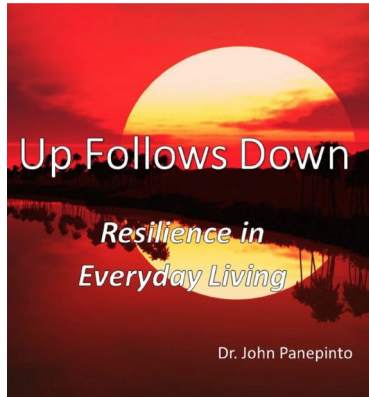




Up Follows Down

Resilience in Everyday Living

Dr. John C. Panepinto



Up Follows Down: Resilience in Everyday Living provides a framework to develop resilience in the common experiences we have each day. In addition, Up Follows Down offers a new way to consider resilience, one that includes the capacity for continuous growth and development. With up-to-date information and practical strategies, this book will help readers to develop the fundamental building blocks of the character and qualities of resilient individuals. Up Follows Down also offers pathways of development as resilient individuals move firmly forward with purpose and direction.

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John Panepinto, PsyD

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The information provided in this book is intended for general consumer understanding and education on various developmental issues. Utilizing the advice in this book is voluntary and at the sole risk of the reader.

The Extraordinary in Ordinary Life

"It is extraordinary how extraordinary the ordinary person is."

George F. Will

Anna, a 53 year-old single mother, walks to work each day, takes a local bus 45 minutes to a community college in quest of a degree and a better life. Beyond all this effort and foremost in her life she raises her teenage son with deep devotion. 18 year-old Bella waits tables on the weekend, and carries an "A" average in high school. During the week, while her mother works challenging hours in the service industry, Bella cares for her brothers and sisters after school, making dinner and helping them with their homework. She has been accepted to several colleges and will be the first in her family to reach this educational height. In her presence she exudes warmth and confidence. You would never know that she lived her entire life in poverty, caring for her siblings after school in a trailer with holes in the floor. 19 year-old Carlton loses his mentor of four years as she passes away suddenly. She was his secure base all through high school as he had tragically lost his parents many years ago. He is an engineering student in college and his welcoming, humble demeanor never belies the devastating times he has endured. Rayshawn, a college upper classman, battled cancer and found a unique way to reach out to others. Despite his challenge he thought of others, trading an opportunity of a lifetime, to show gratitude to those who supported him. Dean, a 51 year-old father and husband, goes back to school to reinvent himself. He works three jobs and studies while everyone is asleep so as not to diminish the roles he values and puts first.

These are just the surface details floating above the depths of complex and extraordinary lives. Anna and Bella are not celebrities but need to be celebrated for their inspiring model of living with resilience. We will visit Rayshawn's story later for some of you may have heard of this amazing young man. Carlton and Dean are people you may pass on the street or stand behind in the grocery line. Why are they extraordinary? If we look deeper into their stories we realize that many under the same circumstances would have wilted, given up, or chosen a far different path. What these individuals have in common is the quality of resilience combined with a vision that they are moving toward.

These individuals do not just bounce back. They stand up and move firmly forward toward something higher and better—a vision formed in their own minds, on their own terms. It is the *Up* that follows the *Down*. While some may call these individuals "ordinary," the truth is by owning their lives so completely and fully, they live in an extraordinary manner. In a time where people are famous just for being famous

rather than for a gift, talent, or service they share, these individuals represent models for which we can all aspire. We learn more about their stories in the pages to come. But first, let's begin our journey into resiliency...

Resilience

“The future depends on what you do today.”

Gandhi

In the literature on resilience, two important definitions arise. The American Psychological Association (APA) describes resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress— such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means ‘bouncing back’ from difficult experiences.” Masten and colleagues (2009) offer a similar definition in the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, stating that “resilience is the positive adaptation in the context of significant challenges, variously referring for, processes of, or outcomes of successful life-course development during or following exposure to potentially life-altering experiences.”

What is common to these conceptualizations of resilience is the context, the broad sense of time and space. We need a significant timeframe to be able to get a sense of resilience. Yet, the APA offers that resilience is not an extraordinary quality, and that it can be learned and developed by anyone. What is missing in these conceptualizations are the building blocks that manifest in the present. In other words, adaptation occurs through repetition—consistency over time. This is the essence of development and, at a micro level, is life altering as well. You build a house a brick at a time; you win a Super Bowl, one play at a time; you play an intricate musical piece one note at a time. The quality comes in the moment and the transition from moment-to-moment. Form follows function, thus resilience requires a form, a process that allows the function of resilience to be developed one occurrence at a time in order to adapt in the give and take process between person and environment.

This is the frame for our look into resilience. Can we develop resilience in the moment-to-moment happenings in our life? And what is the psychological structure that interprets, creates meaning from experience, and responds to the demand of the environment? When we understand this, we can build new, more adaptive psychological structures. We can build resilience.

Two Processes

With simplicity in mind I want to introduce how everyday experience is *simplified*. The developmental process I am describing owes to the work of Robert G. Kegan who described how we as humans differentiate in order to integrate. In other words, we evolve to handle the challenges of life, which then makes us better able to handle them.

So life offers more challenges and more complexity, and we then meet these and become more complex human beings. This process of complexity/simplicity continues and describes the nature of open systems. Open systems, ones that are interactive with the environment and the input of outside processes, evolve to critical point where the system either increases in complexity to meet the demand or breaks down and doesn't bounce back.

Simple does not mean easy or less able. Simplicity is what is required to meet greater and greater demands for the complexity and capacity of the previous structure is enfolded in the new structure. Simplicity is the building block of autonomy, the ability to be more complex without using the same amount of energy or resources. We learn to walk but do not forget to crawl, learn to run, but still have the capacity to walk. Over and over the structure evolves to accommodate the requirements of complexity.

On one end of the spectrum resistance to growth looks over-controlling and rigid, with each day structured to the point of predictability. Nothing new, no exploration or risk-taking; it's the "same old same old." To use Kegan's term, this process of staying the same is "self-preservation." In other words, the ego or who you call "I" resists change. And what is staying the same? The very lens of experience and how we know and create meaning from this experience—the ego or self. In this state of self-preservation the energy to change beliefs and attitudes is deemed too much of a risk, too much of a demand. This energy is used to resist growth, and we have the beauty of rationalizations, selective attention, and opinions to keep everything the same, to validate our perceptions. It *seems* far safer to stay the same than to risk the effort of change. But is it really safer considering the cost?

In everyday terms, we get to choose how we meet the moment and at some point in our lives growth becomes optional. In his article "On Leaving Flatland and Honoring Maslow" author John Rowan points out the tendency to view the human experience from the same qualitative plane. Yet, in developmental terms, this is not truly the case. Rowan stated:

"Humanistic psychology is famous for many things, and one of the major ones is Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs. This says that there are qualitatively different levels of consciousness, which we go through in our development. We move up through them in order, until we come to a choice point. At this point we have to take a conscious decision to proceed, because society no longer pushes us onward. If we do so proceed, by our own intentions, we move into the realm of self-actualization."

Again, at some point in in our development, the growth process becomes a choice and driven by our intentions. A blessing and challenge to our growth process is the way we are wired for safety. Survival is primal and our basic needs are first and

foremost. Safety is a prime motivator and we are excellent at sniffing out danger whether it is real or imagined. The challenge of everyday life is that, for the most part, our basic needs are met and we are not in mortal danger. The current structure of our brains has been so for thousands of years and evolved at a time when survival and basic needs dominated activity. Hunters and gatherers had very different motivations than those living in the information and technological age of the twenty-first century. So, moving up the hierarchy of needs (see *Table 1*) requires us to let go, to risk as needed, and to realize that on the other side of the fear of change, is something worthy of our efforts.

Table 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Need	Defined
Self- Actualizing Needs	Self-fulfillment and to reach one's fullest potential
Aesthetic Needs	Beauty, symmetry and order
Cognitive Needs	Exploration, learning, understanding
Esteem Needs	Achievement, competence, recognition, approval
Connection and Love Needs	Relationships, affiliation, belongingness
Safety Needs	Emotional and physical safety
Survival Needs	Food, shelter, air, water

Self-fulfillment and reaching one's potential sits atop the hierarchy, yet the needs below must be met first. Once a need is met, the unmet need then motivates. There are no guarantees that this process is a smooth one, thus the need for resiliency plays a part in the movement towards self-fulfillment and reaching one's full potential.

Things Go Our Way—or Not

“Almost everything you do will seem insignificant, but is important that you do it.”
Gandhi

Building on the introduction to this concept of resiliency, I suggest that the difference between things going our way and not going our way represents two different but interconnected processes of experience, and fundamentally two different psychological experiences. Therefore, they require two different skillsets within one mindset. When things are going our way, we are in a groove and we are in tune with the environment. Our intelligence, ability, and skills are in harmony with the demands of the environment. We *resonate* as an open system with the outer world. This resonance can be experienced at work, play or within a relationship. While this may seem small, large things develop from these seemingly insignificant moments.

Table 2: Common Daily Experiences

Things Go Our Way	Things Do Not Go Our Way
Expectations are met	Expectations are not met
Alignment with beliefs, values	Beliefs, values dissonant
Positive emotions	Negative emotions
Momentum Up	Plateau or momentum down
Intelligence, resonance	Resilience
Flow, Control	Problem solving, adjusting

For example, consider when you are driving at a fast pace on a highway. You barely notice all the decisions you are making. Simplicity is felt in the autonomy of many and diverse abilities. Years of driving have made these skills autonomous. Unconsciously you adjust to the demands and conditions of the road and traffic. The outsider watching you would observe the gentle hand movements adjusting the steering wheel, the subtle eye movements scanning ahead and checking mirrors.

Suddenly, another car cuts you off, swerving sharply in front of you and nearly catching the front of your car. You feel a rush of adrenaline, slam on the breaks, or maybe even swerve to avoid a collision. Your breathing quickens, your heart races, your thoughts change instantly—and all this occurs in a flash without a conscious decision. Sensing danger, the sympathetic nervous system released the neurotransmitters in response and “fight or flight” mode kicked in.

In the first part of the above example, the driver was experiencing a match between the demands of driving and his expectations. The feeling may even resemble qualities of “flow” in that there may be a loss of a sense of self, time, and being in control of one’s actions. I will refer to this quality as *resonance* in reference to the attunement between the individual’s inner world and outer world. When things go our way, we resonate with what is before us. We use our current skills, attitudes, beliefs, and abilities to meet the moment. The balance is just right and remains within the boundaries of equilibrium.

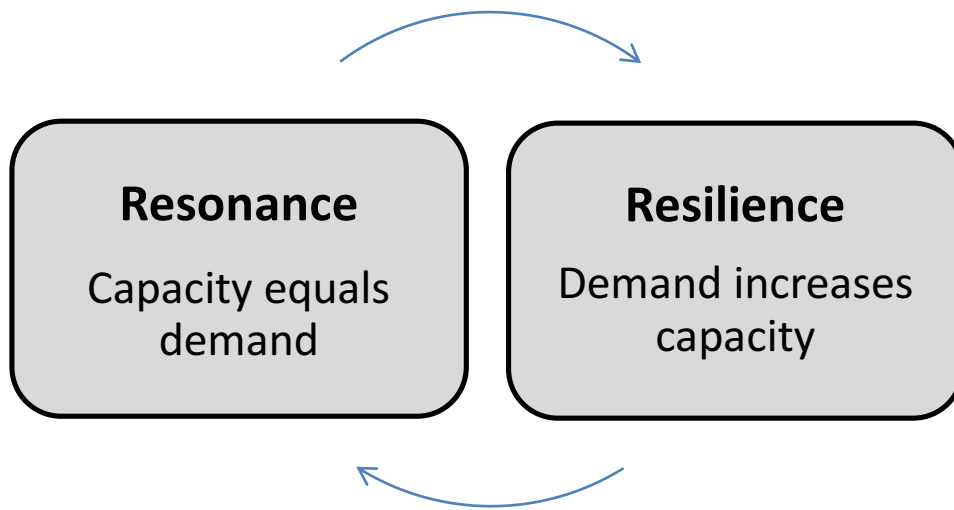
Although it may sound inviting, if everything always went our way we would be living a very small life. If you consider that number of people in our social and work circles—not even considering the vast people we don’t know, the odds steadily increase that something will not go our way. Our way of knowing has to grow more complex and the demands require certain qualities to handle the demands of change, challenge, and loss. This process, the second in the example of the driver above, is *resilience*.

In order to meet a challenge, to grow, or to cope with adversity or a loss, we require some inner quality to handle the internal chaos, deconstruction, and then reconstruction. Resilience is more than bouncing back for this describes elasticity and the nature of the fabric has not changed necessarily. Anyone who has used an old rubber band has experienced the degradation over time. The resilience I am referring to is the opposite of this. The elasticity increases over time to meet greater challenges.

Resilience is not only the bounce back, it is the quality of enduring while the fabric changes.

So our days are full of resonance and resilience. And the more we know about each of these processes, the more we can enlist these capacities in our life roles towards self-fulfillment and helping others along the way.

Figure 1. Resonance and Resilience



The arrows in *figure 1* are also important for they represent the cycle of increasing complexity. The top arrow represents the dissonance, discomfort, and recognition of the imbalance. This is when those aforementioned negative feelings may arise. The bottom arrow is the resolution and restoration of balance. We have learned and grown or weathered the storm. Something has changed, and these changes can come in two forms. The first is *informative* meaning that *what* we know has changed. We have learned new information that makes us more adaptable in the future. The second type of change is *transformative* meaning *how* we know has changed. The structure of our way of knowing has increased in complexity and, thus, our capacity to meet the challenges of the environment has increased.

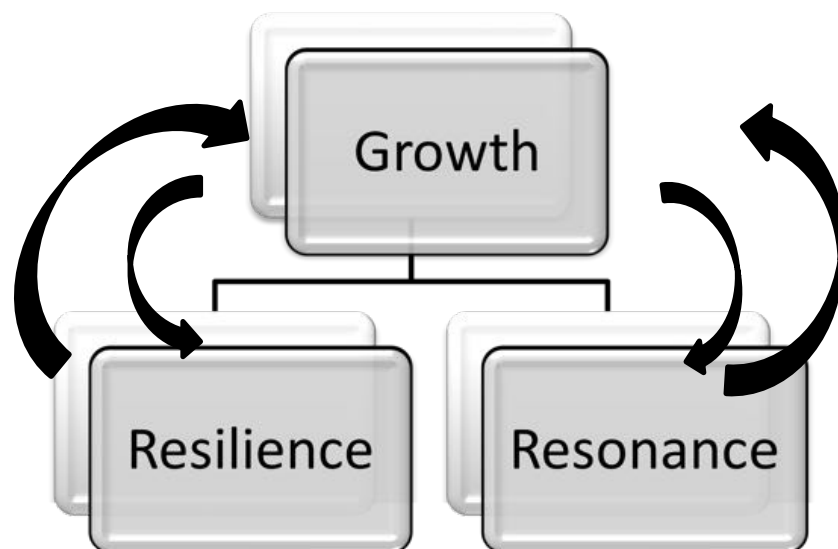
Informative learning can happen daily. It is additive and can be as simple as learning a fact or connecting with a new resource. Transformative learning represents major leaps in development, a major cycle in the complexity/simplicity dynamic. Transformative changes are life-altering and can come in the form of information, traumatic or extremely challenging life experiences, new relationships, or the change in or addition of a life role. Not only what you see, but *how* you see changes. The old way is consumed by the new way and is not lost. This capacity helps us to help others along the path. We have been there and can empathize—one of the most powerful forces in the relationship process.

Table 3: Two Life Processes

Two Life Processes: Interaction Between Person and Environment Integrated and Interrelated	
<u>Resonance</u> <i>Control, Flow, Learning</i>	<u>Resilience</u> <i>Challenge, Adversity, Development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence, attitude, values, skills, actions in balance with the demands of the environment • Fidelity between internal and external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress, loss, development, change of roles, loss, transformational experiences, etc. • Creates a demand in emotional and cognitive resources.

To take that one step further, resonance and resilience relate to each other in terms of stunted growth or integrated evolution. Too much resonance and too little resilience both will keep an individual from moving forward and the current state of the self is preserved. On the other hand, the integration of resilience and resonance serves the growth process.

Figure 2: Growth via the integration of Resilience and Resonance



In the clinical work I perform as a psychologist, counselor, and consultant this process reveals itself each day. Some individuals are stuck and some more stuck than others. There are things in their life that are working for them, and other things that are not working. Anxiety and depression are two highly diagnosed medical conditions in modern society. A list of the top ten prescribed medications in the United States is stocked with drugs to treat these conditions. At the core of anxiety is a lack of control, a focus on aspects of the future that seem overwhelming and beyond one's capacity. Depression is the *down* that often follows lack of control and the label, depression, elicits the vision of a rut or low point.

I bring up these conditions not to judge, discount, or invalidate. Some individuals are biologically prone to these conditions or have experienced significant loss or trauma. I offer these examples for the way it fits with the immediacy of everyday life, the diverse happenings of each day, what we choose to focus on and where we place our energy. Non-clinical depression resulting from loss, change or adjustment is the *down* that follows *up* owing to perception. This concept is a reason that Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based approach for depression for there is a plan to change thinking, feeling, and doing driven by the motivation to do so. Likewise for anxiety in which the anxiousness a person feels begins to impair aspects of his or her life.

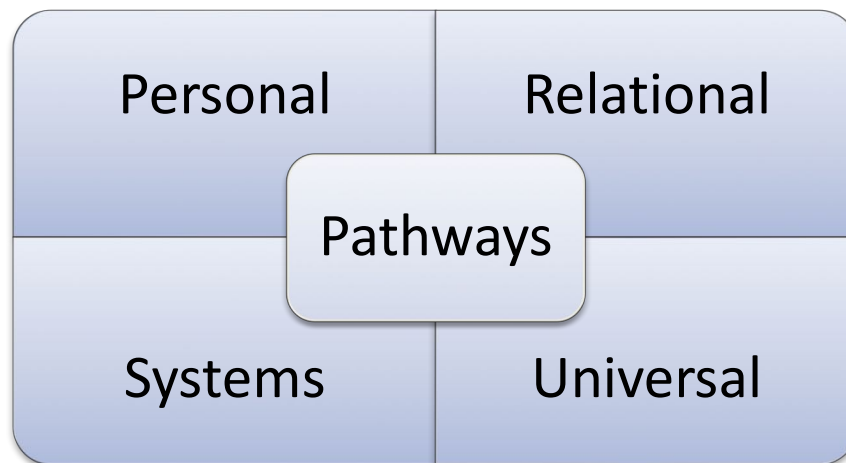
If we bring these conditions down to the non-clinical qualities of sadness and anxiousness or worry we can see how these lows can lead to change—a new perspective. We emote sadness and anxiousness when we are on one side of the resilience-resonance balance. Sadness emanates from the perception of loss. Anxiousness arises out of concerns for an impending event or uncertainty about an outcome, in other words, a lack of control.

What is important to consider is that the emotions we experience are telling us something. *The feelings are messages not mandates*. If we learn to sense the emotions and interpret the feelings we are well on our way to understanding how resilience leads to growth.

Practical Pathways

So how do we develop resilience? How do we build on the innate capacities we all possess to adapt to the complexity we experience? What is the everyday process that many align with in order to meet adversity, bounce back, overcome loss and challenges, and meet the demands of growing and evolving as human beings? In this chapter we will introduce four practical pathways. I use the word, *practical*, because these are concepts you can bring immediately into your daily life. You do not need to purchase anything, change your address, meet someone new, change jobs or join an organization. Now this does not mean that these events will not happen; it means that you can start exactly where you are. A practical approach honors the principle that living life authentically and fully offers challenge enough.

Figure 3. Four Pathways to Resilience



The four Pathways in *figure 3* are connected and interrelated. If you change or grow in one pathway, the other pathways will be influenced in some manner. The first Pathway is the Personal and it places you at the center of the universe. This is not an egocentric notion but rather the most fundamental pathway for it is how we experience life and our uniqueness. The Personal Pathway and its subjective nature, for many, affords the greatest opportunity for change and development because it is the pathway for which we have the greatest input and control. It encompasses our mind and our bodies. At the center is our meaning-making, our interpretations of experience as well as our responses. There are several practical strategies for this pathway which we will explore in chapters to follow.

In the Relational Pathway we are no longer the center of the universe and now have responsibility to relationships. Relationships represent three living elements: the two individuals or entities and the space that represents the connection. This pathway represents powerful opportunities to develop resilience for it brings in the responsibility of life roles.

When we place relationships into a larger structure of interconnectedness, a system emerges. The Systems Pathway includes a greater view of the world, and spreads out across a larger fabric of time and space. Families, social systems, and organizations provide fertile ground for life challenges and, therefore, resilience, adaptation, and evolution.

Further still, the Universal Pathway includes all. The universal represents systems of systems, interconnected and dynamic. This pathway honors all that came before us and all that lies ahead. It is connected in time reaching the past, present, and future. The Universal is the ultimate in self-awareness for we can hold the self in view objectively. The Universal includes timeless principles as well as the highest and best, the deepest and widest of human experience.

Principles

It is important to acknowledge that certain principles underlie the pathways described here. These principles provide a reference that you can check back on now and again on your journey. They are fundamental to resilience and growth and provide the foundation of the pathways.

Resilience:

- Resilience is a process and a quality.
- Resilience occurs in the open system of being human and therefore is part of a feedback loop.
- Intelligence is an integral part of the feedback loop, and if resilience represents the quality of bouncing back, there must be a wisdom involved for what one is bouncing back toward. In other words, purpose, intention, needs, self-fulfillment, and competency are part of the dynamic—not just overcoming adversity.
- Resilience does not define the individual but helps to inform and to transform. One can be resilient and stay in one place, grinding away against adversity, such as poverty, without leaving the space. This type of resiliency preserves the individual's present identity as a survivor or fighter. In this work, resilience is considered much more than just bouncing back.

Open Systems:

- A feedback loop exists between the person and the environment.
- Energy, matter, and information are exchanged between internal and external environments. Just as food is taken in, information is exchanged which can increase the complexity of our way of knowing.
- There are times of balance and as well as times of transitions to new evolutionary balances.

Learning:

- Fundamentally, we are learning each moment. We are either reinforcing what we already know (expectations, resonating with the environment) or challenging our way of knowing (resilience leading to informative or transformative change).

Subject-Object Relationship:

- The concept of resiliency and growth presented in this book is based in ego development and the subject-object relationship (*Table 4*).
- Based on Kegan's Constructive-Developmental Theory (CDT), subject is what one is, what one is embedded in, what one is unable to perceive or reflect upon, and unable to question in one's meaning-making. Object is what one has, what one can be responsible for, what one can reflect upon, and what one can know and change.
- Subject is the structure of one's meaning-making while object is what we can perceive and respond to given this structure.
- The subject-object relationship is at the core of human thoughts, feelings, and social relating.
- The environment offers a reflection of our subjectivity. The product of our way of knowing is reflected on the products and effects of our processing, and therefore, we can come to know these products and effects by reflecting, examining, and deconstructing our perception.

Developmental Psychology:

- The pathways are built on a framework based in the Constructive-Developmental Theory (CDT). According to this theory, perceptions are both perceived and constructed into a coherent meaning given one's present meaning-making structure. In addition, there is a transformational quality to our meaning-making in that one is continually in the process of developing more complex stages of consciousness over time. Kegan identified five distinct stages of consciousness (*Table 4*). Each stage represents a distinctively different quality of experience. Within these stages one does not lose the qualities of the previous stage, but rather they become dis-embedded and a part of what we are able to be

responsible for and reflect on in the new stage. CDT provides a holistic framework for the dynamic process of differentiation and integration between self and environment over the lifespan.

- The structure of the pathways is developmental and based on the subject-object relationship. While we may participate in all the pathways at one time or another, our way of knowing will be centered on certain pathway representing our developmental stage. For example, an adolescent may have an experience along a Systems Pathway, but they will know this through the Personal or Relational pathway as, developmentally, adolescents have not typically reached this level of ego development. The Systems Pathway requires a systemic way of knowing which is developmentally beyond a typical adolescent according to Constructive-Developmental Theory.

Table 4. Subject/Object Relationship Five Stages

Stage	Subject (Structure of Knowing)	Object (Content of Knowing)	Underlying Structure
Impulsive	Impulses, perceptions	Reflexes, (sensing, moving)	Single point Atomistic
Imperial	Enduring dispositions, needs, interests	Impulses, perceptions	Enduring categories
Interpersonal	Interpersonal relationships, mutuality	Enduring dispositions, needs, interests	Cross-categorical, trans-categorical
Institutional	Self-authoring, identity, ideology	Interpersonal relationships, mutuality	Systems
Interindividual	The dialectic between ideologies	Self-authoring, identity, ideology	System of systems

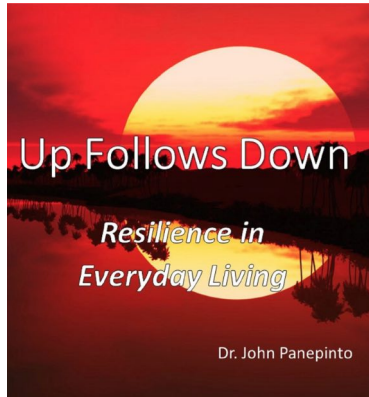
- Note: Adapted from *The Evolving Self* (Kegan, 1982) and *In Over Our Heads* (Kegan, 1994).

Unique Paths and Common Roads:

- The concept of resiliency presented in *Up Follows Down* honors unique qualities and aptitudes of the individual, while establishing common pathways for development. While the structure or context is common, the content within these pathways can be extremely diverse.

Control:

- Resilient individuals are better able to distinguish the difference between what is within their control and what is beyond. They make an active and informed choice to put their intention, focus, and energy on what is within their control.



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