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Human Performance for Resiliency Reading List

Overview: The books on this reading list are for intended for Marines and Sailors to increase their physical, mental, social, and spiritual resilience through knowledge and application of human performance concepts.

Note: * denotes ebook or audiobook can be found on [Navy MWR Digital Library](#)

Physical Domain

Books in this domain focus on optimizing physical performance beyond just “PT.” This includes, sleep, nutrition, and comprehensive fitness planning to include recovery and injury prevention.

***Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams** (Scribner, 2017) by Matthew Walker
Professor of neuroscience and psychology at UC Berkeley and Director of its Sleep and Neuroimaging lab, Dr. Matthew Walker explores the growth of scientific discoveries in the last twenty years that has shed light on sleep, one of the most important but least understood aspects of our lives, wellness, and longevity.

Food Rules: An Eater’s Manual (Penguin, 2009) by Michael Pollan
A lecturer at Harvard and UC Berkeley, Michael Pollan brings a simplicity to our daily decisions about food. It is a handbook that lays out a set of straightforward, memorable rules for eating wisely, one per page, accompanied by a concise explanation.

***Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers** (Holt, 3rd Ed, 2004) by Robert Sapolsky
Sapolsky is a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University and a research associate with the Institute of Primate Research, National Museum of Kenya. In this work, he explores the holistic affect of stress on our body, mind, and spirit, offering science-based solutions as well as practical advice. A great view of a holistic approach to human performance.

Peak: The New Science of Athletic Performance That is Revolutionizing Sports (Chelsea Green, 2019) by Marc Bubbs

Dr. Marc Bubbs ND, CISSN, CSCS, is the Performance Nutrition Lead for the Canadian men’s national basketball team, a speaker, and a former strength and conditioning coach. His work presents a sustainable, practical approach to physical and cognitive performance.

The Body Keeps Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma (Penguin, 2015) by Bessel van der Kolk

Dr. van der Kolk captures his lifelong work in the study of trauma and how it literally reshapes both body and brain. Not satisfied with psychiatric approaches to treatment, Dr. van der Kolk explored innovative treatments such as neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga – with striking results. This work examines the effect of treating objective (common among trauma population) medical diagnoses and symptomology with subjective (individual focused) treatments meant to empower the person.



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Mental Domain

Books in this domain focus on developing a flexible and tough mindset in order to adapt to challenges and achieve goals.

***The Talent Code** (Arrow Books, 2010)/**The Little Book of Talent** (Bantam, 2012) by Daniel Coyle

NY Times bestselling author Daniel Coyle draws on cutting-edge neurology and firsthand research to identify three key elements that allow us to develop our gifts and optimize our performance in sports, art, music, math, or just about anything: deep practice, ignition, and master coaching.

***Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World** (Riverhead Books, 2019) by David Epstein

Journalist David Epstein examined the world's most successful athletes, artists, musicians, inventors, forecasters and scientists. He discovered that in most fields—especially those that are complex and unpredictable—generalists, not specialists, are primed to excel.

***Can't Hurt Me: Master your Mind and Defy the Odds** (Lioncrest, 2020) by David Goggins

Navy SEAL veteran and ultra endurance athlete David Goggins endured a difficult childhood – poverty, prejudice, and physical abuse. Through self-discipline, mental toughness, and hard work, he transformed himself and is the only man to complete Navy SEAL training, Army Ranger school, and the Air Force Tactical Air Controller course.

***Stillness is the Key** (Portfolio, 2019)/ ***The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations on Wisdom, Perseverance, and the Art of Living** (Portfolio, 2016) by Ryan Holiday

Ryan Holiday draws on timeless Stoic philosophy to show why slowing down is the secret weapon for those charging ahead. Stoicism has been the mindset of choice for leaders such as General Jim Mattis and Admiral James Stockdale. "The Daily Stoic" is a great resource for anyone wanting to tend to their mental fitness through Stoic principles as part of their daily routine.

The Upside of Stress: Why Stress is Good for You, and How to Get Good at It (Avery, 2016) by Kelly McGonigal

PhD and Stanford Lecturer Kelly McGonigal writes that undergoing stress is not bad for you; it is undergoing stress while believing that stress is bad for you that makes it harmful. In fact, stress has many benefits, from giving us greater focus and energy, to strengthening our personal relationships.

***Thinking Fast and Slow** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011) by Daniel Kahneman

World renowned psychologist and economist (and Nobel Prize winner and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient) Daniel Kahneman explains the two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical.

***Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy** (Knopf, 2017) by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant

Sandberg and Grant write this unique work from the perspective of one's experience (Sandberg) in recovering from the sudden death of her husband, and a psychologist's (Grant) view that concrete steps can be taken to recover from adversity, and that an individual is not born with a fixed amount of resilience. It is a muscle that everyone can build.



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Social Domain

Books in this domain focus on strengthening one's relational IQ in order to enhance personal and professional relationships, connectedness, and cohesion.

***Together: Why Social Connection Holds the Key to Better Health, Higher Performance, and Greater Happiness** (Harper Wave, 2020) by Vivek Murthy (former Surgeon General)

The 19th Surgeon General of the US (serving from 2014-2017), Dr. Murthy writes about the importance of human connection, the hidden impact of loneliness on our health, and the social power of community.

***Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive** (Celadon Books, 2019) by Marc Brackett

Dr. Marc Brackett, founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and a professor in the Child Study Center at Yale University, he has developed a method to improve the lives of children and adults – a blueprint for understanding our emotions and using them wisely so that they help, rather than hinder, our success and well-being.

***Sapiens/Homo Deus/21 Lessons for the 21st Century** (Harper, 2017) by Yuval Harari

Dr. Yuval Noah Harari, a PhD in history from the University of Oxford, lectures at the Department of History, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in world history. This is a two-book series that is a narrative of humanity's creation and evolution that explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be "human." Was on the summer reading list of Bill Gates, Barack Obama, and Mark Zuckerberg.

The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion (Vintage, 2013) by Jonathan Haidt

Dr. Haidt, the Thomas Cooley Professor of Ethical Leaders at NYU's Stern School of Business, shows how moral judgments arise not from reason but from gut feelings. He shows why liberals, conservatives, and libertarians have such different intuitions about right and wrong but also why each is actually right about many of its central concerns.

***The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups** (Bantam, 2018) by Daniel Coyle

Daniel Coyle goes inside some of the world's most successful organizations and studies what makes them tick. He demystifies the culture-building process by identifying three key skills that generate cohesion and cooperation, and explains how diverse groups learn to function with a single mind. In the final analysis, culture is not something you are – it's something you do.

***Rising Strong/Daring Greatly** (Avery, 2015 / Random House, 2017) by Brené Brown

Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston. These are two books she has written, both deal with vulnerability. She dispels the cultural myth that vulnerability is weakness and argues that it is, in truth, our most accurate measure of courage, that the willingness to show up and be seen with no guarantee of outcome—is the only path to more love, belonging, creativity, and joy.



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***The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World** (Flatiron, 2019) by Melinda Gates

Gates is a successful software engineer, businesswoman, and philanthropist. She is the co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Part memoir, part moral appeal on the importance of social change, Gates' presents a revolutionary, but simple, thesis for building social cohesion: when we lift others up, they lift us up too.

The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias (Harper Business, 2018) by Dolly Chugh

Dr. Dolly Chugh, social-psychologist at the NYU Stern School of Business, discusses how to confront difficult issues such as sexism, racism, inequality, and injustice. Nearly everyone believes in equality, diversity, and inclusion, but how do we stand up for those values? Using her research findings in unconscious bias, she offers practical tools to respectfully and effectively talk politics with family, to be a better colleague to people who don't look like you, and to avoid being a well-intentioned barrier to equality.



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Spiritual Domain

Books in this domain focus on reflection of personal and professional values and sense of purpose that affect one's moral and ethical decisions.

Manifesto for a Moral Revolution: Practices to Build a Better World (Henry Hold & Co, 2020) by Jacqueline Novogratz

Jacqueline Novogratz, founder and CEO of Acumen and philanthropist dedicated to changing the way the world tackles poverty, builds a model for impact investment and developing sustainable solutions for the problems of the poor.

The Warrior Ethos (Black Irish Entertainment, 2011) by Steven Pressfield

Steven Pressfield, a Marine veteran and author of Gates of Fire, examines the evolution of the warrior code of honor and "mental toughness." It goes back to the ancient Spartans and Athenians, to Caesar's Romans, Alexander's Macedonians and the Persians of Cyrus the Great.

Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation (Jossey-Bass, 1999) by Parker Palmer

Parker Palmer, writer, teacher, activist, and senior partner of the Center for Courage & Renewal, invites us to listen to the inner teacher and follow its leadings toward a sense of meaning and purpose. Telling stories from his own life and the lives of others who have made a difference, he shares insights gained from darkness and depression as well as fulfillment and joy, illuminating a pathway toward vocation for all who seek the true calling of their lives.

Man's Search for Meaning (Beacon Press, 2006) by Viktor Frankl

Viktor Frankl, survivor of Auschwitz and Dachau, professor of neurology and psychiatry and the University of Vienna Medical School, wrote a classic, seminal book for the ages. Originally published in 1946, and written in nine days, it's a riveting account of his experience in concentration camps and an exploration of the human will to find meaning. At its heart is Frankl's conviction that the primary human drive is not pleasure, but the discovery and pursuit of what the individual finds meaningful.

Religion for Atheists: A Non-believer's guide to the uses of Religion (Vintage, 2013) by Alain de Botton

Alain de Botton, author of seven books that look at the great questions of ordinary life, argues that we can benefit from the wisdom and power of religion, without having to believe in any of it.

God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question--Why We Suffer

(HarperOne, 2009) by Bart Ehrman

Bart Ehrman, a Bible scholar and Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, discusses the question of why there is so much suffering in the world is more than a haunting thought. His inability to reconcile the claims of faith with the facts of real life led him to reject Christianity. He discusses his personal anguish upon discovering the Bible's contradictory explanations for suffering and invites all people of faith—or no faith—to confront their deepest questions about how God engages the world and each of us.



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Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging (Twelve, 2016) by Sebastian Junger

Sebastian Junger, a journalist and war correspondent who directed the film “Restrepo”, combines history, psychology, and anthropology to explore what we can learn from tribal societies about loyalty, belonging, and the eternal human quest for meaning. It explains the irony that-for many veterans as well as civilians-war feels better than peace, adversity can turn out to be a blessing, and disasters are sometimes remembered more fondly than weddings or tropical vacations. He explains why we are stronger when we come together, and how that can be achieved even in today's divided world.

Emasculating Warriors: A Nation at War with its Warriors (Independently published, 2019) by Dwight Horn

Horn, a Navy Chaplain, examines his experience ministering to Marines during the Battle of Fallujah in Iraq. Horn offers a moral/ethical perspective in addressing the effects of war on both the warfighter and the society it fights for. In terms of Spiritual Fitness, it asks leaders to consider the character of the warriors under their care, ensuring they are spiritually ready to fight and if necessary, kill, and for the right reasons.