

Building Personal Resilience™



Reference Guide

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Building Personal Resilience – Reference Guide



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Introduction

HeartMath Mission: To activate the heart of humanity for living more heart-based lives.

Our Shared Values

HeartMath believes that every heart holds wisdom and intelligence that can help guide each of us through adversities. By accessing our heart's intelligence, creative ways can be found to bring balance and rhythm to these challenges.

Every life has its challenge. Every heart has an answer.

The Heart's Transformational Potentials

Many people are sensing there's more to them than the person who shows up each day. They feel a prompting to unlock their higher potentials that frees up their spirit to help them rise above stress, daily challenges and pressures. Learning and practicing the HeartMath skillset is a means to unlocking our higher potentials by helping you and your clients better self-regulate emotions, experience less stress and have more ease, compassion, confidence and fulfillment. In your own life and together as you work with your clients, you'll explore activating your heart's intelligence and applying that to your daily life.

What is Different?

Special emphasis is placed on that which is unique to HeartMath: *a system of science-based, coherence-building skills designed to use on-the-go to help people bring their physical, mental and emotional systems into balanced alignment and connect with their heart's intuitive guidance.* This process helps individuals increase their self-awareness and build and sustain resilience by enhancing their ability to more intelligently self-regulate their energy, which directly affects performance and unfolds the steps to fulfillment through becoming more of "who we truly are."

You have an important role in helping others gain an understanding of the concepts while at the same time helping them develop an effective plan for a sustainable practice, which is the necessary foundation for effective and fundamental change to occur.

With consistent use of the personal coherence techniques and technology, if available, individuals are supported to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Your Role in Working with Others

Consider for a moment those people in your life who have supported you, whether personally or professionally. What did you learn from them? What were the qualities you admired most in them? How were they helpful? The people who have supported you in this way, whether formally or informally, are often called mentors.

A mentor is one who has more experience or expertise in a given area and shares it with someone with less experience or knowledge in that area. In this regard, you share your expertise, experience and knowledge of the HeartMath System. A mentor also helps others achieve their goals through a process of care, inquiry and empowering support.

Our work with others is not about fixing people or their issues. Rather, it is getting to know them and their situations through dialog and supporting them in finding their own solutions. It's teaching them techniques and practices that encourage and challenge them to attain a higher degree of emotional self-regulation. We encourage and allow them to make their own discoveries by listening to and following their heart intelligence. In doing so, they build confidence in their abilities to handle situations with greater resilience, emotional stability and composure.

Part of your role is instructional and involves helping individuals identify their sources of stress and energy drain. Another part is helping them gain greater self-awareness of how they are behaving and reacting and teaching them the resilience concepts and techniques. Your role also involves helping them integrate the techniques and practices into everyday life. One of the biggest challenges most people have, especially at first, is remembering to practice the techniques on-the-go. Your support in holding them accountable to practicing and integrating the techniques is very important. The techniques will work, but only if they are used.

Your Practice

Consider your own experience as you seek ideas for how you can encourage those you work with to practice the techniques. What was it that made sense to you about the practices and techniques? How were you able to remember to practice? What made it “click?” What is a personal story about practicing a technique that deepened your understanding of it? When do you apply the techniques and practices in your own life? How are they helpful? When is it more challenging to practice them where you notice a difference?

The Building Personal Resilience Reference Guide

This Reference Guide is a resource for you to help you deepen your own understanding of the techniques and practices so you can more effectively teach and model them while also obtaining the benefits of practicing them in your daily life.

Suggestions are offered throughout the Reference Guide to help you get the most out of using the *Building Personal Resilience Program* as you work with others, while also drawing from your own experience of practicing the HeartMath System.

You will see questions throughout the Reference Guide to engage you in this learning

process. The questions are also meant to model using questions as an effective means for helping individuals gain an experiential understanding of integrating the techniques and practices into daily life. Take a moment and consider each question, just as you would ask of those with whom you work. You will also see words in italics or in bold type. Pay attention to them because they are important communication points.

The Building Personal Resilience Transformational Process

Building Personal Resilience begins with understanding HeartMath's resilience model and the basics of the HeartMath System. It includes the HeartMath skills that can empower you and your clients to connect more deeply with the power and intelligence of the heart even as the world is experiencing a growing stress epidemic. Adding the qualities and energetics of the heart helps create the important baseline shift to change behaviors and achieve desired outcomes.

Essential Fundamentals

The following five points are essential fundamentals of the HeartMath System. Keep them in mind as you work with the HeartMath System personally and with clients. Spend time to make sure you understand the importance of each and revisit them from time to time.

HeartMath techniques are much more than the breathing! Each technique is a coherence-building technique and should not be considered a breathing-only technique or a relaxation technique, which basically just lowers heart rate. A lower heart rate is not practical in our busy daily lives and can actually impede performance. Having a lower heart rate doesn't mean we are patient and compassionate with others or confident in a conversation. We may still be worried, anxious, impatient or have judgments and not self-regulating our emotional responses. Simply having a lower heart rate also does not mean that we are connecting with a deeper part of ourselves and accessing our heart intelligence.

Coherence, on the other hand, can be a calm state, but it is also a state where we are active, engaged, alert and focused. In a heart-coherent state we can have a low or high heart rate. Practicing the coherence-techniques brings about important physiological changes and enables us to increase our ability to more intelligently self-regulate our emotions and behaviors, thus leading to more fulfillment, less stress and becoming more of who we really are.

Breathing is an important step that helps kick-start the process of increasing one's coherence and can reduce the intensity of an emotional reaction, ***but breathing is only the first step.***

One of the goals of using the HeartMath skillset is gaining increased internal awareness. This involves expanding awareness of how our response to external events

affects our physiology, relationships, decisions and performance. It's important to place strong emphasis on the internal experience gained through expanding awareness and then shifting into coherence, rather than relying only on what the coherence technology indicates.

The key to the techniques' effectiveness is their simplicity. Don't complicate what is intentionally simple. When people are stressed, they are cortically inhibited and will only be able to comprehend and remember key steps they have practiced. Keep it simple.

Clear and concise gets the message to the brain. Introducing more concepts, practices or teaching more techniques is often *not* the best approach because it becomes a lot of information, rather than grounding one's ability to practice the techniques and begin to facilitate positive change. Keep it simple so the message to the brain is concise, targeted and effective.

The HeartMath System is much more than the coherence technology. Some people know HeartMath because of the coherence technology, without knowing that HeartMath is a full skillset of effective self-empowerment techniques and practices. Genuinely understanding and applying the techniques along with the benefits gained from using the technology makes it possible for people to achieve both their short-term and long-term goals.

Building Personal Resilience Handouts

Individual handouts for each of the key topics of the *Building Personal Resilience Program* are available to give to your clients to help engage them in understanding and incorporating the HeartMath resilience concepts and techniques into their everyday lives. Suggest that they make notes throughout or highlight important points they especially want to remember. Some of the handouts are exercises to help them connect the dots between the emotions and attitudes they experience daily and how they respond to situations, how emotions and attitudes affect their resilience, performance and how they feel overall. You also can use the handouts as a refresher for yourself and as an on-going practice to deepen your own experience and connection with your heart. Often something you've read or heard will take on new meaning as your own practice and understanding evolves.

Be flexible when using the handouts. You can give the appropriate handout to your client that supports what you are discussing, exercises you would like your client to do or that describe the technique you are introducing to them. *(Keep in mind this license includes handouts and does not include PowerPoint slides or workshop-style delivery.)*

Be inquisitive by asking questions aimed at helping them reflect on their personal experience in relation to resilience, self-regulation of their emotions, practicing the techniques and how that affects how they show up in daily life.

Key Concepts, Techniques, Practices and Exercises

The following are suggested discussion points and tips for each topic that have been found to be helpful as you guide your client through the transformational process.

The Meaning of Resilience

Use the Resilience handout to introduce HeartMath's broader definition and meaning of resilience. Keep in mind the overarching theme of resilience by helping your clients relate their day-to-day experiences to resilience, coherence, their inner battery, energy drains and gains and how these effect how they respond, make decisions and their attitudes and performance. The inner battery is a very effective metaphor that usually makes it easy for them to relate their energy level to how they show up each day. It also puts their particular situations into the context of why it's so important to intelligently manage their energy by self-regulating their emotions.

You might begin by asking your client what the term resilience means to them. Most often people will say that it refers to bouncing back. Explain that the understanding of resilience has evolved and that the HeartMath definition reflects an expanded understanding of resilience.

HeartMath defines resilience as **the capacity to prepare for, recover from and adapt in the face of stress, challenge or adversity.**

People commonly talk about resilience as being flexible and bouncing back. In addition to *adapting, bouncing back or recovering from*, there are two other important concepts in the HeartMath definition:

The first is *capacity*. Capacity is how much of something you have. In this case capacity is how much energy you have stored in your inner battery. The more energy you have, the greater your resilience capacity. That means you're better able to handle situations (*being adaptable*) in the moment.

The second important concept is *preparing for*. The more resilient you are, the better prepared you are to handle situations as they arise and the less you create situations from which you have to bounce back.

Introduce the inner battery metaphor. Most people readily relate to this and even talk about feeling drained or charged. The goal is to build your energy reserves and keep more energy in your inner battery, which is another way of saying, *building and sustaining your resilience*. The following are sample questions you can use to engage your client in exploring their resilience.

- What does resilience mean to you?