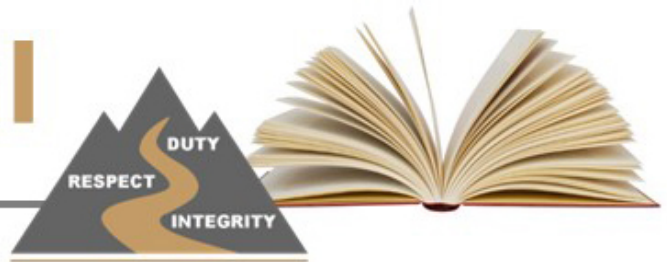


# Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



## Resilience by Eric Greitens

### Why Read *Resilience*?

*“Resilience is the virtue that allows you to move through hardship and become better. No one escapes pain, fear, and suffering. Yet from pain can come wisdom, from fear can come courage, from suffering comes strength – if we have the virtue of resilience.”*

*“Leadership isn’t a set of techniques or tricks. Like resilience, it’s a way of being. ... You can’t fake any of it. If you want to lead, get yourself right first.”*

Resilience is a book about how to be resilient in life and leadership. There’s a lot here: It tackles hard topics on personal and professional levels. It’s a book that you should read slowly, and think hard about, as almost every sentence is loaded with deep thoughts on how to live a more resilient life.

So why should fire leaders of all levels read this? At its core, it’s a book on self-leadership, and leadership truly begins with leadership of self. Self-improvement should be a constant goal of any leader, and the pursuit of resilience is core aspect of that goal. Even if we don’t lead anyone but ourselves, we should put in the work to be a better person, personally and professionally.

There are several videos on the book available online. Find some of them at the links below, or by using an internet search engine.

- **Brian Johnson – 5 Big Ideas from Resilience (11 minutes):**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7auriAoTNO>
- **Eric Greitens – What Are You Responsible For? (3 minutes):**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM61dt2z8r0>
- **2016 WFSTAR – Stress Preparedness and Resilience (15 Minutes):**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAPlc5-QFLs>

For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

**Blog:** <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

**Professional Reading Program:** <https://www.nwccg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>

**Main WFLDP page:** <https://www.fireleadership.gov>

## *Resilience Discussion Questions*

### **Letter One: Your Frontline**

What was your definition of resilience, before you read this chapter? Was it the same after reading it? If it changed, why? What challenges are you facing?

### **Letter Two: Why Resilience**

What do you think about philosophy? Do you view it as an active way of thinking and acting, or as a more abstract idea? What do you think about the Thoreau quote at the end of section 8?

### **Letter Three: What is Resilience**

What do you think about the Hemingway quote that opens letter 3? Does it hold true in the fire world? What do you think about the idea of not being able to “bounce back?”

### **Letter Four: Beginning**

How can humility empower your team and those around you? (For more ideas on humility in teams check out [https://www.nifc.gov/wfstar/library\\_HumanFactors.html#Seahawks](https://www.nifc.gov/wfstar/library_HumanFactors.html#Seahawks)) How do you harness the positives of being competitive with while accepting and mitigating the negatives?

### **Letter Five: Happiness**

What do you think about joy being a byproduct of activity, and not something to strive for in and of itself? What’s your take on the three kinds of happiness talked about in this chapter?

### **Letter Six: Models**

Why is it a good idea to have good role models, especially as leaders at any level? How do you emulate your role models? Can you learn from the mistakes of others without repeating them?

### **Letter Seven: Identity**

How can the way you act impact the way you feel? Why is it important to ask “who do we want to be?” What’s the difference between “feeling” something and “being” something (section 3)?

### **Letter Eight: Habits**

What do you think about habits and “big” decisions? How can habits “free our minds to focus on what matters most?” How can habits make us more resilient?

### **Letter Nine: Responsibility**

What do you see as the relationship between resilience and responsibility? How can the fear that can accompany responsibility be a good thing? How do you deal with excuses?

### **Letter Ten: Vocation**

How do you create purpose in your life? What is your vocation? Is your vocation different than your job? Do you know the vocation of the people around you, on your crew, in your organization?

### **Letter Eleven: Philosophy**

Why is it a good idea to combine thinking and action, instead of separating them? Have you ever seen yourself or others acting without thinking? How does realism influence resilience?

### **Letter Thirteen: Pain**

What are your thoughts on pain, Stoicism, and the “premeditation of evil?” How can the practice of evaluating worst-case scenarios be beneficial as a leader? How are pain and tension a part of a “well-lived life?”

### **Letter Fourteen: Mastering Pain**

Do any of the ways of mastering pain that the author mentions seem familiar to you? How can something as simple as breathing make you more resilient? How can practicing gratitude make you more resilient?

### **Letter Fifteen: Reflection**

Are there tasks in wildland fire that offer opportunities for reflection? What do you think of using the four questions in section 10 for situational awareness?

### **Letter Sixteen: Friends**

What do you think of the idea of fellowship? Does it apply in the fire setting? What’s your take on the four kinds of knowledge mentioned in section 5?

### **Letter Seventeen: Mentors**

Who are your mentors? Who do you mentor? What’s the author’s difference between good coach and a bad coach? What do you think about the child vs. warrior section toward the end of the letter?

### **Letter Eighteen: Teams**

Have you been part of a team that flourished under shared purpose and hardship? How about a team that failed under pressure? How do you define a resilient team?

### **Letter Nineteen: Leadership**

When you think of resilient leaders, who comes to mind? What do you think of the quote “If you want to lead, get yourself right?”

### **Letter Twenty: Freedom**

What’s the difference between “freedom from” and “freedom to?” What do you think about the author’s ideas on work-life balance? Do you agree? Disagree? Why or why not?

### **Letter Twenty One: The Story**

How has your story shaped you? How have you placed meaning on your story?

**Letter Twenty Two: Death**

What are you doing today to “Hurry up and live?”

**Letter Twenty Three: Sabbath**

Do you set aside time to “simply be?” How do you make time to stop the “grind” and find joy and rest?