

Stresses of the Job in Modern Times: Coaching Resilience in Judges, Peer-to-Peer

An Interview with Jan Bouch by David Prince

Court Review editor David Prince sat down remotely with Dr. Jan Bouch, a psychologist with four decades of experience working with resilience and the unique stresses faced by judges. Here is their free-ranging discussion about the unique stresses of the job, how those stresses have changed in modern times, and some strategies for dealing with them.

DP: Good morning, Dr. Bouch.

JB: Good morning. Thanks for having a conversation.

DP: Before we dive into our topic, let's introduce you to our readers.

JB: I hold a doctorate in Psychology with a particular emphasis on organizations and neuropsychology. I work as an executive coach and train others in coaching skills. I have my Professional Certified Coach credential from the International Coaching Federation. Additionally, I have certification in Conversational Intelligence and mBIT (multiple brain integration techniques) coaching.

DP: What experience do you have with judges? I think you would agree that judges are a fairly unique group.

JB: Yes, I am in my fourth decade of working in the judicial branch, and I've been in both administration and education roles, as well as a consultant. The last decade or more has been focused on working with judges teaching highly credible (personally and professionally) judges in building coaching skills to help them support other judges. I've trained judges in several states, and the interest continues.

DP: When I called you, I mentioned that I'm experiencing more and more judges who are talking to me about the increased stresses of the job. What is it that's so difficult about being a judge today?

JB: We could start with how much COVID has changed the direction and the way that judges are doing some of the work of the court. And that, in and of itself, is not just a new modality but also changes the social structure of an already isolating job. Before that, I think, in the years that I've worked in and around the justice system, some of the significant changes I've seen start with the decision to become a judge and the process it takes to get there.

It differs from state to state, but the judges go through a whole life of building experience, skills, knowledge, investment in education, and reputation. So you're building up to that moment that you're either elected or selected or appointed for your judgeship. You have this great, welcoming investiture. You're at a peak at that moment, and then almost immediately, it just goes, shroom, the other way because you become the low person on

the totem pole again. You're back to kind of climbing.

That's one challenge for judges—you don't know what it is to be a judge until you're a judge. You can think about it. People can talk to you about it. You have a vision of what kind of judge you aspire to be. You can think about the system and the structure and the relationships. But until you're there, you don't know.

DP: What are the stresses of the judge job?

JB: The stresses of the job start hitting you from the start and can come as a surprise to many.

Some things that contribute to the stresses of being a judge are the things we're aware of. One is that the job itself can be isolating, and it changes not only your professional relationships but it also changes your social relationships. And that's a fine line—trying to balance my role as a judge and my rights as a citizen. So that's one source of stress.

Another one is just the role you play inside the organization of the courts. You may have been a lawyer at the peak of your career, maybe a partner at a firm used to making decisions at a very high level, and then you enter an environment where that high-level work is not the first assignment you're going to get. You have to go through that climbing process all over again and then learn to navigate a very different kind of organizational environment.

Those stresses have always been there.

But, more recently, we have put judges into problem-solving courts. For all the benefits there are, we must consider what it did to judging because it made professionals like judges move into an area in which they don't feel they have the competencies. They are also in a different and unfamiliar relationship with the other participants. I think it's not a bad thing, but it requires the accomplished professional that is a judge to learn a new and foreign area, and it also changes the nature of how we judge and how we partner.

We've taken the judge from some relationships where the judge probably had considerable autonomous power to an area where the judge must exercise that power collaboratively. When you think about that, it's really in the world of problem-solving courts.

In the operation of courts, we are in an environment where we rarely close the loop on things. Judges close the loop on decisions most of the time, and they are comfortable closing those loops. But in terms of the infrastructure and policy, calendar structure, court assignments, staffing, and relationships with our external partners, much of that is ongoing, an ongoing need that never closes and needs to be managed in a very complex environment. That's not always an easy thing to do for someone that likes to close loops.

DP: You made a reference to becoming a judge and being

required to operate in areas that are unfamiliar to you or for which you may not have had skill training. What did you mean by that in terms of stress on the judge?

JB: It's new learning. Not only do you have to learn how to make judicial decisions, but you also have to think about—maybe know a little bit more about mental health. Or know about how to deal with somebody experiencing PTSD if you're dealing in a veteran's court. Or in a family court, or one specifically focused on domestic violence. It's important for a judge to also understand the context of the experiences that the litigants are having, as well as have a strong judicial and legal background. You're just adding another layer to the decision-making process. These are often areas in which the judge may not have had prior experience, training, or comfort.

DP: Certainly, in my law school, they never taught us much about how to provide mental health analysis in a live setting or strategies for dealing with someone's mental health needs.

JB: Exactly. That's what I was just going to say. When you look at the people who are arrested, a lot of times, they come to the courts with multitudes of problems that aren't going to be easily addressed just because they're in front of a judge. It's overtaxed all of our need to have a wider understanding of the way people live and the context from which they come.

DP: And one of the other topics you mentioned as a source of stress for becoming a judge was isolation. Many of the judges I know are loners by temperament. But why would you say isolation is such a challenge for a judge if so many are disposed to be loners?

JB: Regardless of temperament, we all need social interaction and are affected by isolation. I think some judges appreciate and like that isolation, but I also know that in the four decades I've worked in and around the judicial branch, I've seen judges change. Just by the nature of the problem-solving courts, we have brought in judges who have different interests and perspectives as to how justice is dispensed. And they may have an interest in doing this by partnering with the other court participants in a different way and having a different type of conversation with, say, a drug court litigant than they might have in another type of court.

DP: Let's step back and talk a little more about the psychology of a person needing to share with others but dealing with the isolating nature of the judge-job. The judge can't necessarily ask for advice from other people. The judge can't really use those interactions with other people to help the judge cope with their stresses. Can you talk about those challenges?

JB: For an attorney contemplating becoming a judge, they believe they have a skillset to fulfill the role. From that vantage point, it can feel risky to show self-doubt, uncertainty, and vulnerability. When you move into the role of becoming a judge, your social life changes. And these may have been people you had a very strong relationship with. When you were all peer lawyers, you attended certain events together; maybe your families socialized. You can still do that, but you must do it differently. And then you throw in something on top of that, like COVID and the subsequent system changes

and adaptations tapped our resiliency muscle in ways none saw coming.

Under the extra isolation of COVID, the judicial system also realized the benefits of offering Zoom as a different modality for dispensing justice. Certainly, we've heard from litigants that resolving relatively minor issues has been well served by Zoom. But Zoom fatigue is real. An added layer of stress came from the inability to sit down and have a cup of coffee and have that social connection—we are wired for social connections. Our social health, our emotional health, our mental health, our physical health, and our spiritual health are held together through our social connections.

Even post-COVID, we are in a much more remote Zoom-based world. I think it's a new way of learning to live and work differently and is not always easy. Because, during COVID and in this new way of working, judges don't often see each other because they are managing their own calendars. When they see each other, it might be a business topic and not necessarily something that nurtures the social side.

DP: A lot of what you've talked about are the stresses that are inherent in the challenges of becoming a judge. You've just touched on how the challenges of isolation have been exacerbated by dealing with COVID and the post-COVID world. Is there anything else about our modern times that have changed those long-term challenges to being a judge?

JB: I think there are several factors contributing to the added stresses. One is that there's a politicization of the court system, which is seemingly getting worse, not better. There is massive misinformation that's out there today. And the courts are being put up, not as individual judges, not even as individual court levels, but just as the courts in general. It's painted with that one brush. And if you happen to be a judge, you're swooped into the judge image. Dealing with that single broad-brush stroke of politicized misinformation would, to me, be a real stressor where your identity is vested in being a judge. Your personal character is wrapped up in the things that you think you bring to the judicial branch. You bring those values because you care passionately about the work that the courts do. And then the courts, your courts, get painted with a broad brush of misinformation, and you don't get to personally stand out in that broad-brush perception.

I think another two contributing factors are social media. The first is how quickly things happen today. In the courts, we're in a business where we value decision making and the decision-making process. We want to tap our intellectual capital and be able to use that in a meaningful way. However, the discussions about and criticisms of the courts move so swiftly that little opportunity exists to respond.

The other factor illustrated by social media is the number of people acting these days without filters—boundary management. We see a rise in the amount of reactivity on social media that can be cruel and unkind.

All of these things contribute to a changed kind of respect and reverence for the judiciary. When I was growing up—I am in my late 60s—when someone visited our home, if they were a doctor or they were a lawyer, or they were a dentist, or whatever role they had in the community, we were taught that you have respect for that role, you had respect for that position. When we

answered the door, we greeted people with, “Hello, Dr. So-and-So.” I had that model growing up. That is not the model of communicating respect today. There are no filters. We react quickly without thinking through intent and impact.

I often think of the level of reverence that I have for the courts as an institution. Now, judges arrive in a system that I don’t think share that same level of reverence for the roles that judges hold in our democratic society. As a result, it’s hard for a judge who has invested their identity in the job to maintain a sense of self-esteem and passion fueled in a way that makes the work meaningful. That’s the tough call I see right now, and I think that is what is sapping resilience.

DP: I think you have your finger on something that is developing and not adequately understood right now. In the conversations I have with judges, constantly, they are touching on what you just discussed, the idea that people are drawn to this profession because it speaks to their core sense of identity. People make great sacrifices to become a judge because they are dedicated to a perception of the importance of the work. And when I talk with judges, more and more, I have the impression from them that they no longer feel that those core values that led them to make these sacrifices are valued by the society in which we live. And, when I talk to them, it puts them in the form of existential crisis as they’re trying to deal with it. Have I overstated that?

JB: No, I don’t think you have at all. I think that’s exactly right.

How do you keep that passion? You come into this system that you regard as vital and important, and you’ve made a huge investment of yourself in getting to this place, and then you experience the devaluing of the system, and you feel like, “Wow. It’s not valued. It’s not even a place that holds the esteem I saw.”

DP: We’ve talked a lot about the challenges that judges are facing. But I’ve heard you talk before and know your optimism. When you talk about solutions, you use the word “resilience.” What is “resilience”?

JB: First, we are all hardwired for resilience. That’s a fact. Everybody has it, and how we use it is what we’re talking about. Resilience is when we hit a speed bump; does it collapse us, or do we hit it, roll over it, and bounce back up? And it affects almost every aspect of our life. Our resilience is about our self-care. Our resilience is about our ability to problem solve and our ability to tap into and access critical thinking skills. It hits every area of our life.

Resiliency theory was identified by Dr. Norman Garmezy, who was a psychotherapist who started looking at people who were under a great deal of stress. He asked how come some people did well with it, and others did not. Answering that question is the essence of resilience. Again, we’re all hardwired for it. It’s a matter of how we use it and how we learn to build and maintain high resiliency.

I’m sure every one of us can say, “Well, I just met somebody who constantly hits the ground but is back up the next day and other people who are shut down by the simplest things.” Part of what we do in working with resiliency is to build those skills so that we can take a longer path where the opportunity presents itself and, as a result, we can hit that bump and roll over it. We give ourselves the opportunity to hit pause and do a little reflec-

tion and gather some information before we go right to a response. What we know about resiliency is that we must care for ourselves first, and then we can help our organizations and communities. Individuals who exhibit consistently good resilience are those who are self-aware, manage their emotions and situations, and continuously exercise their resiliency muscle to be able to problem-solve well.

I think that individuals who exhibit consistent resiliency have clarity about their personal values. Inside court organizations, they work hard to attain alignment with their personal values and organizational values. Some of the work I do with organizations is to help them actuate organizational values into guiding principles. Value misalignment can drive an individual into survival mode and go covert inside the organization. Once a judge has entered survival mode, it is often hard to pull them back into a thriving mode. A resilient individual will take a long view of the situation and often exhibit strong resiliency by remaining flexible, being positive, and allowing and even inviting other perspectives.

DP: You said earlier that your work in recent years has focused on building coaching skills with judges so they, in turn, can go out and help other judges. I know you’ve helped set up peer-to-peer coaching programs for judges in a number of states. Tell me a little bit more about teaching judges to be coaches.

JB: Coaching is a different way to have a conversation with someone. One way to differentiate coaching from other modalities is to talk about the three C’s—consulting, counseling, and coaching.

A consultant is often brought in for their expertise, and they have a specific role or assignment to play inside an organization. Counselors generally work 80% on trying to heal an individual and very little on forward movement, maybe 15 to 20 percent.

Where coaching differentiates between those other roles is that it’s about 80% looking forward and very little looking backward. It starts from a place where an individual can tap into their own resources, and sometimes they just need some help doing that. Coaches are partners in the journey who help colleagues tap their own creativity and resources. Coaches listen actively and evoke awareness. Where there is a level of trust and safety, coaching can work with a colleague to go deeper in the conversation and get at what the words mean and what is behind the words. Coaches help colleagues get clarity on what the issue is before moving to solutions. Rarely what an individual initially says is the real issue.

DP: Is teaching coaching skills to judges any different than teaching them to others?

JB: A big awareness through learning coaching skills is that judges realize how quick they are to problem-solve. And that’s an appropriate role as a judge. That’s what they are trained to do. And many of the cases that go through the court have a kind of routinization so they can be quickly decided.

But when you’re in a coaching role, you are actively listening and listening to connect. When you are listening to connect, you are asking the judges to shift to a very different model, and it challenges the desire to want to solve the problem quickly rather than to help an individual judge solve the issues or challenges themselves. There certainly are some appropriate times where we

can tell them a simple answer, but most of the time, that's not the issue that a judge brings to a coaching conversation. Most of the time, there are multiple tentacles of the issue, and maybe it's relationships or funding or hierarchies or whatever it is, but it's more complex. And that's the time when a coach gives you the space and the confidentiality to be able to have a conversation that pushes risk and vulnerability.

DP: I've seen many organizations and some judiciaries that have created mentoring programs. Considering your three Cs, it sounds like most of those older model programs are designed more for the consultant trying to give expertise and the wisdom of experience to the other person. In contrast, coaching is akin to what we do in problem-solving courts. You're helping the person try to solve their own problems, and by doing that, helping increase their ability to cope with issues in the future, manage the stress, and become a better, more productive judge. Is that it?

JB: There are some parallels. An important distinguisher between coaching and motivational interviewing is that, no matter what, when you're sitting in your role as a judge, you always have a hammer. So, there's a power differential there. You might have a conversation that to you, is trying to feel more like empowering the person and your support for them, but if they don't achieve the things that they say they're going to do, you can do something. That's a big difference because, in coaching, you have to be in the other person's shoes as a peer, sharing power with, and not over, another individual. And that's the big one.

DP: We've been talking about coaching. You mentioned a concept earlier, and I want to follow up on it. Value alignment? What is that?

JB: Here's the current research. And if you will indulge me, let me share what we know from the research so far. We know more about what goes on inside the brain than we have in the last three or four decades. We can see what things light up in the brain through CAT scans and MRIs, and fMRIs. Because of that, there's been more research looking at the connections between the brain and how it communicates with the "heart" and the "gut." The "gut" is primal. It's who we are. Most of our automatic reactions are triggered by the "gut."

For example, if we had early life experiences that just are hardwired into our brain and are emotional for us when triggered, it's often the "gut" that, appropriate or not, acts to protect us because of the experience. Without working on some of the integration and the coherence of all three intelligences, we're not fully implementing our capacity to make much better decisions.

When I'm talking about values in the "heart," that's where our emotions reside. Our "heart" is the center of our emotions.

Frequently, when I'm coaching individuals, what I help them unlock and become aware of is their value misalignment. And that then opens a whole other discovery path for that individual to say, "All right. I'm here. The organization is over there. What can I do to get them in better balance, better alignment, if I even want to do that?" But you've got to get clarity around where all these triggers reside in our body. That is the act of self-awareness.

Same thing in the research regarding neural connections. We recently learned that even at my age we can rewire our brain. We can make new neural connections so that when we once said you can't teach an old dog new tricks, I think that's wrong. Research

does support our ability to teach an old dog how to do something differently. However, it doesn't just happen. It generally requires support, so we just don't fall back into our habits. And that's most of what we do. Ninety-eight percent of brain functions are automatic. And so, unless we are intentional and focused and committed and supported in that commitment, it's hard to make the changes we say we aspire to make. That's a big piece of it.

Judges, in particular, value cognition. We value the brain and our smarts, and our intelligence. That's what makes judges who we are in the role of judges. And it's new for judges to help them step out of this part of their brain and ask it to step aside and check in with other intelligences that can help in the decision-making process. And coaches can help you work with integration techniques.

DP: Earlier, you used another phrase "locus of control." What's that about?

JB: Yes. That's my favorite. I think that it's what's within my control. It is about how I live my life, and it's looking at what are the relationships I have, toxic relationships that people continually want to play in, and they're not bringing any joy or happiness or well-being to an individual. Other kinds of things you have some control over like who's in your circles, our clarity on our inner circle as they provide us rejuvenation.

There's an interesting way of thinking about concentric circles and just say in that small, tiny circles are our really intimate group, who's in that and what do I allow you to have from me? And then it gets bigger and bigger and you start to look at a picture of where do I have control, where do I need control, and what really matters to me?

If I can't change the organization, having a coaching conversation with someone about all the things that are wrong with the organization does nothing. For a moment, a person might feel good talking about it, but nothing's changed. What you want to do in the coaching conversation is ask, "All right. I can't change the organization. They didn't hire me to do that. Our work together is about you. What part of the situation do you have some control over? What options do you have for how you respond?" And that's what you're really helping them to do because if we take on the weight of the world, it's not possible to activate our resiliency muscle.

Our resilience is tapped every day. Individuals who really work well with resiliency know that they need to care for themselves first before being able to care for my organization and before being able to care for my community. And you can see the difference in the people who, not self-centeredly but because of their own need to and their own desire to, use their resiliency skills to hit the speedbump, whatever it is, but also to have a pause button so that they are able to make the right decision for how they need to respond for themselves. An example of "locus of control" is this: "I don't know why the Boston Marathon bombing happened. I could ask that question forever but will probably have no answer for it that will make any sense to me or bring me peace." It's about saying, "What's important to me, and what do I need to do to safeguard those things that keep me healthy and able to bounce back because we all hit adversity?"

DP: Getting back to this idea of resilience, can one describe it to deal with adversity?

JB: Exactly. Yeah, that's exactly it.

But it's not the big stuff. It's not the big stuff. That's not the stressor. The stressor is in a moment for people, but I'm talking about I'm running five minutes late and now I can't find my car keys. And these are the kinds of things that can take us way up, way fast.

One of the most stunning pieces of information I learned in the last couple of years is about cortisol activated in our bodies. It stays in the body for an average of 26 hours. Think about that. If every time we have a small bump, but we don't have the skill to pull it back, we are walking around with cortisol activated in our body. And that's not good for our health or our own well-being because cortisol is very taxing. Cortisol is a hard recovery, and it doesn't serve us in the long run if stress isn't managed.

DP: Are you saying that, for example, I'm on the bench and I realize I made a mistake in the way I allocated parenting time in this case? I see that as a failing on my part, or I feel bad about it, are you telling me I've got a chemical damaging my body for 26 hours after I make that error?

JB: You could, but maybe not. Let's talk about the other side of that. Maybe you looked at that error, and you kind of sat back, and you drew on your resiliency skills to regulate the cortisol. You looked at it, you hit the pause button, and you were able to work with the alternatives. You might have even called your coach and said, "Listen, I found that I'd made an error. And because I feel like I don't want to process what my options are alone, could we have a conversation?" that's a resilient individual. Cortisol is potentially damaging to our bodies if we remain in constant stress and don't employ strategies for calming the alarm.

The resilient person who falls apart easily—because, as I said, resilience is hardwired, we all have it in us—could view the situation you describe as a failure. What they do if they're activating the cortisol is ramping themselves up rather than hitting the pause button and thinking through options. Cortisol is necessary for our body's overall health. Too much can lead to long-term health problems. We can learn to manage our alarm systems through activities such as examination of our self-talk, our breathing, yoga, meditation, etc.

DP: So when I make my next mistake tomorrow, I just keep that cortisol corrosion in my system day after day after day.

JB: You do if you activate it and don't employ strategies to dial it down. People who are quick to anger activate cortisol very rapidly. I worked with a judge back in the '80s, and he would get so frustrated on the bench that he would just walk off. He finally, ultimately, left the role of a judge because he didn't have the kinds of skills that were necessary for him to take care of himself and be able to reset to zero each and every time that he needed to be on the bench.

DP: I have to admit, the examples you gave are very familiar to me in the way I've responded to my own mistakes. Well, it's that lawyer's fault, it's that party's fault, it's the appellate court's fault, that probably ties into that idea of locus of control as well.

JB: It is. And it's also back to—these sound like woo-woo words, and they're not—in introducing them to the judiciary, I think there's no better place to have it introduced, and that's talking about practices that we put in place like "mindfulness" or even

learning to be "present." As simple as those sound, we're not very good at doing these. If our email goes off over here, or our phone rings, our thoughts leave us every, what, every 10 to 12 seconds, and we have to pull ourselves back into the present. We have to intentionally work to activate calm and resilience.

DP: You use a word that I hear a lot in these discussions from the world of psychology, "present." And you gave us some examples of what makes it difficult to be "present." But what does it mean to be "present"?

JB: Well, that's building practices. Mindfulness is one of them. But another one is, for example, as a coach, if I'm rushed, and I'm going into an appointment with a colleague or client, I just barely get there at the time that we're supposed to be meeting, that to me is—first of all, it would be very disrespectful of me to do that because I would not have put myself in a place where I am fully present. Simple practices to bring centering and presence can be deep breathing, just sitting in silence, and composing myself so that I appreciate the opportunity to work with this individual. Even something as simple as breathing for a minute or two helps us to get centered and helps to put us back into a place of balanced coherence. And when we're in that place, we are able to be "present," where we are listening fully, connecting, building trust, to allow someone to take risks and explore vulnerability. People are not going to take chances or risk being vulnerable unless we have shown them that I am there for them, I am showing up for them, and that this is their time and their sacred space.

We must work to be "present." Otherwise, we're going to be, "What am I thinking about?" Thoughts are just thoughts, and part of what coaching helps you with is to take your thoughts, pull them out of your brain, look at them and say, "Why am I thinking those thoughts?" Just because our brain hears it doesn't mean it's true.

DP: What does that mean?

JB: Coaching allows us to look at our thoughts, pull them out, examine them, turn the beach ball to view a different color. Words are just words. Words have power. It is important to understand what a particular word means to another person. If somebody could come to me and I say, "How's your day today?" And they say, "Oh, it's been really frustrating," I can assume I know what "frustration" means to me and how I experience it. But if I apply my assumption to their use of the word, we've already got a problem. I would stop right there and say, "Say more about that." I do this to make sure I get the context of what that "frustration" was about for that individual. We tend to climb up the ladder of assumptions because it's familiar. And it's biochemical. It happens at a split second when we move through our assumptions. And a big part of coaching, and I think a really strong piece of it, is helping to kind of unpack, go back down the ladder of assumptions and examine, what was our thinking? How are we making meaning? And how did we get to this conclusion? And that's the trick.

DP: What is the "ladder of assumptions"?

JB: It's that climbing up when someone says something, a key trigger word. Say, well, "the judicial system," let's put that out there. Now, if I've had good experiences with the judicial system, I hold one assumption. If I didn't, I might climb right up to what

I assume has happened previously and act based on that assumption. We are operating with assumptions all the time because it's all biochemical. What we want to do is be aware and test out our assumptions. What assumptions did you hold about this conversation we were going to have today? How has that been met or not? Those are important questions. When we're climbing the ladder of assumptions, this is where we're making meaning of what's being said by others. We really want to test the accuracy of our assumptions,

DP: I'm not sure I follow.

JB: Assumptions accept that something is true without necessarily any proof. For example, we see someone parked in a handicapped space, and they leave their car without a visible disability. Think about that example. What assumptions might be made about that individual.

What's important in the judicial branch, I think, around working with assumptions is the more familiar we are with the lingo, the language, and the experiences we've had with the court, the more quickly we are to assume we know the problem and the solution.

And what coaching stresses is that it may be the same problem, but it is not the same person, not the same time, not the same context. And by listening deeply to that individual, you open the possibilities for that individual to have access to their awareness about the situation and how to select the best option, for them.

DP: You said that you have helped set up coaching programs in several states. But assume I'm someone reading this article and I think much of this discussion resonates with me as challenges I am facing. If my judiciary does not have a coaching program, what can I do? What should I do to try and move to a healthier life?

JB: I think the first thing would be to pick something small. We can't make big, sweeping changes. The first place to start is what I can do, which is a small shift for me. For me, for example, one of the things that I intentionally put into practice is I stop and have gratitude moments, three things I'm grateful for. I do this every day because it sculpts my brain to think more positively. Positive optimism and flexibility are two protective factors that build resiliency muscle. You could commit to doing something like that. Journaling is another option, just write it down. Write down the three things I'm grateful for today because then you have it written, and you can go back and look at the things that bring you joy and fill you up, fill your spirit up.

Being present, I think, just sometimes what it means to be present. That is being aware of where your mind goes when you are in conversations with others. Be intentional about that; that's another way to build those resilience skills. Many of our thoughts are about the past or thinking about the future. That is not being in the present moment.

And then something as simple as just breathing. By the way, I'll put this out here. There's a book called *The Breath* by James Nestor, and it's an intriguing book. You think, who could write a book about breathing? Most of us don't know how to breathe well and correctly. And I think even a minute of just deep, intentional breathing has such a power over our ability to regulate our emotions.

Those would be three things. And one more small thing is to just get up and walk around the block. It sounds silly, but that whole thing, "stop and smell the roses." That's what we need to get back to. The other day, I did that. My husband had a rose from our garden and brought it in, and I smelled it, and I just took in the scent and the beauty of the flower for 30 seconds. I wasn't focused on anything else but being in that moment. I think the more aware we become of those moments, the better able we are in building our capacity to manage.

DP: Your description of "smell the roses" is a great place to bring our discussion to a close. Thank you for your time and your insights.

If I wanted to learn more about resilience, where would I go, online or in a book?

JB: There's much information online, and there are multitudes of books about resilience. And I would encourage you to just look at some on Amazon or in the library and just read up about it, but resilience is—again, I just want to end by saying it's hardwired in all of us. You can even see it in the temperament of babies. Some babies show remarkable resilience. Other babies fuss over everything. And what we know is that even though it's hardwired in us, we can change it, teach it, and practice skills to be better at recovering from the inevitable bumps that we're going to hit almost daily. And it's the small stuff that usually triggers us. It's not the big stuff. One book I would recommend is *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* by Kristin Neff.



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