

- Is *resentfulness* a warning I am doing too much?
- Does my *sadness* signal I am still hanging on to what used to be and grieving a loss?
- Is my *fear* an invitation to expand my ability to trust and to deepen my inner resources?

Learning to express emotions in respectful ways is easier said than done. Under stress, I am more vulnerable to regress and to blame others for how I am feeling. Increasing my Emotional Intelligence includes accepting 100% response-ability for how I feel, think and behave.

When frustrated by a problem—such as an accident—I take a moment to breathe deeply, calm down and remind myself that I can deal with this in constructive ways. Pausing for a moment of self-care stops the escalation of emotions and soothes my heart, mind and body. It also reinforces that I am capable of handling the situation.

Although there is an appropriate time to vent with family and friends, I recognize when they have become burdened by compassion fatigue. I widen my circle of support and avoid putting too many expectations on my loved ones that will lead to burn-out.

Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) gives my life meaning and purpose. As described in Chapter 3, it is possible to be spiritual without being part of a formal religious tradition. Cindy Wigglesworth describes Spiritual Intelligence as the capstone because it builds upon and integrates the other types of intelligences.

Resiliency means being able to re-frame whatever is happening in a positive light—even to find meaning and purpose in painful circumstances. Viktor Frankl, a

psychiatrist and survivor of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp told his captors who had killed almost everyone in his family: *You can take everything from me, but you cannot take my spirit.* I recently visited Frankl's home in Vienna which has become a museum. He wrote *Man's Search for Meaning* based on his experiences of discovering sources for courage under extreme duress.

Courage is at the root of both *discourage* and *encourage*. Increasing my Spiritual Intelligence encourages me to be *courageous*—the Latin word for living with heart and spirit.

In a half-baked world, you can *sweeten* your life with *P.I.E.S.* or multiple intelligences. Expand your resiliency skills by integrating all four dimensions!



Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What helps you to pay attention to what your body needs in the moment? How could this help to prevent accidents or trips to the ER for blockages or dehydration?
2. How do your beliefs about expressing uncomfortable emotions affect your ability to respect feelings as important sources of information?
3. What encourages you to handle the heat of the kitchen and to bake cherry *P.I.E.S.*—especially when life feels like the pits?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Choose a specific activity today to sweeten your life in one of the dimensions of *P.I.E.S.*
- ❖ Re-frame a current challenge by applying a specific intelligence to increase your resiliency.

Chapter 5: L = Live

Learn to Live Mindfully

If we learn to open our hearts, anyone—even those who drive us crazy—can be our teacher. Pema Chodron

What you choose to focus on impacts your health—positively or negatively. Dwelling on the pains and frustrations about living with an ostomy, can make them feel worse. In contrast, directing your thoughts and feelings to noticing what is going well, or what brings you joy, reduces stress and expands your well-being.

The August 7, 2017 issue of *Time Magazine* summarized 5 scientifically proven methods for easing the symptoms of depression. They include:

1. Exercise
2. Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation
3. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (change negative thought patterns)
4. Behavioral Activation Therapy (identify the activities that add joy and purpose for living)
5. *Mindfulness Training (living in the present moment)*

Living mindfully is a set of skills to manage stress in healthier ways. Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn developed the **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)** program in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Since that time, over 720 MBSR programs operate in medical centers and clinics across the globe.

Mindfulness uses deep, focused breathing to increase awareness of thoughts, feelings and physical sensations.

The goal in living mindfully is to *notice, accept and work with stressors*, rather than to *react* to them.

M = *Moment-to-Moment Attention*

I = *In the Here-and-Now*

N = *Non-judgmental Attitude*

D = *Detach from Unhelpful Thoughts*

F = *Forgive and Be Grateful*

U = *Unconditional Acceptance*

**L = *Learn with the Beginner's Mind*
by Zhen-Phang**

Although some might think of mindfulness as just sitting around and saying *Ommm . . .* it requires practice and discipline to learn to live mindfully throughout the day.

Mindfulness Includes 7 Characteristics:

1. *Non-judgmental*: notice without criticizing. Consider the judgments, thoughts and feelings as being *sources of information*, rather than being *right* or *wrong*
2. *Patience*: allow things to happen in their own time
3. *Beginner's Mind*: choose to open your mind to all possibilities
4. *Trust*: believe in yourself, your inherent wisdom and ability to grow from all circumstances.
5. *Non-striving*: learn to love life as it is, rather than being attached to specific outcomes for happiness

6. *Let Go*: release what you do not have control over and work with what is

7. *Acceptance*: find inner peace--no matter what happens

One of my biggest challenges is to catch myself when I am being judgmental and criticizing myself, others or situations, as being *wrong*. A mindful approach invites me to find compassion for the *unmet needs that are fueling the judgments and ways to meet them*. I trust that everything can serve me—even when it feels uncomfortable. Acceptance does not mean that I like or condone what is happening. Instead, I acknowledge and work with the current reality.



Think of acceptance as being like a Bamboo Finger Trap. Imagine inserting your index finger from each hand into the opposite ends of the bamboo tube. If you resist and try pulling them to get out, your actions cause the woven strands to tighten.

So what is the secret for getting out of the trap? *Relax, rather than struggle!* Do the *opposite* of what you are naturally inclined to do. By pushing your fingers even deeper into the bamboo trap, you create a relaxed space and loosen the grip of the bamboo snare. Practice the equivalent with painful feelings or situations. *Move forward with your life through acceptance, not resistance.*

In 1966, about 20 years ahead of his time, Eric P. Trunnell, Ph.D, an Assistant Professor in Health Education at the University of Utah, wrote an article in the Journal of WOCN about *Mindfulness and People with*

Stomas. He encouraged patient education and ostomy support groups to receive mindfulness training!

He advocated ostomates to practice mindfulness because he understood the realities of the physical, as well as the psychological, adjustments of living with an ostomy. He knew that it would require extra skills to cope with the changes in body image, self-concept, sexuality, impact on relationships and the chronic stresses of stoma care. Trunnell believed that ostomates would live easier lives if they had additional tools to handle their challenges.

New research published in June, 2017 by Ivana Buric, a psychologist at the Coventry University's Brain, Belief and Behavior lab, validates Trunnell's insights. Thoughts impact our behavior and well-being. Practicing 15 minutes of mindfulness a day can improve your health.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. How would living more mindfully increase your well-being as an ostomate?
2. Which of the 7 characteristics for being mindful do you find the *easiest* to apply in your daily life? Which one is the most *difficult* for you to do?
3. What supports you to pay attention to your thoughts and to increase the ones that support your health?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Choose one aspect of mindfulness to strengthen.
- ❖ Take 15 minutes today to practice deep and slow breathing. Notice how you feel afterwards.

Chapter 6: I = Inspire

Inspire Possibilities by Increasing Your PR Skills

*Fireproof does not mean the fire will never come.
It means that you will be able to withstand it.*

Michael Simmons, Fireproof Movie: Never Leave Your Partner Behind

Those who live with you are also impacted by your ostomy. They, too, must learn to cope with bathroom odors and accidents, wait patiently while bags are being changed, find storage for extra supplies and budget for additional healthcare expenses.

Stress can take a toll on your significant relationships. You can prevent melt-downs by increasing your **PR** skills to *fireproof* your relationships. To inspire possibilities under pressure, develop your **PR Skills** by changing your:



***Pattern of Response to create
Positive Relationships and to
Practise Repairs as needed***

Picture these PR skills as serving like a fire drill.

Rehearse these skills *before* there is a fire or you become overcome by the smoke of stress. Avoid escalating flare-ups by not adding fuel to the fire, nor fanning the flames in a conflict. Practice these **P's** and **R's** for maximum safety in your relationships and to reduce combustion.

Pay attention to your *early warning signals*—your physical sensations, layers of feelings, thoughts and patterns of behavior. Without judgment, observe what you notice.

Does your voice become higher pitched? Do you clench your jaw, tighten your stomach or hold your breath? Use your fire extinguisher skills before things further heat up.

P = Pause & Predict your triggers

- What is the biggest trigger that ignites you or causes your relationships to blow up?
- What is under your control? What is not? Are you trying to direct situations that you cannot change?
- Is there a time in the day when you, or others, are more likely to smolder?

My biggest trigger is when others minimize or dismiss or my feelings. I expect empathy and respect—even when my experience is different from their perspective. Knowing my sensitivity to this reaction, I consciously take several deep breaths to calm myself before responding. Instead of complaining, I re-state what I DO want from others.

P = Prepare a Prevention Plan to avoid meltdowns

- Similar to other safety drills, have you identified your fire extinguishers?
- What reduces the flames long enough to call upon your **PR** skills?
- If the fire is raging out of control, what is your escape plan? Do you have an agreement to take a time out to avoid scorching your relationships?

When I am upset and afraid of saying things that I will later regret, my best fire extinguisher is to set the kitchen timer. I take a break for at least 20 minutes to soothe my Survival Brain. Next, I do something physical to release my pent-up emotions. I might walk around the block or vigorously mop the kitchen floor to drain off excess

adrenaline. After I have calmed my body, I am better prepared to sift through my emotions. Journaling helps to release my emotional trash and to identify the core issue(s). This provides guidance about which of my options would be a more helpful response.

R = Rehearse *new patterns of response*

- Specifically, which behaviors need to change? Do you need to do *more* or *less* of something?
- How will you practice this new response until it becomes a natural part of you?
- What will remind you to practice these skills when you need them the most?

My husband and I also use the 1-minute timer on our I-Phones to listen better to each other. We each take turns speaking for 1 minute. However, the listener does not get their turn to speak until he/she has satisfactorily summarized both the facts and feelings of what the other shared. This means I need to really listen, not just think about what I want to say as soon as he is done speaking!

R = Reinforce & Reward *positive behaviors*

- What encourages you to maintain new patterns of responding and prevent relapsing into the old ways?
- What sustains a firewall to keep flare-ups from spreading?
- How will you reward even baby steps toward fire-proofing your relationships?

One way of reinforcing and rewarding is by giving appreciation and acknowledging effort. Dr. John Gottman's research states that healthy relationships experience a 5:1 ratio of 5 positive comments to 1

negative one. I have found that noticing and encouraging new, supportive behaviors reinforces them to continue.

Both pain and pleasure can motivate change. However, there needs to be enough *emotional gusto* to generate sufficient wattage to break old cycles. A *charge* of distressed feelings can be the very fuel that is needed to re-wire outdated wiring. Rather than *short-out* your circuits, commit to regular relationship maintenance.

By consistently rehearsing these **PR** skills, you will eventually re-wire your reactions to conflict. Taking small steps really does add up to big changes over time. By practicing these skills you will strengthen all of your relationships and expand your circle of support.



Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. What inspires you to want to increase your **PR** skills for **Positive Relationships**? Or, what are the costs, if you do not apply them?
2. Which of the **PR** skills needs the most attention to prevent future melt downs?
3. What will remind you to *pause* before saying or doing something that you later regret?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Practice changing one pattern of response today—especially when you are stressed.
- ❖ Rehearse what you want to say that soothes, rather than inflames, a hot topic.

Chapter 7: E = Enjoy

Enjoy Life More; Express More Gratitude

*From what experience have you suffered most?
Even what tastes most bitter,
can be transformed into sweetness.* Maria Rilke

When things are going well, it is easy to be thankful. But what encourages you to enjoy the benefits of a grateful heart when life's events are not so comfortable?

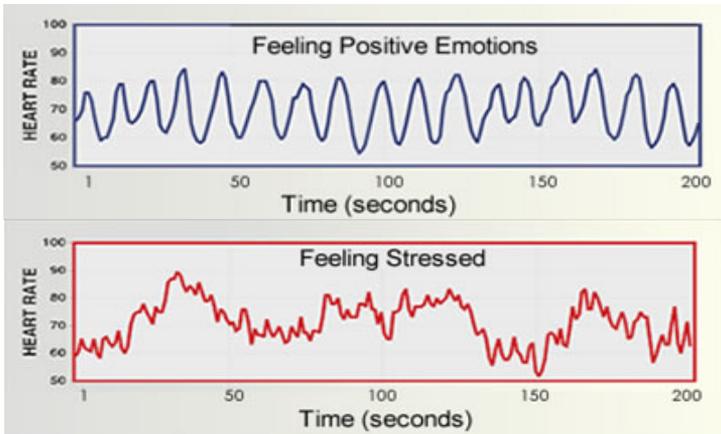
St. Paul wrote in his letter to the Thessalonians 5:18, *Give thanks to God in all situations*. This advice is even more powerful when you consider that Paul was writing these words from jail and facing possible execution.

Brother David Steindl-Rast is a Benedictine monk who sponsors a website called www.gratefulness.org. In his article, *Grief and Gratefulness*, he describes the story of the Comstock Mine in the Sierra Nevada to explain the value of *mining our blues*.

In 1859, prospectors flocked to the gold mine but complained about the *danged blue stuff* that kept clogging their machines. Later, the workers discovered the heavy blue sand was laden with silver. In a similar way, Brother David invites us to *excavate our grief*. What appears to clog our contentment may contain unexpected treasures.

I needed to mine my blues when the surgery to re-connect my colon was unable to fully function due to radiated tissues. Through the Heart Math Institute of California, I discovered an unexpected treasure: *Gratitude can transform sadness. A change of heart, changes everything.*

Strong emotions—both positive and negative—affect heart rhythms. Feelings such as anger, sadness, or fear, create uneven and irregular heart patterns. On a computer screen they look like jagged mountain peaks with lots of steep ups and downs. In contrast, heart rhythms become more even and smoother whenever people express gratitude for someone or something.



*Images from the Heart Math Institute on how gratitude impacts heart rhythms
Visit www.HeartMath.org for more resources*

The research from Heart Math demonstrates that *gratitude is one of the quickest ways to shift the brain's emotional gears—especially the Survival Brain's reaction.* There might be initial grinding to disengage from concentrating on frustrations. However, by shifting to what I am thankful for, I create a positive change in my mood.

I began unwrapping the gift of gratitude when I heard Lang and Ival Secret, from the Friends of Ostomates Worldwide-USA, (FOW-USA) speak at our Spokane Ostomy Support Group. They described how ostomates from developing countries strapped tuna cans to their belly to catch the solid waste because they had

insufficient ostomy supplies. Water was also in short supply for clean-up.

In contrast, I had a bathroom with hot, running water just steps away from a comfortable bedroom. I decided to stop my *pitty-potty party*. With a renewed appreciation for everything I took for granted, I gave thanks for my colostomy, indoor plumbing, medical care and health insurance for supplies.

I felt gratitude for my family and friends who encouraged and supported me in this journey—even when I was stuck in the blues. With their help, I evolved from my initial reactions of bewilderment and disgust, to acceptance.

My husband, Mark, a retired nurse, patiently explained what an ostomy meant. Although distressed and depressed about wearing a colostomy bag, Mark continued to affirm that I still looked attractive. Despite my doubts, he continued to reassure me that he loved me as *is*—even when my temporary bag became permanent.

Another unexpected gift from my husband was a customized item of intimate apparel. No, I'm not talking about a teddy or a thong. In the hospital, I wondered out loud if there was something to cover my colostomy bag to avoid hearing, or feeling the crinkly, plastic sack rub against my skin. My request was answered.

A few days after returning home from my first surgery for a colostomy, I heard our sewing machine rattling clickety-clack late at night. Since my version of sewing includes a stapler and duct tape, I appreciated Mark's skills—especially his homemaking abilities.

Mark had taken a well-worn flannel pillow case—a blue one in my favorite color—and sewed a cover, complete with Velcro fasteners. Although the diamond in my wedding ring may sparkle, nothing compares to soft flannel next to my skin!

Each anniversary when Mark and I renew our vows, I have a clearer understanding of what it means to love each other in *sickness and in health*. It has truly been a rare gift to be loved so fully and to unwrap this treasure.

(Note: For those who do not have someone who sews in your family, read the ads in the Phoenix Magazine for retailers who sell ostomy bag covers, swim wraps and other accessories.)



Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. What encourages you to *be thankful in all things*—especially when life is challenging?
2. Have you noticed your mood shift when you focus on what you are thankful for or you appreciate?
3. What supports you to get off the *pitty potty* and to feel more grateful and enjoy what you *do* have?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Practice the *Shift and Shine* technique from Hearth Math. *Shift* your attention to your heart and take three slow breaths. Think of someone or something that makes you happy. *Shine* that positive feeling to yourself and others until you notice a wave of appreciation flowing through you.
- ❖ Imagine Gratitude as a *Vitamin G* that transforms your vitality. Enjoy a dose throughout each day.

Chapter 8: N = Nurture

Nurture Yourself by Noticing and Meeting Your Needs

Remember that an ostomate is a person interacting with their natural environment—not just a pouch with legs!

Michael Gerald, had his first ostomy surgery at 18-months

Living with an ostomy is a *chronic* medical condition—not just a quick fix. As a result, *both* the ostomate and their loved ones will need to make adjustments in order to meet the on-going needs for *all* those involved.

Care providers sometimes struggle to find the sweet spot between offering enough support without becoming overwhelmed. Some swing from one extreme of over-protecting to resentment by doing too much.



The unmet needs of the ostomate, and those closest to them, can erupt in unexpected ways—like a volcano. When someone *blows up*, focus on identifying the *underlying needs* fueling the explosion—not only the *symptoms*.

There are 4 basic sets of needs:

1. Love & Belonging:

I feel affirmed and valued because I exist—not because of what I do or my appearance. I trust that my needs matter.

2. Safety & Stability:

I feel at ease when I can count on others. I am protected from harm through sufficient and consistent care.

3. Power & Influence:

I am in charge of my life and I accept full response-ability for the choices I make and their consequences.

4. Creative Expression & Purpose:

I freely and easily express who I am and my unique gifts. I enjoy meaning and purpose in my life.

Unmet needs will not be ignored. If not met in a healthy manner, they are often expressed in negative ways. This might include begging for attention by whining and complaining. Others misuse their power by being aggressive—or behaving like a helpless victim. Feelings of frustration and hopelessness can create a negative cloud of volcanic ash affecting all those in the region.

Here are ways you can meet your needs by nurturing yourself *physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.*

40 Tips to Nurture Yourself and Meet Your Needs

	Resources for Physical Needs
<i>Output Problems</i>	Notice and track which foods are more likely to cause you, gas, diarrhea, constipation or a blockage.
<i>Stoma Blockages</i>	Eat mindfully. Make <i>Chew, Chew, Chew</i> your new mantra.
<i>Poor Nutrition</i>	Be aware of when you are eating (or not eating) for emotional reasons.
<i>Problems sleeping</i>	Be as physically active as possible. Tire your body to help relax your mind. Move daily—even for 15 minutes.
<i>Prepare for Accidents</i>	Hope for the best; but prepare for the worst. Carry a discreet bag with essential ostomy supplies wherever you go. Keep extra supplies and clothes in your car. Be mindful of minor

<p><i>Manage Your Ostomy Supplies</i></p> <p><i>Handle Ostomy Odors</i></p>	<p>odors to detect a possible leakage.</p> <p>Use your calendar to mark the dates for changing your ostomy bag or re-ordering ostomy supplies. Keep extra supplies on hand for emergencies.</p> <p>Remember to turn on the bathroom fan. Use Poopurri™ or other bathroom odor fighters. Chew Devrom™ tablets or put DevKo™ tablets inside your bag.</p>
Resources for Mental Needs	
<p><i>Grieving</i></p> <p><i>Depression</i></p> <p><i>Downward Spiral of Negative “What If’s?”</i></p> <p><i>Hopeless for the future</i></p>	<p>Grieving is a natural reaction to loss. Grief is different from depression. Allow yourself to feel ALL of your feelings and to express them in healthy ways.</p> <p>Monitor self-talk to be more positive. Seek professional help if your depression continues, or gets worse.</p> <p>Use as many senses as you can to image positive outcomes for challenging situations. <i>What if</i> you anticipated things going well? Even if it does not, <i>what if</i> you felt confident to handle it anyway?</p> <p>Explore creative options to solve problems. Create a routine and do something—even a tiny success—to encourage hope for your future.</p>
Resources for Emotional Needs	
<p><i>Criticizing and Complaining</i></p> <p><i>Wallowing in Self Pity</i></p> <p><i>Feeling</i></p>	<p>Eliminate your critical voice. Talk to yourself in a nurturing tone and refer to your bag in respectful ways. It is a part of you, and it is saving your life.</p> <p>Release emotional trash by journaling on a regular basis. Find the humor—even when distressed by an accident.</p> <p>Find a mentor—someone with a similar</p>

<i>Isolated</i>	experience who is handling grief well to encourage you.
<i>Lonely</i>	Join an Ostomy Support Group—in person or on-line. Seek out other community resources for assistance. Explore new ways to have fun with others.
<i>Blames or whines</i>	Express appreciation to your caregivers. And, caregivers—find ways to take a break whenever needed.
Resources for Spiritual Needs	
<i>Lacks a sense of purpose and personal mission.</i>	Set new goals to help deepen your spiritual life. Take time for daily reflection or meditation. Find ways to be of service to others. Read inspirational literature.
<i>Feels alone or disconnected.</i>	Join a spiritual growth group or a Scripture discussion. Attend a yoga or a Tai Chi class. Keep a gratitude journal. Spend time in nature.

Nurture re-wires an emotional set point from stress to joy.



Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. What are your needs? Which ones are feeling unmet?
2. How is coping with a chronic condition affecting you and others? What are the needs of your caregivers?
3. Which nurturing tip did you like the best?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Talk honestly about needs and ways to meet them.
- ❖ Choose a nurturing tip to practice today.

Chapter 9: C = Communicate

Communicate Clearly with the 4 C's of Courageous Conversations

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.
Margaret Wheatley

A *courageous conversation* is one that you would prefer to avoid, but choose to have anyway. Why? Because ignoring the issues makes matters worse. *Courage* blends being respectful with heart and a firm backbone.

When faced with difficult decisions, such as choosing surgery for a permanent ostomy or a revision, clear communication becomes even more vital.

You have a legal and an ethical right to be fully informed before deciding what kind of healthcare treatments you want, or do not want, to receive. Your healthcare provider should explain the relevant facts in understandable ways.

Become clearly informed as possible about the potential benefits, risks and side effects, *before* choosing any medical procedures. Explore how the decision will impact your lifestyle, family life, and finances, as well as your emotional and spiritual resources to manage the effects.

Signing a consent form is more than just completing the necessary paperwork. It is a *collaborative process* to prevent any misunderstandings or regrets, and to partner more effectively with your healthcare provider.

Initiate courageous conversations with your life partner and family members. They are impacted by the decisions that you make, too.

The key components or **4 C's** for courageous conversation include:

1. **Clarify** what is most important;
2. **Care** enough to seek mutual understanding;
3. **Cultivate** other choices that expand possibilities;
4. **Commit** to respecting everyone involved.

Using the **4 C's** has strengthened my marriage and family relationships. They empower me to discuss the difficult topics—such as how my ostomy impacts my sexuality. Open and honest communication can actually restore and improve relationships, as well as increase intimacy.

Dr. John Gottman, Director of the Relationship Institute at the University of Washington, predicts with a 90% accuracy which couples will separate. How? He observes them when they argue.

Those who remain stuck in patterns of fuming silence or blaming criticism usually split up. Gottman describes four deadly communication patterns that can destroy relationships. In contrast, commit to the **4 C's of Courageous Conversations**:

4 COMMON <u>C's</u> in MIS-COMMUNICATION	4 <u>C's</u> & COMMITMENTS for COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS
1. Complain about others and situations. I blame them for how I feel.	1. Claim 100% responsibility for my life—all my thoughts, feelings, choices and actions.
2. Cover up my feelings, by withholding or sulking	2. Communicate and tell the <i>Unarguable Truth</i> about what I am feeling and what I would like.
3. Criticize or Claim how I	3. Cultivate an attitude of

am the victim and others are at fault	<i>wonder. . . I wonder what I can learn from this?</i>
4. Contempt is expressed verbally and non-verbally	4. Commit to Create responses that restore respect and resolve conflict

My husband and I have made an on-going commitment to engage in courageous conversations. Yes, we are getting lots of opportunity to practice and to strengthen our skills!

1. Clarify What Is Most Important

When emotions are running hot, take the time to calm down long enough to clarify your core concern. Separate what is most important from the minor issues. Concentrate on identifying a common goal.

2. Care Enough to Seek Mutual Understanding

Understanding does not always mean agreement. To make it safer for others to share their perspective, practice *listening without judgment*. Notice when a defensive behavior (yours or theirs) is shutting down the dialogue. Apologize for any disrespect—both verbal and nonverbal.

3. Cultivate Choices to Expand Possibilities

Avoid being limited by an *either/or* decision. Explore options that support a *both/and* approach. For example: *I/We can have a high risk conversation AND our honesty can increase trust within our relationship*. Be curious about why a reasonable, rational and decent person would shut down in silence or explode with frustration. Consider the underlying needs and motivations that are fueling someone's behavior. Find innovative ways that can meet both sets of needs.

4. Commit to Respecting Everyone Involved

Consistently monitor not only *what* is being said, but *how* it is being spoken. When I get really angry, I literally cannot think straight. My goal is to become 100% accountable to maintain respectful behavior. No excuses. By maintaining a safety zone of respect, I increase confidence that future interactions will be positive ones.

I have made it a priority to initiate these important conversations *before* I need to make significant decisions—*not when I am under duress*. I have completed the necessary legal paperwork to provide medical directives to protect my preferences. I have designated who is legally authorized to make medical decisions on my behalf—especially if impaired due to an emergency.

May your courageous conversations increase clarity!



Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. What topics have you been avoiding that call for a courageous conversation?
2. To what degree have you participated in *courageous conversations* with your healthcare providers, life partner and family members?
3. Which of the 4 C's are the easiest or hardest for you to practice?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Pick a topic that you are ready to initiate a courageous conversation with someone about.
- ❖ Practice listening without judgment today—especially with someone you disagree with.

Chapter 10: Y = YES

Yes, You Can Transform Adversity; Yield to Find Your Resiliency

“Say ‘Yes’ to everything . . . Human behavior is not dictated by conditions, but by the decisions one makes.”
Viktor Frankl

Dr. Viktor Frankl, as described in Chapter 4, found reasons for living, even when his wife, pregnant with their first child, was killed in a Nazi Concentration Camp. His quote: *What gives light, must endure burning* encourages me to find purpose and meaning in the midst of adversity.

Living with an ostomy is not easy. Yet, I have a choice throughout the day for how I will choose to respond. Sometimes I fall into the trap of fearing the worst:

- *What if I have an embarrassing accident?*
- *Will my physical activities cause a stomal hernia?*
- *Will this food cause a blockage or other problems?*
- *Do others notice when my bag is bulging with gas?*

However, I am only one thought away from changing my perspective. Mendhi Audlin, author of *What If It All Goes Right?*, transforms my fears by re-framing my thoughts. She encourages me to begin asking different types of *what if* questions:

- *What if I felt more confident that I could cope with whatever happens?*
- *What if I focused on all that I can do as an ostomate, rather than on what I can't?*

- *What if* I enjoyed living as well as I possibly can with my ostomy and let go of it defining my life?
- And, even *if* the circumstances are not desirable, nor comfortable, *what if* I choose to accept what is?



Troublesome circumstances are similar to the irritations forming a pearl. Resiliency trusts that good can emerge—even from aggravations.

Before my father died, he gave me the gift of a beautiful strand of pearls—an inter-generational legacy. I appreciate its significance in multiple ways.

Pearls, the world's oldest gem, have been collected throughout history as a sign of wealth and success. They are known as both the *tears and a gift from the gods*. Pearls symbolize the process of transforming irritants into priceless treasures.

A pearl sac forms as a defense mechanism to seal out any inner and outer threats—such as parasites or damage within their environment. Concentric rings of growth evolve over time to create an iridescent luster. *Their light reflects the power of resolving past irritations.*

There are two types of pearls—*natural and cultured*. Natural ones are formed spontaneously and are found in fresh water and in salty seas. In the early 1900s, entrepreneurs began transplanting an irritant into the oyster's soft tissue to create cultured pearls on demand.

Regardless of what provokes me, I have a choice about how I will respond. Disturbances can occur naturally through external events that I have no control over—such

as disease, disaster and death. Other aggravations can result from my internal choices. In either case, I can always choose to cultivate a pearl.

One reason that pearls are such valuable gems is because they represent the commitment to transform all that annoys us. I realized that in order to create my pearls, I would need to practice the **Serenity Prayer** daily:

*God, grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can
And, the wisdom to know the difference.*

Acceptance feels like a paradox. Finding peace with a distressing situation can open the door to new possibilities. When I let go of my attachments about how I think others or life should be, inner peace flows more easily. A good friend said she was going to write on my tombstone: *She finally let go!* Hopefully, I am learning to let go sooner than that.

Pearls are not formed overnight. The valuable ones take years to develop. As each new cycle integrates whatever disturbed it, another layer is formed. The pearl is enlarged and the light shines through with even more brilliance.

Perhaps this is why wise sayings are called *pearls of wisdom*. Insights flow from the tears of our biggest aggravations. Discovering their gift requires a willingness to be transformed by all of life's challenges, within and without. Rather than continue to blame the person or the situation that most annoys me, I can choose to bless them for the strand of pearls they are creating.

Becoming resilient is similar to creating a necklace of pearls. It is a step-by-step process of strengthening and deepening my capacity to thrive in the midst of challenges. Resiliency is like the *Parable of the Pearl of Great Price*. It requires all I have to transform my irritants into these gemstones.

Before I die, I will pass along my pearl necklace to our daughter, Katie, who was named after her great grandmother—their original and wise owner.

May the *10 Tools for Resiliency* expand your ability to shine brightly as beautiful *pearls-in-the-making!*



Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. What is your *pearl of great price* that invites you to transform the grit in your oyster into a gem?
2. To what degree are you willing to view the irritants in your life as potential pearl-creators?
3. What are your *pearls of wisdom*?

Action Steps:

- ❖ Transform a negative *What if?* by turning it around. Use this new perspective to strengthen your resiliency skills.
- ❖ Choose something that you need to say *Yes* or *Yield* to that has blocked you from moving forward.
- ❖ Complete the **Resiliency Self-Assessment Quiz** included in the following chapter. Notice your current strengths and areas for growth.

RESILIENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT:

Sweeten Your Life with P.I.E.S.

by Susie Leonard Weller, M.A.

Directions: Put a ✓ on your **strengths**;
Circle **areas for growth!**

PQ = PHYSICAL INTELLIGENCE: SELF-CARE I treat my body with the respect it deserves.
I enjoy great health and energy to live as fully as possible.
I maintain a healthy weight and eat nutritious foods.
I stay as active as I can and exercise regularly.
I am free from any chemical addictions—such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, drugs, or sugar—and respectfully care for my body's needs.
I sleep well and take time to rest as needed.
I expand my capacity to enjoy play, pleasure, humor and beauty.
OTHER:
IQ = INTELLECTUAL INTELLIGENCE: MENTAL AGILITY I notice my thoughts and I am open to learning.
I examine my beliefs and release those that no longer serve me.
I maintain realistic expectations for myself and others
I set appropriate boundaries to respond, rather than to react.
I respect diversity and consider other points of view.
I am curious and look for the good in all people and situations.
I focus on the things I can change; I let go of what I can't influence.
OTHER:
EQ = EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: RELATIONAL MASTERY I relate to self and others with compassion and wisdom.
I check-in to notice and name my feelings. I express them wisely.
I accept 100% response-ability for my life—how I feel, think and act.
I pause and take steps for self care—especially when I'm stressed.
I take authentic and concrete action to make amends as needed.
I am comfortable to ask for, and to receive help as needed.
I enjoy enough support in my life and treat others with respect.
OTHER:
SQ = SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: PURPOSE & MEANING I am guided by my deepest source of wisdom.
I regularly spend time in silence and reflection to nourish my spirit.
I enjoy clarity about my life's mission and unique purpose.
I surrender to the mysteries of life that can't be fully explained.
I practice mindfulness to live as best I can in the present moment.
I communicate appreciation and gratitude for all that is.
I think globally and act locally to be of service to humanity.
OTHER:

Resources & References

Chapter 1: Recognize and Accept What Is

The Grief Recovery Handbook: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses including Health, Career, and Faith by John W. James and Russell Friedman. www.griefrecoverymethod.com

Butterfly Story by Elizabet Sahtouris.

Visit www.sahtouris.com

Chapter 2: Expand Your Skills for Coping Skills

7 Pillars4Life. Visit www.thepillarprogram.com

Chapter 3: Strengthen Your Spiritual Resources

Cindy Wigglesworth, author of the *Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) Assessment*. Visit www.deepchange.com

Charter for Compassionate Cities: *Charter Toolbox Kit with Spiritual Assets*. Visit www.charterforcompassion.org

Chapter 4: Integrate a Sweeter Life with P.I.E.S.

The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz. Visit: www.theenergyproject.com

Chapter 5: Live Mindfully to Respond Well

Jon Kabat-Zin has mindfulness resources at www.mindfulnessscds.com

Drug-free Treatments Backed by Science by Mandy Oaklander as part of the *Time Magazine Cover Story: The Anti Antidepressant*, August 7, 2017, page 45.

Eric Trunnell, E. P. (1996). *Mindfulness and People with Stomas.* Wound Ostomy Continence Nursing Journal 23(1): 38-45.

Ivana Buric, genes and stress researcher, quoted in *Time Magazine*, July 24, 2017, *Yoga Can Change Your Genes*.

Chapter 6: Inspire “PR” Skills to Increase Options

Fireproof: Never Leave Your Partner Behind Movie. Visit www.fireproofthemovie.com

Chapter 7: Enjoy Life More; Express More Gratitude

*A Network for Grateful Living (ANG*L)* developed by Brother David Steindl-Rast. Visit www.gratefulness.org

The Inside Story: The Power of Feelings eBook published through the Heart Math Institute. Visit www.heartmath.org

Ival & Lang Secret are contacts for the Friends of Worldwide—USA Ostomates. Visit www.fowusa.org

Chapter 8: Nurture Yourself to Meet Your Needs

Growing Up Again by Jean Illsely Clarke and Connie Dawson

Michael Gerald, Ostomate and author of a PowerPoint on the psychological adjustments for ostomates. Visit: www.powershow.com/.../Psychosocial_Adjustment_to_Ostomy_Surgery_Contact_Michael_at_me.gerald@gmail.com

Visit the *United Ostomy Associations of America* website for fabulous resources at www.uoaa.org. The *Phoenix Magazine* can also be accessed through this website.

Chapter 9: Communicate Clearly with the 4 C’s

Crucial Conversations When the Stakes Are High by Patterson, et al. Visit www.vitalsmarts.com

10 Lessons to Transform Your Marriage by John Gottman, Ph.D. Visit www.gottman.com

Chapter 10: Yes, You Can Transform Adversity

Visit the Viktor Frankl Institute at www.viktorfrankl.org

What If All Goes Right? by Mendhi Audlin. Visit www.whatifup.com

NOTES



Susie Leonard Weller, M.A. is a retired adjunct teacher from the Community Colleges of Spokane, a Certified Life and Spiritual Coach and a Certified Thinking Styles Consultant. She is the author of: *Why Don't You Understand? Improve Family Communication with the 4 Thinking Styles.*

Susie was diagnosed with Stage III Colorectal Cancer in 2006. She received a temporary colostomy, and later a temporary ileostomy in preparation for a bowel re-connective surgery. However, due to her radiated tissues she received a permanent colostomy in 2009.

For the last 8 years, Susie has been a co-facilitator for the Spokane Ostomy Support Group in Washington State. She writes regularly for the *Phoenix Magazine*.

She loves to kayak, paddleboard and travel. Her colostomy has not prevented her from exploring countries ranging from Austria to Australia by foot, bike, car, bus, train, plane, boat, zip lines and even camels.



For more resources,
contact Susie at:
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This booklet is my gift to YOU! May all ostomates, and their loved ones, *thrive* with increased resiliency skills.

If you would like to help pay for the printing, please send your donation through *Pay Pal* to my email address.