

Endorsements on Behalf of *Resilient Warriors*

“America’s heroes have been at war for more than a decade, selflessly defending our nation. They are the brightest and bravest of their generation. General Bob Dees knows the dangers they have faced, the sacrifices they have made and the challenges confronting their loved ones. If you know a veteran of a long ordeal, *Resilient Warriors* is a ‘must read’ for them—and for you.”

~Lt. Col. Oliver L. North, USMC, Retired

Host of *War Stories* on FOX News and author of the “American Heroes” book series

“A must read book for every leader and care-giver intent on providing help and hope to those recovering from combat trauma or any painful, life-changing event. With extensive research and compassionate observations, this resource offers valuable insights to veterans, past and present, who continue to navigate their way back home to normalcy. The spiritual principles of resilience presented in this book will help the reader manage the most difficult traumatic event in their life with increased confidence and the assurance of restoration. I highly recommend this book to every military chaplain in the critical pastoral care they daily provide to our veterans and their families.”

~Douglas L. Carver, Chaplain Major General, United States Army, Retired

“When life is not the way it is supposed to be...When you hit the wall and feel like you can’t go on... Every life is filled with moments of crisis, loss & trauma. *Resilient Warriors* takes its readers to a safe place and profound insights, offering hope on the healing journey –a valuable resource for each of us, providing insightful coaching around the critical psychological and spiritual quality of resilience. General Bob Dees is a Resilient Warrior and Leader himself, well qualified to inspire and mentor us around this essential characteristic for individuals, leaders, and organizations. I look forward to *Resilient Leaders* and *Resilient Organizations*, equally relevant parts of this significant Resilience Trilogy.

~Dr. Tim Clinton, Ed.D., President, American Assn of Christian Counselors

Author of *The Bible for Hope* and *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling*

“To really live you must almost die. To those who fight for it, life has a meaning the protected will never know.” A very short but powerful phrase I first saw in a Special Forces team house in Vietnam, but it quickly became a reality in my life and put into words a truth about life...a meaning to life that would guide, encourage, and provide ‘bounce’ for me as I battled to come ‘Home’ from the war.

“War teaches many harsh lessons about life...about death...but, unfortunately, for too many of us those lessons remain locked away in our hearts and minds...buried deep beneath fear, guilt, anger, or pain and cannot provide the meaning, the wisdom, the resiliency, the ‘bounce’ needed to truly ‘Come home’ from the war and battles of life.

“General Dees is a man of war, but more importantly a man who has the gift of putting into words the unspoken thoughts that are hidden in the hearts of our nation’s warriors. His words of wisdom and spiritual truth will provide for all warriors the ability to ‘bounce back’ from the battles and challenges each of us face and derive a meaning to life that others will never know.”

~Gary Beikirch, Medal of Honor, Vietnam

“As a family financial expert, mother of seven and military spouse, I’ve learned how to bounce back when life throws a curve ball. *Resilient Warriors* helps families, warriors and leaders have the all important bounce. This series comprehensively looks at a tried-in-the-trenches means of achieving resilience. I appreciate General Bob Dees’ compassionate Biblical wisdom on this topic, and the pastoral approach he brings to areas in our lives in need of timely attention. This practical resource also incorporates the applicable disciplines of physiology and psychology that will help any warrior, leader, organization or family live an above average life.”

~Ellie Kay, America’s Family Financial Expert[®], ABC News Financial expert

Author of 14 books including *Heroes at Home: Hope and Help for American Military Families*

Resilient Warriors

The Resilience Trilogy

Major General Bob Dees

US Army, Retired



www.ResilienceTrilogy.com



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This book contains Appendix 3, *Resilient Warrior Battle Book*, which maps to Chapters 5 - 10 of *Resilient Warriors*. The *Resilient Warriors Advanced Study Guide* is a separate publication, ISBN 978-0-9838919-5-6, which comprehensively addresses all chapters of *Resilient Warriors* (1-10), providing additional content in an expanded study guide format.

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Resilient Warriors

The Resilience Trilogy

Major General Bob Dees

US Army, Retired



www.ResilienceTrilogy.com

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Foreword

Governor Mike Huckabee

Bob Dees is a “Christian General,” just as leaders like Robert E. Lee, George A. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and so many others who have selflessly served in the cloth of our nation while acknowledging their strong faith. Having provided his talents and perspective several times for the FOX show, *Huckabee*, Bob has also been part of adding color and deep background commentary as a part of two of my trips to the Middle East where he has notable expertise from having served there. He continues to be a trusted adviser to me on military issues in my role as a commentator and author. Of recent, Bob has risen to national stature because of his pioneering work to help troops, veterans, and their families with the “hidden wounds of war” and the lasting effects of combat trauma.

While Bob, himself, would make no claims to greatness, the fact is he has led U.S. military forces around the globe, and led them well, in the good times and in the tough times. He has much to offer to individual warriors (that’s all of us!), leaders (that’s most of us!), and organizations that seek to cultivate resilience as insurance for the coming storms of life. As is consistent with Bob’s approach to leadership, he believes that “reality is our friend.” This first book in his *Resilience Trilogy*, *Resilient Warriors*, is no exception: he speaks clearly and candidly about the relevance of individual spirituality and faith in achieving comprehensive fitness and resilience for the unavoidable and the inevitable, the very real “body slams” of life.

I cannot think of a more relevant topic in today’s world than “How to Bounce Back.” General Dees combines the pervasive effects of national and global issues such as the economy, national security, energy, healthcare, and erosion of fundamental values with the ever present personal issues such as employment, health, relationships, and ultimate purpose and meaning, to develop an engaging and powerful spiritual roadmap for surviving and thriving in the Before, During, and After phases of the storms of life. I know I will personally benefit from the inspiring stories and the practical precepts found in *Resilient Warriors*. It’s a goldmine of wisdom for each of us who seek to bounce our way through the small and large hiccups of life.

I know from my own life experience that “bouncing back” is essential. For instance, I lost my first political race in 1992, but bounced back in 1993 in a special election for Lieutenant Governor that led to my being Governor for almost eleven years and running for President. I

didn't win the Presidency, but the effort opened doors in media that would never have happened without the path. Successes are simply different turns on the highway often road blocked by our disappointments. General Dees explains how getting knocked down is not getting knocked out.

I am confident that the remaining two books in Bob's *Resilience Trilogy*, *Resilient Leaders* and *Resilient Organizations*, will be equally compelling and significant. I can't wait!

Mike Huckabee

Former Governor of Arkansas, 2008 Presidential Candidate
Host of "HUCKABEE" on the FOX News Channel
Radio Host of the nationwide syndicated "Huckabee Report"
New York Times Best-Selling Author

This Book Is Dedicated to Resilient Warriors

- Those great veterans of times past who have preserved our freedoms and in their post-war years fought for a better future for all of us
- Those brave young military warriors of today who continue to go into harm's way on our behalf, many of whom "walk with a limp" with heads held high
- Those first responder warriors who stand daily watch over our citizens, our institutions, our future generations
- Those captains of industry, entrepreneurs, explorers, inventors, scientists, educators, civic leaders, and more who fight for a better tomorrow

And very importantly:

- Those family and friends of these warriors, who in themselves are warriors of the first order—
- Fighting through grief when their warriors get wounded, when their warriors pay the ultimate sacrifice
- Moving forward in faith when strength and courage fail

May these warriors continue to bounce back.

May they be resilient.

Where would we be without them?

Introduction

How High Do You Bounce?

This relevant question is frequently asked across all marketplaces of professional endeavor as well as the inner sanctums of our personal lives. In moments of introspection, uncertainty, or crisis have you asked yourself “How high do I bounce?” Or, looking into an uncertain future, anticipating the hard and concrete realities of overwhelming life situations, would you question, “How high *will* I bounce?”

During days of a crippling economy, persistent terror threats, terrifying natural disasters, wars and rumors of wars, it is natural to ask such questions. I certainly have asked them.

Perhaps the arena where the need for “bounce” is most notable is the military. Our nation’s warriors well understand the challenges of bouncing back after repeated deployments, physical or mental wounds or betrayal on the home front. These warriors go in harm’s way on our behalf. They are the “exoderm,” the outer skin of our country, often wounded, cut, bleeding, and dying on our behalf.

As role models for warriors in every other marketplace and life endeavor, our nation’s military men and women are inspiring and instructive as they meet the challenges of bouncing back. The journey is not easy. Military institutions (including supporting civilian contract agencies) are wrestling mightily with tragically high suicide, posttraumatic stress, and mental and behavioral health issues, as well as what some would term “an unraveling of military families.” All the Military Services are devoting significant resources and leadership focus towards programs and protocols that mitigate these alarming trends. They are making modest progress, but the challenges remain daunting.

For all the Services, “bouncing back” has surfaced as a timely and desirable characteristic for those facing the challenges of protracted and globally pervasive conflict. *Resilient Warriors* complements these efforts to help military personnel, leaders, and organizations bounce back. This work will prove equally relevant to non-military folks, who also face warfare in their respective marketplaces on a daily basis.

We use the term *resilience* to describe bouncing back. Resilience is needed for anyone in any environment where conflicts and uncertainty pervade. *Resilient Warriors* describes the

enduring principles of resilience and makes them available to “warriors” in every endeavor of life.

This work is part of *The Resilience Trilogy*. The trilogy consists of three books written to leverage the principles of resilience on behalf of individual warriors, leaders, and entire organizations.

The Resilience Trilogy

- *Resilient Warriors* How High Do You Bounce?
- *Resilient Leaders* How High Do You Help Others Bounce?
- *Resilient Organizations* How High Does Your Organization Bounce?

As I was falling twelve feet out of a British Lorry onto my back in Army Ranger School, many thoughts crossed my mind: “This is going to hurt! Will I break anything? Will I be able to bounce back?” Many of these same questions reemerged in parachute landing falls (PLFs in “Airborne” vernacular). They came again as I held my wife’s hand when the Doctor informed us of our infant daughter’s death. They were present when my helicopter in Macedonia was plummeting to the earth without power, and when the South Korean National Assembly asked for my removal because of my late night evacuation of a South Korean village in the impact radius of a suspected terrorist plot. The questions hounded me anew when I was unable to control events leading to the death of one of my troopers. They invaded once more during rare but painful incidents of disappointment and betrayal from over forty years of leadership in the military, business, and ministry. You, no doubt, get the point.

Most certainly you also have had plenty of opportunities to bounce. In addition to death and taxes, a veritable certainty of life is that we all get body slammed, kicked in the gut, blindsided, or simply overwhelmed with the crush of life’s unrelenting demands.

Whether you are:

- A soldier on his third deployment to the Middle East (about the average) wondering whether the next Improvised Explosive Device (IED) has your name on it, or
- A businessman tottering on the edge of bankruptcy in a depressed economy, or
- A single mom wondering whether you will default on your home mortgage during the housing crisis, or

- A parent who is struggling to raise your kids among mounting teenage peer pressures, or
- A young man whose wife is suffering from cancer, or
- A single dad struggling with a debilitating disease like diabetes, or
- A military family fearful that “the doorbell might ring” and you will soon hear the words, “We regret to inform you that your loved one...”

For the vast majority of us, trial and tribulation are realities. Jesus reminded his disciples, “In the world you will have tribulation...” (John 16:33, NKJV) The question is not *if*, but *when*. Trauma is a reality. It is part of the human condition. We are all at war.

The reality is that as warriors we fight, we get wounded, and we bounce back to fight again—that is what warriors do. Resilience is a fundamental skill for warriors, a fundamental skill for each man, woman, and child on this planet.

The reality is that as warriors we fight, we get wounded, and we bounce back to fight again—that is what warriors do.

Let me become more precise. I am talking about the nature and quality of bouncing back. Resilience is the ability for individuals, leaders, and organizations to take a hard hit and continue to pursue their mission, sort of like a National Football League (NFL) lineman who gets body slammed, takes a short breather on the sidelines, and then gets right back in the game. Resilience represents the ability to become better, not bitter; to bend but not break; to return to full function and potential after an internal or external shock; in short, to bounce back.

The term *resilience* is used across a variety of domains. The *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary* provides the following: *Resilience*: n.; "1: the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress 2: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change." (Used by permission. From *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary* ©2011 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, www.Merriam-Webster.com).

Along similar lines, the Navy defines resilience as the “bounce factor” in their Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) efforts. The Army likewise uses the concept of bounce, such as a bouncing ball, in their resiliency training efforts associated with their Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) programs. We likewise use this metaphor of “bounce back” to describe

resilience. Specifically, we contrast the bounce demonstrated by a tennis ball with the catastrophic impact and breakage which occurs when an egg splats on the ground. The egg metaphor is reminiscent of Humpty Dumpty who “...sat on a wall and had a great fall / and all the king’s horses, and all the king’s men / couldn’t put Humpty together again.” No doubt you, like me, would prefer the tennis ball experience.

Gratefully, we have strong resilience role models that inform and inspire us. Consider Joni Erickson Tada, “Rocky,” numerous Prisoners of War, Twin Towers survivors, Congresswoman Gabrielle “Gabby” Giffords, the Warrior-King David among Biblical examples, or others who have beaten the odds, people who should have stayed flat on their face on the hard concrete of life but who, amazingly, miraculously, bounced back. Throughout *Resilient Warriors* we will draw inspiration and example from a number of resilient warriors such as these.

The question, “How high will I bounce?” is relevant to us all. In other words, “How resilient will I be?” when the next heavy load forces me to my knees or lightning suddenly strikes my world? As with the frequent assertion made about leaders being both born and made, resilient people are also born (their genetic disposition) and made (their life experiences, education, and training). Certainly, God has dished out varying degrees of innate resilience to each of us. It is useful to be aware of our natural strengths and weaknesses regarding resilience. Even more relevant to each of us, however, is *how* to enhance our bounce factor in preparation for the next inevitable body slam of life. How do we proactively get “upstream” to develop resilience that allows us to resist, recover, and restore from future trauma?

Our journey together will explore the fine art of bouncing back. After covering the reality of life struggle and the nature of trauma, we will transition to positive ways to invest in resilience before, during, and after tragedy and trauma, trial and tribulation, occur. We will discuss the concepts of Posttraumatic Growth, and introduce a Resilience Life Cycle©, specifically discussing “Building Bounce” (before), “Weathering the Storm” (during), and “Bouncing Back” (after). Salting each chapter with stories and examples of resilience, we will be inspired by many “Profiles in Resilience,” reminiscent of President John F. Kennedy’s *Profiles in Courage*. We want to enhance your own personal resilience so we have included a final appendix called *Resilient Warrior Battle Book™* for your personal use.

Throughout 2011 I had the privilege of informing and encouraging people from many diverse marketplaces with the theme, “Being a Resilient Warrior.” I have seen business leaders and homemakers, pastors and chaplains, mental health professionals and lay counselors, educators and students, athletes and coaches, military leaders and troops, military families, and veterans choose to invest in resilience to combat the inevitable traumas of life.

“How high will I bounce?” has proven to be a timely and important question in this rough and tumble world of ours. Perhaps a slight twist on the theme is even more important: “How do I bounce *high*?” or “How do I bounce *even higher* than before?” In *Resilient Warriors* we seek answers, principles, and techniques that will prepare us for the “cleverly disguised opportunities” that surely await us. We will learn how to “bounce high without getting stuck” and “bounce even higher” and help others do the same.

Resilience possesses components which are both highly tangible (such as physical and mental) and less tangible (such as emotional, relational, and spiritual). While recognizing the importance of all dimensions of resilience, the spiritual arena is perhaps the one least understood and accepted in a culturally complex environment. Although the term *spiritual* represents a larger domain than just personal religious faith, spiritual is largely synonymous with faith, particularly the Christian faith within the demographics of the U.S. Armed Forces. For example, David R. Segal and Mady Wechsler Segal in “America’s Military Population” indicate that 68% of the U.S. service members state some form of Christian faith preference on their dog tags. Therefore we forthrightly integrate the “faith factor” into overall considerations of resilience.

Should we not now get everything in the fight, including faith, on behalf of our personal resilience? We will most certainly need it. Should we not now get everything in the fight, including faith, on behalf of helping our military men and women and their families bounce back? Daunting and tragic statistics amply illustrate the need for resilience. Should we not all get everything in the fight, including faith, on behalf of the families, teams, and organizations we lead? They need every ounce of hope, courage, optimism, and resilience we can give them.

Consider a passage from the Bible’s Resilience Chapter, 2 Corinthians 4:7-9 (underlining added for emphasis):

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

These simple yet profound words define resilience well. Each of us are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down often and in many ways. Yet, through faith and a relationship with Christ we are not destroyed and we are not broken beyond repair. Through Christ we become resilient. Through Christ we can “overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

Daunting and tragic statistics amply illustrate the need for resilience.

Resilient Warriors comprehensively looks at the diverse means of achieving resilience, to include leveraging the full breadth and depth of Biblical wisdom on this topic, placing a pastoral approach alongside best practices of other applicable disciplines of physiology, psychology, and applicable arenas of medicine and science.

We begin.