

How To Bounce Back

Emotional Evolution and the Science of Feeling Good

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Generation Bounce Back Media

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For my son, Taye

Against all predictions, we are not being run by algorithms, artificial intelligence, or robot overlords. We run *them*.

Imagine that our planet is at peace. Wars have faded into history as a misguided pattern of violence. Humans strive to cultivate positive feelings of mutual respect and connection across the globe and into space.

In this future world, we have learned how to regulate our nervous systems. We've found ways to release feelings of shame, fear, and aggression more easily. We have become experts at crafting beliefs that make us feel authentically powerful. We've mastered the ability to manifest our goals and realize the dreams we have for ourselves and our families.

We've evolved.

Now zoom back to today.

I believe we are standing at the threshold of a new kind of evolution — one not led by biological changes, but by emotional ones. We must feel good to move forward. Why? Because when we feel good we are less likely to harm others, or ourselves. We are less likely to carry fears, biases and negative feelings from the past. Feeling good empowers us to do good. It's pretty simple. This is the foundation for our next evolutionary leap.

Why is this possible now when it hasn't been in generations past?

The answer is: Science, mostly. We are the first generation in human history to understand the mechanics of our own suffering. Today, science is mapping how our biology, brain wiring, genetics, childhood experiences, and environments shape the way we feel, react, connect, and cope. We now know that trauma leaves traces in the body, that stress patterns can be inherited, and that our nervous system can get stuck in survival mode. These are things that, today, leave us feeling out of control of our moods and experiences.

But we also know this: the brain *can* change. Neural pathways can be rewired. We can reshape how we emotionally respond to adversity. Doing so also helps us grow in personal power.

Some past experiences, especially in childhood, can feel like we have been left permanently damaged. But today we have hope for healing and, more importantly, prevention against long-term harm from trauma. With this information, we can greatly improve the odds for this, and future, generations' well-being.

For centuries, our systems have focused on treating dysfunction after it appears. We've seen how addiction, anxiety, violence, and burnout are tolerated as normal in some communities. We have seen dysfunction among our political, moral, religious and corporate leaders become the norm and even celebrated as "strength."

As a nonprofit leader teaching resilience skills, and an attorney, I've been part of programs, courts, and correctional systems that are filled with young people who never had a

chance, and adults who will spend their lives never having lived up to their potential.

But we now have the opportunity to change those doom and gloom projections.

We have the tools to interrupt cycles of trauma before they become part of a person's identity. We can teach children how to manage their nervous systems. We can help adults understand how their past shaped them and how to avoid being trapped by emotions they don't understand or find overwhelming. We have tools that can begin to heal generations who had to learn to survive in bodies that never felt safe.

We will see that our destiny isn't to bow to the intelligence of AI or technology. We are meant to dominate this planet through our unique human ability to feel, to seek out answers to moral questions, to create what has not been created, and to care for each other. Technology may out-think us, but it will never out-feel us. It is emotions that rule this world, not algorithms. This is the true value of humanity that we have yet to grasp and exploit.

Many people today (especially our young people) do not feel safe, yet they are labeled and punished for reactions, behaviors, and defenses that make sense in the context of our evolutionary development. We are a planet of people who are acting in ways *we have evolved to react* when we live in physically and emotionally difficult environments.

We can evolve our emotional responses so that we feel more powerful in the face of fear. We can prevent trauma, build resilience, and adapt intelligently. When we do so, we will individually and collectively gain ownership of our emotional state. We will learn that we can feel good without putting others down, without needing mind or body numbing substances, and without having to accept oppressive paradigms that put our personality and identities in a box. Science has given us the information and the tools; it's time we started using them.

In this book, you will learn you can bounce back and feel good again (or maybe, for the first time ever).



You may have noticed the spark in our logo. It represents the energy to bounce back. It's the spark in all of us that keeps us from giving up. It's the energy that brings joy and gets us moving, even when times are tough. Throughout our journey in this book, you will realize, this spark is in you.