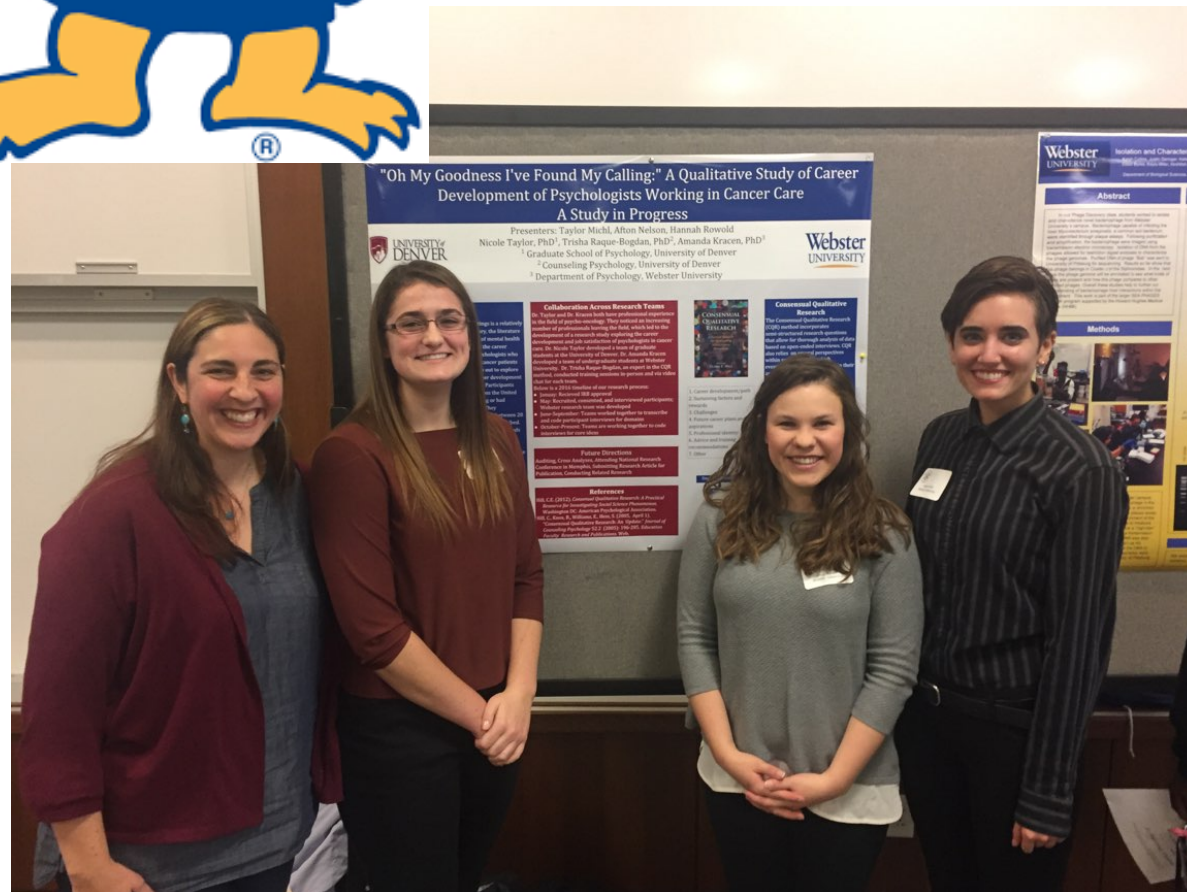


Choose Your Response

Amanda Kracen, PhD

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Proud alum of IMSA class of 1994





Amanda Kracen D



Mental health \neq happiness



Mental health

“State of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”

(WHO, 2014, revised to remove gendered language)

Life involves suffering

GEN Z FEELING STRESSED BY ISSUES IN THE NATIONAL NEWS

STRESS IN AMERICA™
GENERATION Z

OCTOBER 2018

Mass shootings



Rise in suicide rates



Climate change and global warming



Separation and deportation of immigrant and migrant families



Widespread sexual harassment and assault reports



GEN Zs VS ADULTS OVERALL

- GEN Zs
- ADULTS OVERALL

MENTAL HEALTH OF GEN Z

LEAST LIKELY TO SAY THEIR MENTAL HEALTH IS EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD

STRESS IN AMERICA™
GENERATION Z

OCTOBER 2018

Gen Z

45%

Millennials

56%

Gen Xers

51%

Boomers

70%

Older Adults

74%

% REPORTING EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

© American Psychological Association

Mental health challenges in teens

- Anxiety (32% of teens)
- Depression (13% of teens)
- Attention deficit-hyperactivity (9% of teens)
- Disordered eating (3% of teens)
- Others, of course

(NIMH, 2017)

Common...Treatable!

AMERICANS STRESSED ABOUT THE PRESENT BUT HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE

STRESS IN AMERICA™
GENERATION Z

OCTOBER 2018


Considering the nation's future causes significant stress

69%



The current political climate is a significant source of stress

62%



This is the lowest point in the nation's history they can remember

56%



Disagree our country is on the path to being stronger than ever

61%



Feel hopeful about their future

75%





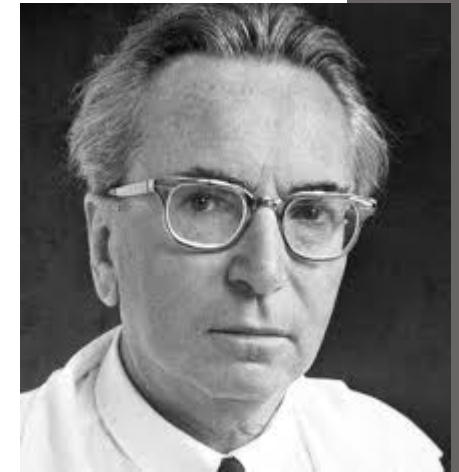
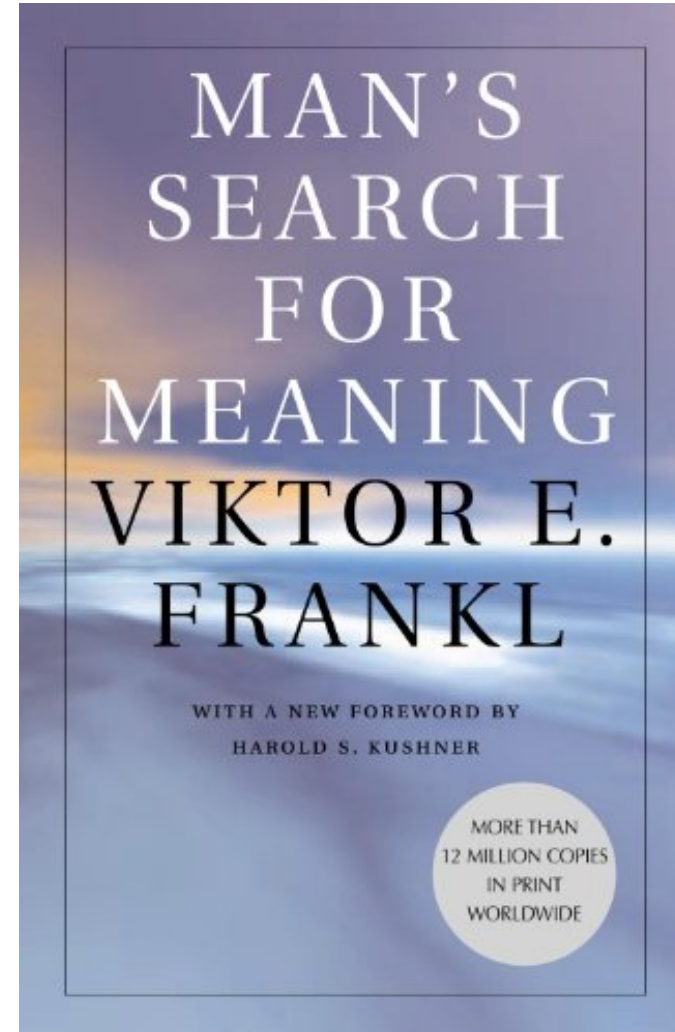
Choose your response



Between stimulus and response,
there is a space. In that space is
our power to choose our response.

In our response lies our
growth and our freedom.

VIKTOR FRANKL



Choose your response

1. Expectations
2. Resilience
3. Meaning

1. Expectations



Clarify expectations

- If you are focused on only expecting happiness, you will be disappointed.
- Be willing to experience happiness, connection, joy, love,
AND stress, sadness, loneliness, fear, etc.

Willingness

- To notice and acknowledge ALL emotions and experiences, not just the good ones


- Holding a cactus



Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

“The goal of ACT is to **create** a rich and meaningful life, while **accepting** the pain that inevitably goes with it.”

(Harris, 2006)



Hold the
feather and
the cactus!

Mental health

“State of well-being in which every individual **realizes** their own potential, can **cope** with the normal stresses of life, can **work** productively and fruitfully, and is able to **make a contribution** to their community.”

(WHO, 2014, revised to remove gendered language)

- These require you to be active!
- You deserve support.

2. Resilience



Basics that help

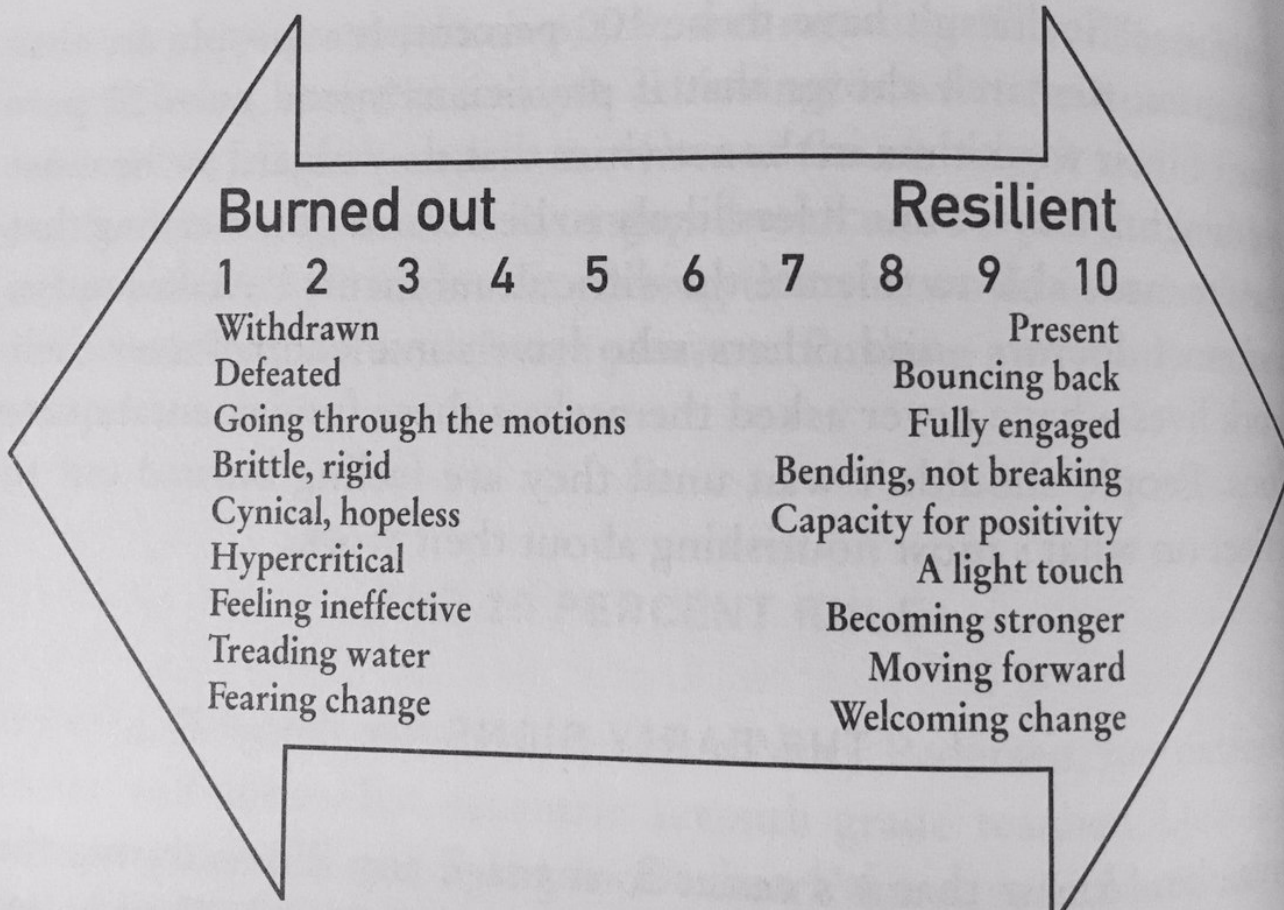
- **HALT**
 - Hungry
 - Angry
 - Lonely
 - Tired



Also need physical and psychological safety

Resilience

Ronald Epstein, M.D.



*Awakening to
notice life*

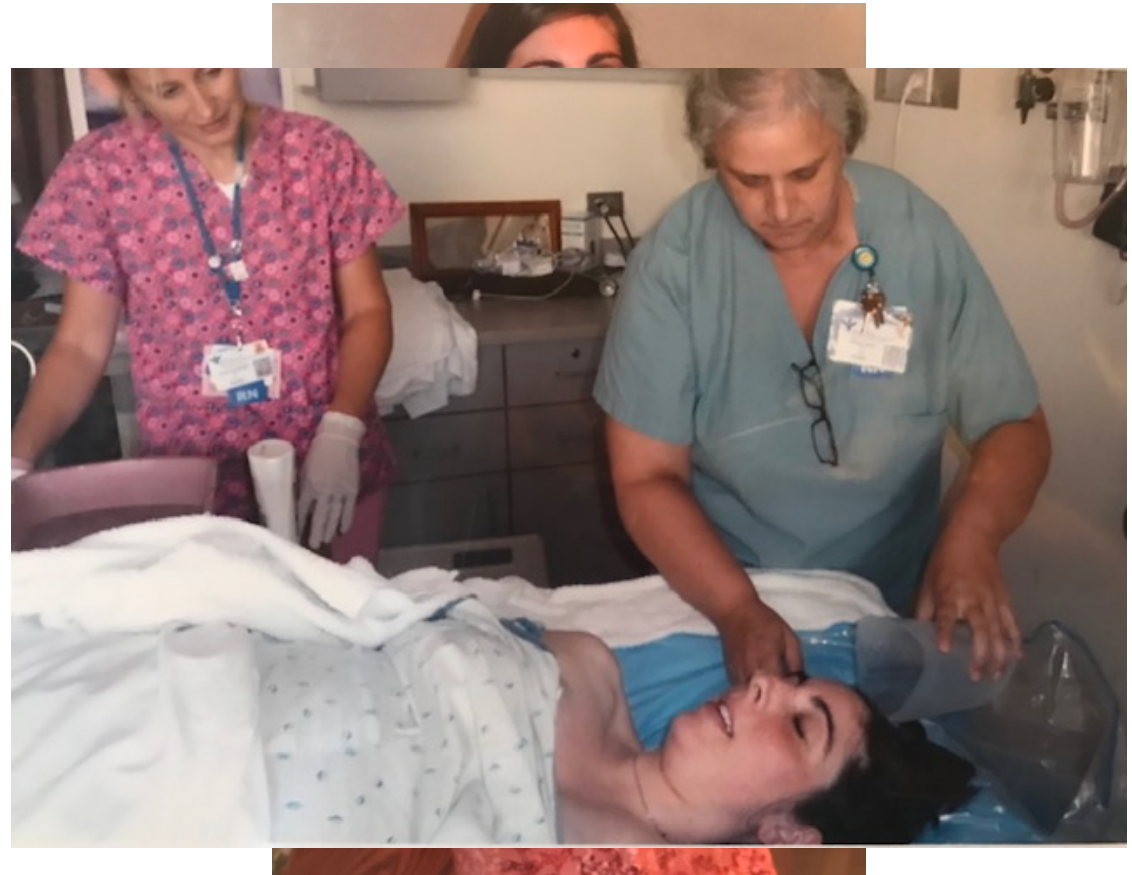
(Epstein, 2017)

Flexibility



Learning resilience & coping

- What did I do at 16?
- What have I learned to do?



Evidence-based coping strategies

- Be active
- Sleep
- Deep breath
- Be self-compassionate



Choose your response

- What do you do already?
- What is 1 strategy you could learn/add/do more?

3. Meaning



“an erosion of the soul”

(Maslach, 2003)

Personal mission statement

- *What do I really want out of life?*
- *What do I want my life to stand for?*
- *What am I uniquely put on earth to achieve?*
- *What do I believe my purpose or mission is in life?*

(Friesen, 2016)

Regrets of the dying (Ware, 2012)

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

Examples

MALALA YOUSAFZAI, ACTIVIST/NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

“I want to serve the people. And I want every girl, every child to be educated.”

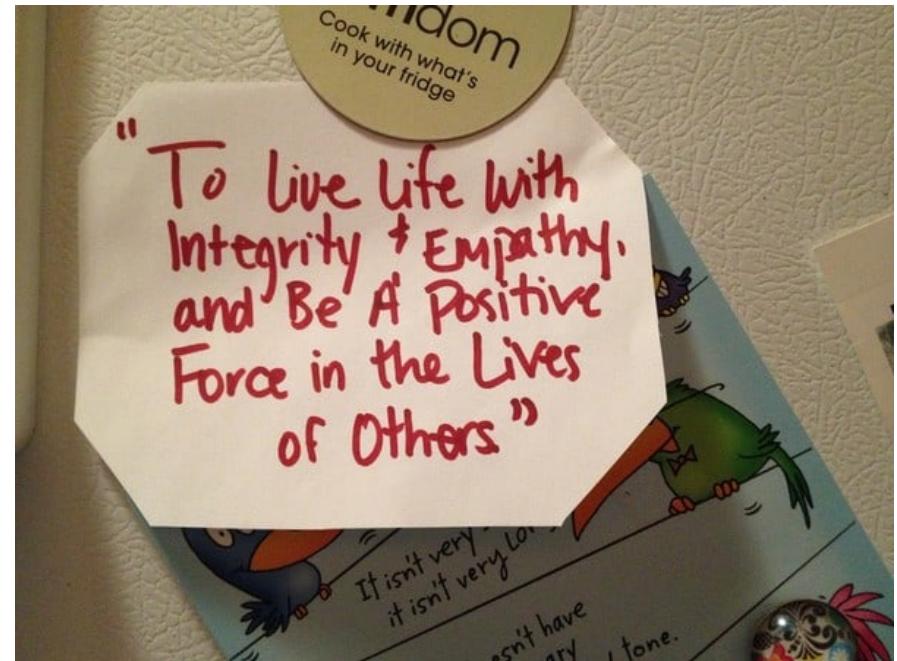


MY MISSION IN LIFE
IS NOT MERELY TO
SURVIVE, BUT TO THRIVE;
AND TO DO SO WITH
SOME PASSION,
SOME COMPASSION,
SOME HUMOR,
AND SOME STYLE.

Maya Angelou

Your homework – Today!

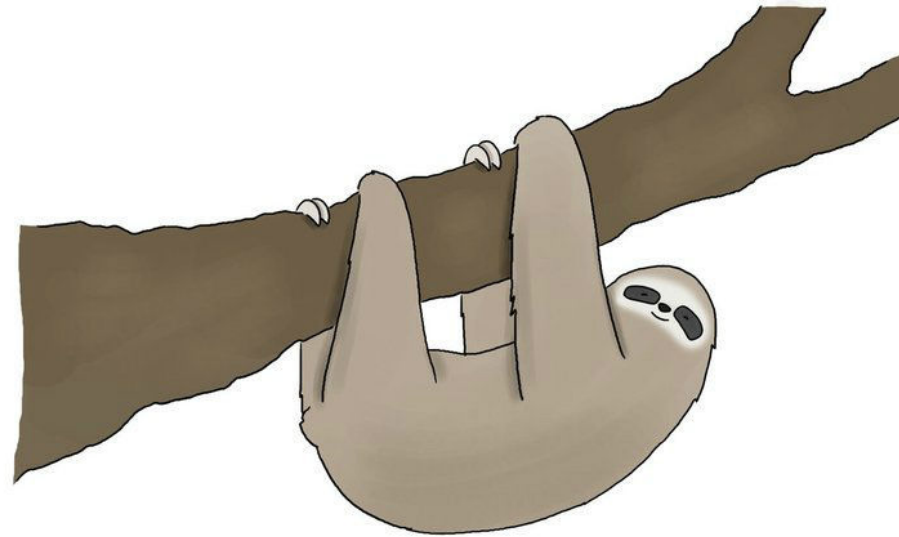
- Write a mission statement
- 1-2 sentences
- Short and sweet



Mental health \neq happiness



The easy life?



Choose Your Response

1. Expect challenges
2. Build resilience
3. Clarify your meaning

amandakracen27@webster.edu

