

*“The two most important days in  
your life are the day you are born  
and the day you find out why.”*

***Mark Twain***



*Path to Resiliency by Chad Robichaux and Jeremy Stalneck is a gift to our nation's military veterans, currently serving military, and their families. From a larger perspective, it will significantly contribute to "Making America Resilient Again." A must read!*

**Major General Bob Dees**

*U.S. Army, Retired*

*Author - Resilient Warriors,*

*Resilient Leaders and Resilient Nations*

*Founder, Institute for Military Resilience, Liberty University*

*A wise proverb states, "A good man may trip seven times, but will get up again". That's resiliency. We all need it. How do we get it? Path to Resiliency provides the answer in a simple, cogent form that every individual can readily apply.*

**David Barton**

*"America's Historian"*

*Founder & President of WallBuilders*

*New York Times Best-Selling Author, The Jefferson Lies*

*Time Magazine's Top 25 Most-Influential Evangelicals*

*Path to Resiliency is a long overdue training solution for the United States military. Over the course of a thirty-year career, I observed improved physical fitness and educational training standards, with the introduction of hours of annual sensitivity training to meet the shifting standards of popular culture, while, simultaneously and systematically, God was removed, leaving a glaring hole in the training of spirit, mind, and body. During the last thirty years, our military has become the social engineering platform of the nation, ensuring our warriors are politically correct, yet unprepared spiritually for combat. This book would be a welcome addition to the spiritual wellbeing of service members providing them with the tools necessary to operate in a complex and violent world and to overcome the trauma of combat in order to once again live productive lives when they return. This book transcends military life. Life is trauma, with or without combat, and this book would be a powerful addition in homes, high schools, and on college campuses. Instead of creating 'safe spaces', we could raise a generation that would flourish safely in all spaces.*

**Colonel Bill Coate**

*USMC, Retired*

*Author - You The Last Best Hope To Restore Our Nation*

*Chad Robichaux and Jeremy Stalnecker have done a great service for our veterans! Drawing from personal experience and proven results, they explain the best path to resiliency. I pray that the clear and compelling message of this book will transform lives for God's glory and the good of our military members.*

**Commander John Marc Wiemann**

*Naval Flight Officer, Retired*

*Lead Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church of Atascadero*

*Serving California has had a front row seat to witness the powerful life transformations that are taking place among our veterans and active military through the ministry of the Mighty Oaks Foundation. With the release of their new book, Path to Resiliency, Chad Robichaux and Jeremy Stalnecker have tapped into the timeless principles of God's Word to challenge and encourage us all (military or not) to live a life of intentionality that will result in leaving the type of life legacy that will bring honor to God, our families, and our neighbors. I highly recommend this book to anyone who desires to live a life of purpose and I believe that it will be used by God to transform many more lives.*

**Dr. Greg Bruce**

*President, Serving California*

*Robichaux and Stalnecker are two warriors who fought to defend our nation and now they fight and encourage others to fight "the good fight of faith." Path to Resiliency was forged in the furnace of their personal battles with combat trauma and years of experience helping fellow Warriors overcome battles of their own. My prayer is that this book would energize many who are stuck in the mire of their own battle to take the first step on a new journey of hope and healing guided by God's Word.*

**Curtis W. Solomon, M.Div., Ph.D. in progress**

*Director, The Biblical Counseling Coalition*

*Former Staff Sergeant, USAF*

*Chad Robichaux and Jeremy Stalnecker address the most important issue facing men today and that is the need to be resilient. They show the path that could actually hold the key to men rising up everywhere and in every situation and becoming the answer to a culture in deep trouble. Not only do Chad and Jeremy teach this path in words, they live it out in their own lives. I highly recommend Path to Resiliency to every person who wants to bounce back and embrace a lifestyle of freedom, purpose, and significance.*

**David Baird**

*Senior Pastor, The Life Church, Manassas, VA*

*As a member of the soul-care community, I have spent many hours with women who are broken, hurting and hopeless from the effects of trauma in their lives. Although God can and does restore these precious and fragile broken vessels, the process can be as intricate and painstaking as gluing a broken vase back together. Robichaux and Stalnecker in Path to Resiliency seek to forge souls into strength before painful blows of trauma come crashing down. I have no doubt that just as I have witnessed the impact of Robichaux's Marriage Advance on countless couples affected by combat trauma, his Path to Resiliency will also strengthen many to hope in Christ for life's traumatic storms.*

**Carrie Foldberg**

*Master's of Arts in Biblical Counseling*

*ACBC-Certified Counselor*

*Women's Speaker*

*If you (or a friend) has experienced the trauma of combat or imprisonment resulting from bad choices, this little book will help get you "back on track". The path laid out to pursue a purposeful life, to accept a Biblical base for decision making and to develop encouraging relationships leads towards a life aligned with a healthy world-view. The tools found in each chapter will make reintegrating into society much, much easier. Use it as a handbook.*

**Jim Heigl**

*Decorated Combat Veteran*

*Executive at Prison Fellowship*

*As a former Registered Nurse and Catastrophic Case Manager, I would say these principles are paramount in the recovery process for anyone who has suffered a life changing injury. Be it from the civilian work world or the most extreme context of the war environment, these same principles apply. I would encourage anyone who feels victimized by their situation to read and apply what Chad and Jeremy share in this book.*

**Doug Barron, M.S.**

*San Diego Director for Cru Military*

*Some people believe the bigger the life problem is, the more complex the solution must be. Chad and Jeremy have written a book that proves that idea to be very wrong. They provide simple steps to follow so anyone can “bounce back” from the challenges they face in life and learn the art of “resiliency.”*

**David Domina**

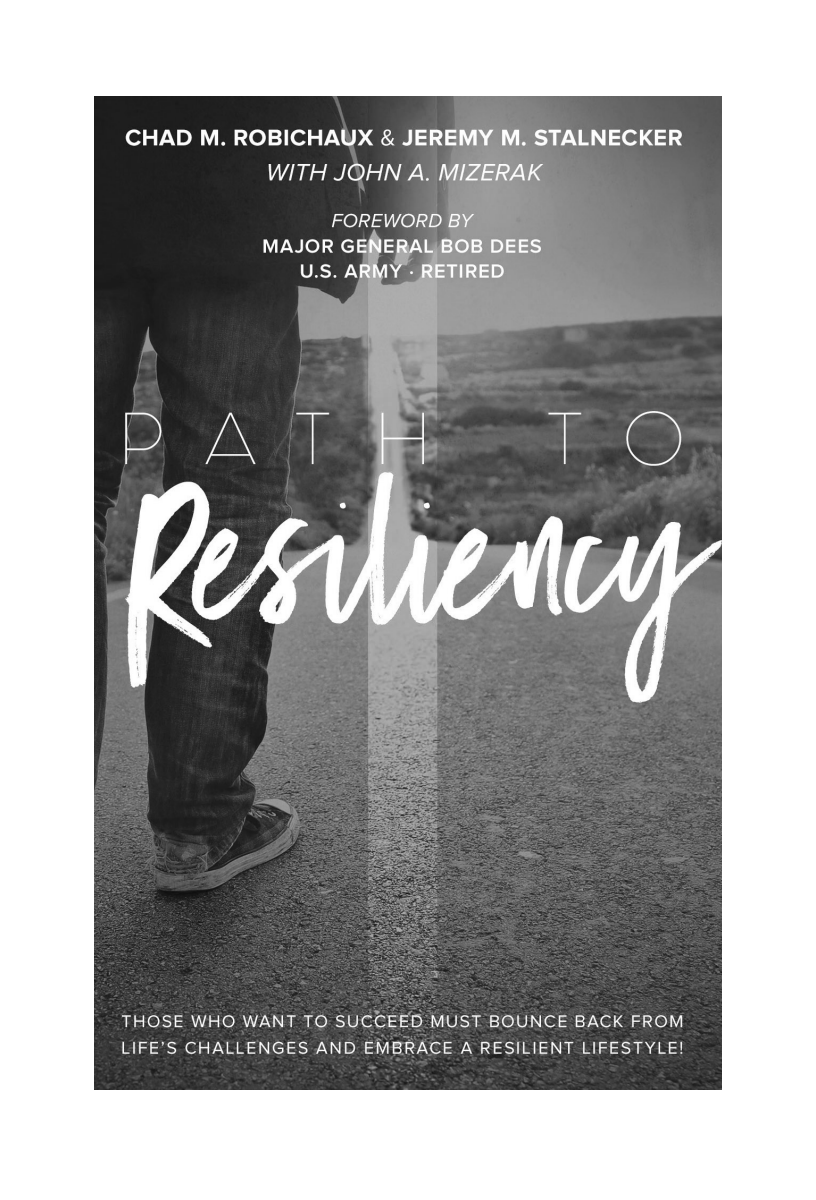
*Pastor, Bethel Christian Fellowship, Rochester, NY.*

*Chad, Jeremy and John have captured the delicate balance of maintaining a winning attitude while dealing with the mental and emotional strain that comes when faced with significant life challenges. This is a very practical field manual for anyone who wants to have a winning mind-set when faced with life's challenges. This goal is achieved by integrating Biblical wisdom with personal discipline to gain victory, which is the essence of resiliency. A great book for anyone no matter what challenges they are facing.*

**Ray Perez**

*Chaplain, Regional Adult Detention Center*

*Prince William County, Manassas, VA*



**CHAD M. ROBICHAUX & JEREMY M. STALNECKER**

*WITH JOHN A. MIZERAK*

*FOREWORD BY*  
**MAJOR GENERAL BOB DEES**  
**U.S. ARMY · RETIRED**

PATH TO  
*Resiliency*

THOSE WHO WANT TO SUCCEED MUST BOUNCE BACK FROM  
LIFE'S CHALLENGES AND EMBRACE A RESILIENT LIFESTYLE!

# Path to Resiliency

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**Chad M. Robichaux and Jeremy M. Stalnecker**

*With contributions from*

**John A. Mizerak**

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**[www.PathToResiliency.com](http://www.PathToResiliency.com)**

PATH TO  
*Resiliency*

Presented to:

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From:

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On This \_\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_



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# Foreword



**Major General Bob Dees,**  
*U.S. Army, Retired*

This book is hitting the shores of America at just the right time. Actually, I wish our military Warriors and the citizens of our nation could have seen this work years before. *Path to Resiliency* by Chad Robichaux and Jeremy Stalnecker is a gift to our nation's military veterans, currently serving military, and their families. Given that warfare is a metaphor for life, the value of this work goes far beyond military application. From a larger perspective, it will significantly contribute to "Making America Resilient Again," a critical objective in light of the serious international, domestic, economic, and

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cultural challenges on our national horizon. May all Americans, including our beloved military servants, read this insightful work for your personal benefit, and to the benefit of our great nation.

Let me explain why *Path to Resiliency* is so important. The brutal reality of life is that we all get “body slammed”—our nation’s valiant military Warriors have seen this time and again over our nation’s history. Particularly after the last fifteen plus years at war, our military and their families have been dipping deeply into their “wells of courage.” As always, they have sacrificially pursued their duty on behalf of America—on behalf of each of us. Many have been wounded. Some of the wounds we can see; some we cannot. Some will heal rapidly; others will take a lifetime. In either case, these same Warriors (including those “Warriors” on the home front) can and must be RESILIENT. This book will help them do that!

As I log more “laps around the track of life,” I have come to judge a book not by its pretty prose but by the character, competency, and life experiences of the author. So it is with Chad Robichaux and Jeremy Stalneck. These guys are the real deal! Chad served as an enlisted Force Recon Marine, Afghanistan veteran, and PTSD sufferer. While Chad experienced great success as a Professional MMA Fighter, he also experienced temporary defeat at the hands of divorce and depression. His literal

## FOREWARD

and spiritual salvation came through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the mentoring of Christian battle buddies. Jeremy, likewise, knows the challenges of war, serving as a Marine Infantry Officer, Iraq veteran, and subsequently a pastor seeking to help his fellow veterans “come all the way home.” Together Chad and Jeremy lead a PTSD Combat Trauma Intensive Program, as well as military spiritual resiliency conferences with various military commands. You can read more about them in the “About the Authors” section.

I also value a book which does not sugarcoat reality, and which does not draw back from effective solutions to pain, sorrow, and suffering. In this case, *Path to Resiliency* unashamedly applies Biblical wisdom as part of a holistic prescription for resiliency. Faith is often “the elephant in the room” that many shy away from, or the secret sauce that gives knowledge and power to recover from the seen and unseen wounds of war. From a Christian perspective, Paul’s letter to the Corinthians expresses the hope and confidence that Warriors in all walks of life can have through the power of faith:

*“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”*

(2 Corinthians 4:8,9, NASB)

*Path to Resiliency* helps us build this spiritual resiliency, a critical complement to resilience in the

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physical, mental, emotional, and relational domains.

*Post-traumatic growth* is a critical concept. In essence, how do we invest in personal resilience before the “storms of life” hit us personally—before the IED goes off, the relationship unravels, the car wreck occurs, or diagnosis is delivered. You get the picture—as we learn and practice resilience skills before crisis and trauma, we become more inclined to respond in the right way. Then as the storm of trauma visits us personally, we reflexively fall into the arms of faith, family, and friends; relying on the roots of truth that grew deeply in our soul when the sun was shining brightly. After we courageously weather this storm, then begins the tough process of “bouncing back” without getting stuck in the toxic emotions of guilt, false guilt, anger, and bitterness. The ultimate objective is growing better, stronger, wiser, and bouncing higher than ever before. Many Warriors have shown us how. You can too, particularly with the inspiration and practical tips in *Path to Resiliency*!

*See you on the High Ground!*

**Major General Bob Dees,**

*U.S. Army, Retired*

Author of

*Resilient Warriors, Resilient Leaders, and Resilient Nation*

*Founder, Institute for Military*

*Resilience, Liberty University*

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# Preface

**Chad M. Robichaux, BCPC, MBA**

*Founder & President –*

*Mighty Oaks Foundation*

*Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs*

The intent of this book is to share with you the lessons we have learned by working with many combat veterans at Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs (MOWP), not only leading them to restoration, hope and a new purpose but finding the strength to be truly resilient to every hardship this world has to throw at us. You don't have to go to Iraq or Afghanistan to face the hardships and trials of life, so whether you are a military service member or not, we all find ourselves in moments of adversity and hardship from time to time. *When we do, will you have the resiliency to overcome those times? Or when you falter, will you have what it takes to bounce back?*

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I am continually asked by supporters of our service members, “*Why has this generation suffered so much more from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) than other generations?*” My answer to that question has changed over the years. Initially, I would have said it was related to the increased frequency of deployments and the longer duration of being under a constant threat from the enemy, as well as a lack of clarity as to who the enemy might be in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. However, I have discovered that those are not actually the main reasons. Combat and military service has knocked down many of our Warriors, yet I have also heard numerous testimonies and even personally witnessed those who have seen the same rigors of war and returned from combat either unaffected or with a new maturity. *What is the difference in these people?* The answer is *Spiritual Resiliency*.

Since the birth of Mighty Oaks in 2011, there has been a continuing question, “*What will Mighty Oaks do when the War on Terror ends?*” This question

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has never swayed us to change our focus and vision, as we were birthed and operated as a call from God to serve the broken-hearted Warriors of our nation. However, over the years I have seen massive growth and evolution of our programs, while doors have opened to reach Warriors that I never could have imagined possible. In the early days of Mighty Oaks we only reached non-active duty veterans of recent wars. God is now blowing the doors open of the active duty military by sending Warriors to us from the various branches on official military orders. This has created a whole new approach to how we care for those we are entrusted with. Now, not only are we serving veterans who will never deploy again to a war zone but also we are being entrusted with those who will face the rigors of war again. These changes moved us from solely focusing on “*Post Combat Trauma Care*” to also providing “*Resiliency Training*. ”

In an effort to reach more active duty members, we had to relook at what we did, how we did it and how we communicated to military leadership. We had to

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align our messaging with the needs of the military's efforts to be a sustainable and effective combat institution. Beginning in early 2015, we were being highly utilized by all branches of the military for resiliency conferences by units returning from and deploying to combat theaters, as well as regular training evolutions for combat readiness ranging from Special Operations Pre-Deployment Resiliency Conferences, to Spiritual Resiliency presentations, to presenting to thousands of recruits at USMC Boot Camp.

*Why would Mighty Oaks be looked at as a resource for combat resiliency?* The reason is simple... through the methodologies we have used at MOWP and the evaluation of those who have experienced combat, we have discovered that the very same methods we use to “heal” PTSD are equally effective if implemented prior to traumatic events such as those experienced in combat. This makes MOWP not only an effective post-combat program but also a pre-combat program using a methodology we would simply refer to as “*Spiritual Resiliency*.”

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*Spiritual Resiliency* is nothing new to the military. The military ethos has always embodied such traits known to build the greatest of Warriors with emphasis on “*The Three Pillars of Resiliency: Mind, Body, Spirit.*” However, with increased restrictions in recent years for the military chaplaincy, fewer religious freedoms among service members, and a redefining of what “*Spirit*” actually means, we believe we have witnessed a significant blow on the *spiritual resiliency* of our service members. Having a strong mind and body, but a weak soul is like having a two legged stool. Even if you can get it balanced, when the slightest pressure is added, it will topple and come crashing down. Of the 2.6 million veterans of the War on Terror, approximately 50% face some sort of physical, mental, or spiritual wound from their service. Many are receiving clinical diagnoses of PTSD, leaving our military leaders scratching their heads as to why. The inability of the military and Veterans Administration to put a finger on the problem costs millions of dollars, and continued failed attempts at

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clinical care has left a wake of destruction marked in blood and destroyed legacies and families. We are still facing devastating statistics such as 22 suicides per day and a staggering number of veterans leaving their families in divorce. There are nearly 22 million veterans in America. Instead of our nation's leaders and heroes coming home to be leaders and pillars of their community, far too many are settling to be government dependents of 100% PTSD retirements, or worse, engaging in criminal behaviors or ending it all with suicide. There is another option for these amazing heroes and leaders, and that is to do something important again—to lead again and be the pillars of society we need in our homes, communities and in this nation. That begins with the resilient spirit of a true Warrior.

*Are YOU ready to take a journey  
with us to find the Path to Resiliency?*

**Chad M. Robichaux, BCPC, MBA**  
*Founder & President –  
Mighty Oaks Foundation  
Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs*

# Introduction

*Resiliency* is defined as the ability to recover quickly; it is the essence of toughness. Although this is not just an issue faced by those in the military, for those in the military, resiliency is a word that conjures up images of coming home from a particularly difficult deployment and making the transition from combat to domestic life with ease. While we wish everyone experienced this, there is an ever-growing mountain of statistical and anecdotal evidence to the contrary. With an alarming number of marriages of those who have been in combat ending in divorce, a veteran and active duty suicide rate of 22 per day, and the all-too-familiar stories of careers coming to an end because of combat trauma, *resiliency* is something that we have a hard time achieving. Even within the civilian world there is a vast chasm between the idea of *resiliency*, and individuals who are actually able to bounce back from a traumatic experience. This all begs a very simple question: “*With the vast infrastructure of resiliency training and family support in our country, why do so many have such a hard time recovering from the inevitable traumas of life?*”

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Sadly, post-traumatic stress often thwarts resiliency. General James Mattis, USMC (Retired), and the former Commander of United States Central Command, commenting on post-traumatic stress, said this:

*“I would just say there is one mis-perception of our veterans and that is they are somehow damaged goods; I don’t buy it. If we tell our veterans enough that this is what is wrong with them they may actually start believing it. While victim-hood in America is exalted, I don’t think our veterans should join those ranks. There is also something called post-traumatic growth where you come out of a situation like that and you actually feel kinder toward your fellow man and fellow woman. There is no room for military people, including our veterans, to see themselves as victims even if so many of our countrymen are prone to relish that role.”*

While this statement by General Mattis is entirely accurate, it is also clear that post-traumatic growth does **NOT** happen for most people. For individuals to grow beyond the traumatic events they’ve experienced, intentional steps must be taken. This highlights the heart of the resiliency issue. As much as America’s Warriors actively prepare to go into combat, many remain passive when it comes to the preparation to return home. Proper planning includes knowing the goal that one is trying to reach, finding

## INTRODUCTION

out which steps are necessary to reach that goal, and then consistently taking those steps until the goal is reached. When one is willing to plan appropriately, no limit can be set on what might be achieved.

### ***Start planning your future today!***

When addressing the subject of planning, educators and military trainers find it useful to first introduce the “7 P’s”.

The “7 P’s” is a U.S. Marine adage for...***Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance.***

When it is explained, the humor and shock of the mild expletive help make the planning process memorable. This process can be used for anything from project planning to training for life-or-death situations.

Military professionals know how to be intentional and deliberate to prepare for victory... *they know how to impose their will.* They would never passively walk into a fight and expect to win without effort.

*So why, when it comes to personal lives, do so many hold different standards?*

If you want to succeed in your life and truly embrace a resilient lifestyle, while having the ability to bounce back in spite of trauma and difficulties, you must intentionally build a resilient lifestyle.

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But there is a problem...*being intentional is NOT easy!* Deliberate preparation, however, is necessary for anyone who wants to grow in this area. It is the only way to develop the skills that will allow one to succeed personally and professionally, regardless of life's challenges. This deliberate preparation is not a skill that anyone is born with; it is developed over time through old-fashioned hard work!

***OK, let's get started.***

One of the objectives of this book is to help you be *ready for, resilient to*, and able to *reintegrate from* trauma, as well as provide the platform for a sustainable lifestyle while overcoming personal pitfalls.

The choices we make define our legacy. Reflecting on these choices will challenge us to measure what's at stake if we continue to live passively and are not deliberate about life.

*A failure to make the decision to be resilient can lead to tremendous loss: loss of health, family, relationships, career, reputation, and **your legacy!***

*While reading this book,  
keep this question in mind:*

***“If what I am doing isn't working,  
then why not do something different?”***

# Chapter One

## Why is it so Hard to be Resilient?

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith;  
be courageous; be strong.

**1 Corinthians 16:13**

In a broken and chaotic world, most people are anything but resilient in the face of adversity. We are daily bombarded by things that fight against our ability to remain steadfast during times of distress, betrayal, hurt, and loss. So much in the world pulls us down from a position of strength and resilience and out of the roles in which God intended us to live. It was not, however, meant to be this way! The reason it is so difficult to live a resilient life has nothing to do with our physical or mental toughness and everything to do with understanding who we were created to be.

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If we were to take a trip to the firing range for a period of instruction on the best way to engage targets with our rifle, a qualified instructor would cover several factors that would lead to our success. One of the major factors would be to clearly see the target. We might laugh if an instructor actually pointed this out, but it is impossible to hit something that you cannot see! In the military, we even talk about the dangers of TRYING to hit a target that cannot be clearly seen. As common sense as this is, it is amazing how many people go through life trying to hit a target that they cannot see! When life knocks us off course, it is impossible for us to get back to a place that we've never even defined. Since we don't clearly understand who we were created to be, we can't get back to that place when we find ourselves lost and without direction. Figuratively speaking, we are shooting at a target that we cannot see and then wondering why we continue to miss.

This is the heart of the problem with living a resilient life. If *resilience* is “bouncing back” or “re-aligning when we get off course,” this becomes

## CHAPTER ONE - *WHY IS IT SO HARD TO BE RESILIENT?*

impossible to accomplish if we do not understand to what, exactly, we are aligning. Our culture constantly tells us how men and women should act and what their roles should be. The reality, though, is that the definitions we are given constantly shift since the culture providing those definitions lacks a standard on which to base them. And so we chase an identity that lacks a point on which to re-align when things fall apart. This causes us to either live without identity, or to allow our past or other experiences to define who we are.

For a person to be resilient, a fundamental truth must be understood: we were all created with a very specific design. We were created to be leaders in our homes and communities, contributing to our world and society in a meaningful way. This will look different from person to person, of course, but we must embrace the fact that our lives have purpose and can make an impact beyond daily survival. Instead of allowing ourselves to become overwhelmed by events of the past, we need to live every day to fulfill the potential that we have been

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given. We must stop allowing a broken culture to define our lives for us and instead seek out the purpose for which we were created.

This is where true resiliency takes place. If we know who we were created to be and the roles that we were created to fulfill, then when things become overwhelming, we can focus our attention on moving forward instead of looking back.

Thankfully, we have Scripture to help us do this! The Bible should serve as the road-map for our lives. It provides the Creator's intent for our lives as well as practical examples of how to apply His intent as we move through life. It is an unchanging standard to which we can align our lives when nothing else makes sense. It is the lighthouse on the shore that will guide us safely out of the storm.

Aligning our lives to this standard will not just happen though. It will require practice and a daily commitment to move forward.

All of us will hit setbacks and reach points of frustration, but there will be moments of

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achievement. Success, however, will NOT come by accident. One must set a goal and stick to it while remaining intentional and committed. As hard as this journey will be, we must remember that we are not alone.

In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul teaches,

*“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”*

We don't have to do this alone...in fact, *we were never meant to!*

***What does God's Word say about understanding our created purpose?***

The story is told of a man who was driving his Model T Ford sometime early in the last century. As has been happening with Fords since the beginning, the Model T broke down on an isolated stretch of road somewhere in the country. As the man worked

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to figure out what was wrong, a stranger pulled up in his own Model T and offered his help. The man, now increasingly angry at his situation, snapped at the stranger and told him that he did not need any help and would figure it out on his own. The stranger, realizing that talking to someone who does not want help is a futile task, got back in his own car and began to drive away. Before he pulled away though, perhaps out of spite or simply to point out the irony of the situation, introduced himself. *"I am sorry that you do not need my help,"* he said. *"But I wanted to introduce myself. My name is Henry Ford."* And with that, he drove away.

As we discuss the issue of resilience, it is amazing how many of us do the same thing as the man in this story. We know that we have a problem. Everything around us, from our relationships to our outlook on our own future, screams that things are broken. Instead of going to the source of help, hope, and healing, we decide that we are just going to figure it out on our own. Even though we find ourselves in our current state of brokenness because we have

## CHAPTER ONE - *WHY IS IT SO HARD TO BE RESILIENT?*

been doing life on our own, we somehow think that we have the wisdom and intuition to fix what is broken.

Thankfully, we do not have to do it on our own. One of the questions we asked earlier in this book was:

***“If what you are doing isn’t working,  
then why not do something different?”***

That is a fair question, and the “*something different*” is aligning our lives to the blueprint for living provided by our Creator. Just as Henry Ford being the creator of the Model T made him the best hope for fixing the broken car, we were created by God, which makes Him the best hope for restoring those things that are broken in and around us. We have been given the instruction manual produced by the Creator. This manual is called the Bible. In the Bible, we have all that we need to understand why we were created, how to be what we were created to be, and how to remain resilient in the face of the many difficulties of life.

The thing about any owner’s manual though, is that

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it does no good until one decides to read it. The first challenge in becoming more resilient is this:

***Decide to stop doing the things that have gotten you where you are, and work to align your life to the person that you were created to be.***

It may be that you are not in a difficult place right now and feel like you can continue to do things on your own. Using the illustration of a car again, it is possible to put low-grade gasoline in a high-performance sports car. It is even possible to put diesel in the same car. Eventually there will be real, even catastrophic consequences, but for a short time the car will continue to go forward. One does not have to follow the recommendations of the creator of the vehicle, but not following them will result in a breakdown. The same is true in life. We do not have to live according to our design and may even function well—for a while. Eventually, though, we will have a breakdown. For those that are doing fine right now, the challenge is to begin living according to the design provided by your Creator so that when the difficulties do come you will remain resilient and strong instead of falling apart.

## Jesus as Our Ultimate Example

The great thing about the Bible as an instruction manual for life is that it does not only tell us what we should and should not do, but it gives us a real example—a model—of how we should live. While many people would consider the Jesus of the Bible to be a weak caricature of a man, that could not be further from the truth. We have the life of Jesus very clearly illustrated for us in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, so that we can see what a “real” man—a resilient man—looks like. Jesus is, in fact, the perfect picture of a life lived for others. In the book of Philippians, chapter 2, Jesus is the perfect mix of grace and truth, strength and mercy, and so clearly illustrates a picture of genuine love.

While entire books have been written about the patterns demonstrated by Jesus, a few examples are these:

**Servant Leadership:** Even though He is God, the Creator of all that exists, He left heaven and came to earth to pay the price

## PATH TO RESILIENCY

for sin on our behalf because we could not do it on our own. (Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:12-20)

**Unconditional Love:** Jesus regularly stopped to be a blessing and to love those who could do nothing to pay that love back. In fact, these were typically the people that no one else would even talk to. Whether the worst sinners in society (Mark 2:15-17), small children (Matthew 18:1-6), or a harlot at a well (John 4:4-26), Jesus always loved the unlovely.

**Righteous Indignation:** There is a great story found in the Gospels about Jesus “cleansing the temple.” He discovered that instead of a place of worship, the temple had become a place for money to be made. He was so angry that He made a whip and drove out all the people who were using God’s house to make money (Mark 11:15-19). There are many lessons in this story, but primarily, we see the strength and courage needed to stand up for what is right.

## CHAPTER ONE - *WHY IS IT SO HARD TO BE RESILIENT?*

**Sacrifice:** We are not characterized by what we consume, but by what we produce for others. Jesus produced the gift of eternal life. This gift required absolute sacrifice and cost Him everything (John 19:1-30). We must sacrifice for those we love... ***Daily.***

Those who are resilient are those who align their lives to the blueprint for life given by their Creator. They follow the example set forth by Jesus in His birth, life, death, and resurrection. Wherever you find yourself today, whether in a moment of crisis or in a place of relative stability, both the path forward and the foundation to a resilient life are found in alignment to the blueprint of life.

***If what you are doing isn't working,  
maybe it's time to do something different!***



# Chapter Two

## Living with the End in Mind

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

**2 Corinthians 5:10**

Reading a good book is one of the simple pleasures of life. Although some books can teach us things that will help develop skills for living, there is nothing quite like reading a book that tells an interesting life story. What makes the story of someone's life even more interesting is when that story takes an unexpected turn with an ending far different than anticipated—and even better if that turn causes an underdog to become a hero!

As interesting as reading a story like this can be, it is easy to forget that in a very real way, each one of

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us is writing a story of our own. With a developing cast of characters, plot twists and unexpected endings, the stories of our lives are being written to be bound and read when we are gone. This story, although each one has a different title, is our Legacy. An individual legacy is the story of a life as it is understood and remembered by those on the outside. A legacy is not what we wish it to be but is rather the way that we are remembered. *It is the example that we leave for those coming behind.*

Just like any other good story though, the legacy of your life is not complete until the final period is put on the final sentence on the final page. To put it simply, if you do not like the legacy that you would leave if you died today, you can hit the return button, start a new paragraph, and begin writing the story that you want to be told.

We should all live our lives with our legacy in mind. This requires that we live every day with the end of our life in mind. Live each day asking the question, “What am I doing today that is going to make my legacy something that I would be proud

## CHAPTER TWO - *LIVING WITH THE END IN MIND*

to leave behind?” Living with our legacy in mind clarifies our day-to-day lives and motivates us to make decisions that will outlast the here and now. To do this, it is important to consistently ask some clarifying questions:

*“What will my legacy be if nothing changes?”*

*“What do I want my legacy to be?”*

*“What do I need to do to make it happen?”*

*“What am I investing in now that will outlive me?”*

*“If those that I care about followed my example, would I be happy with where they end up?”*

One day the story of your life—your legacy—will be handed down to the generation coming behind. *Will that story be something that they cherish because of the lessons taught and the direction given? Or will it be something that they cast aside because it has so little value?*

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*How will you be remembered?*

*As angry and lost, bitter at the world, constantly pushing away those that love you? Or as an honorable person, who served others, loved their family and never compromised their character and integrity?*

The choice is yours. Begin today to live with the end in mind.

### ***What does God's Word say about leaving a legacy?***

In the Bible passage from 2 Timothy 4:7, Paul had expended himself in service of Christ and had a keen sense that he was nearing the end of his life. We know from his writings to other churches that he was not afraid of death. In fact, he clearly stated that if he were absent from the body, he would be present with the Lord. The resurrection had defeated the sting of death, and Paul couldn't wait to meet his Savior.

As Paul pondered the end of his life, he made three very simple statements about his legacy. He had "*fought the good fight*"—standing firm as a spiritual

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warrior, clothed in the armor of God, faithfully defending the truth of the Gospel. He had “finished the race”—ensuring that he was neither disqualified nor disheartened in the marathon of life and ministry. Most importantly, he had “kept the faith”—remaining true, committed, and loyal to the One who had rescued him from sin and darkness.

Notice that Paul’s brief statements here say nothing about the education he had received, the places he had traveled, the letters he had written, the people he had preached to, or the churches he had planted. He simply wanted his legacy to be labeled as “faithful.”

### *Jesus lived an ultimate example of LEGACY:*

The story of the Gospels is really the story of the legacy of Christ. It is in the Gospels that we learn how a perfect person entirely focused on doing the work of God would live and interact with others. While none of us is perfect, the story of Christ on this earth provides the yardstick against which each of us should measure our lives. The way that we

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live, if we truly want to fulfill the purpose for which we were created, should emulate the life of Christ on this earth.

The purpose of Christ's time on earth is clear. We understand this because He declared that He had come "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). He came to humbly and sacrificially die on the cross in our place to pay for our sins. That was His purpose on this earth. As He fulfilled that purpose, however, He went through a process of teaching those around Him how they should live when He was gone. The Gospel message as we understand it today continues to spread more than 2,000 years after the death and resurrection of Christ because He not only fulfilled His purpose but equipped those He led to communicate that message. It is amazing that Jesus told His followers they would do even greater works than Him! (John 14:12) He knew that beyond providing salvation, His legacy of teaching and training would allow His disciples to change the world for generations to come.

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What we learn from Jesus' example of how to leave behind a powerful legacy is that it must be *intentional*. Jesus truly lived every day with the end in mind. He knew that one day soon He would leave and that the only way the most important message ever delivered would be propagated was if His followers understood their role in delivering it. He began by selecting those that He knew He could invest in—a select few that He very intentionally mentored. He then taught these men the truths that they would hang on to as they spread the message around the world. He told them some of the challenges they would face and then encouraged them to remain faithful in spite of those challenges. Most importantly, He modeled with His own life how to deal with opposition as He went to the cross. If we want to live a legacy that is worth handing to the next generation, we need to follow His example:

*1. Choose those in whom we will intentionally invest.*

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- 2. Strategically communicate the key truths that they need to understand.*
- 3. Paint a picture of the challenges they will face.*
- 4. Encourage them to press forward in spite of challenges in order to accomplish something important.*
- 5. Provide an example that is worth following.*

***Jesus is the ultimate example.  
Follow His legacy as you develop your own!***

# Chapter Three

## The Power to Choose

*There is a way that appears to be right,  
but in the end it leads to death.  
Proverbs 14:12*

***Daily decisions spread out over a lifetime are the criteria by which all of us will be defined.*** If legacy is the story of a life, and living to leave a legacy means living every day with the end in mind, then the natural question is: “What do I need to do daily to ensure that I will leave a legacy of which I can be proud?” The simple, though not easy, answer is: ***“You must decide!”***

Seeing this principle at work in those who participate in the Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs is always amazing. Our primary program is a week-

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long getaway intended to recalibrate a person's life. Broken men and women—those without purpose, direction or hope—often attend these programs as a last resort. They have tried other programs and “therapies” only to continue drifting through life with an uncertain future. On the other side of the program, these same men and women now have a purpose and hope that is truly remarkable. Relationships are restored, direction is regained and meaningful legacies are being built. So what changes from the beginning of the week to the end? How does this dramatic, life-altering change take place? The change begins the moment that a man or woman DECIDES to get up from the place that they have fallen and to move forward toward something meaningful. Tools, encouragement, and accountability are given, but the change happens because a decision is made.

The lie that enslaves so many that have dealt with trauma is that because of what has happened to them, they can no longer be the person that they would like to be. Some think that trauma takes

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away the ability to make decisions related to daily behavior. While it is true that many types of trauma have real emotional and physiological consequences, it is also true that they do not remove the power or the ability to decide! When that right—the right to choose—is surrendered, life becomes an out-of-control train looking for a place to crash.

It is certainly easier to blame the circumstances of our life on something out of our control, but the past only defines the future for those that allow it! Resiliency and a worthwhile legacy will come only to the person that decides to live every day to the best of his ability. It is not a perfect or difficulty free life that makes the difference, it is the decision to fulfill a created purpose IN SPITE OF those difficulties that makes the difference!

Among those who have served, the belief that trauma removes the ability to decide has led to:

- *22 suicides EACH DAY, among those who have served, or are currently serving.*

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- *Marriages falling apart at a rate much higher than the national average among civilian couples.*
- *Children with parents who are physically present but emotionally and/or psychologically absent.*
- *Men and women who have served for reasons beyond themselves that spend the majority of their lives consumed with angst and self-pity.*
- *The most effective leaders our country has produced essentially sidelined because of events outside of their control.*

It is no secret that our homes, our communities, and our country are suffering from an absolute leadership crisis. What a tragedy it is that proven leaders who have endured hardship and overcome the biggest obstacles have put themselves on a shelf because they have decided not to decide.

## ***What does God's Word say about making Good Choices?***

The Bible offers many principles to aid the process of making decisions that honor God. The following list is not exhaustive, but it does represent many teachings of Scripture.

***1. Begin with prayer.*** *1st Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." If we are told to pray continually, that would certainly include times of decision-making!*

***2. Define the issue.*** *Wise decisions are informed decisions. It is important to understand what options are available. Once the factors are known, options can be further considered and evaluated. Proverbs 2:2 says, "turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding."*

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**3. Seek Biblical wisdom.** *Some decisions become easy, especially if there is one clear choice consistent with God's Word. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." When we follow the teachings of God's Word, He guides our path and provides knowledge to make wise choices.*

**4. Listen to Godly counsel.** *Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." Sometimes, talking with a friend or family member is enough. At other times, consulting with a pastor or other trusted voice could make the difference between a harmful decision and a helpful one.*

**5. Trust the Lord with your decision.** *In other words, if you've made your decision with prayer, sound wisdom, and Biblical counsel, trust God for the outcome. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on*

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*your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”*

#### ***6. Admit mistakes and adjust accordingly.***

*There is no wisdom in continuing down a wrong path after you have discovered it is wrong. Be willing to admit mistakes or failures and ask God for the grace to change.*

#### ***7. Give praise to God for your success.***

*When your decisions result in personal success, the temptation is to believe it is due to your own power, talent, or genius. However, it is God who blesses our efforts and gives strength. “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven” (John 3:27).*

## *Jesus as Our Ultimate Example of Godly Decision Making*

Doing God's will is a choice. That is made clear by Jesus' statement, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own" (John 7:17). Note the first part of that statement: "If anyone chooses to do God's will." Understand that you can make a choice in your life to do God's will.

It is not a one-time decision. Instead, it is a choice that has to be made again and again. These are choices that strengthen your decision to do God's will.

An amazing illustration of the power of choice is found in the life of Christ. We understand from Scripture that Jesus is God. He is the same God that created everything "in the beginning" and the same God that sustains life today. He left heaven and came to earth, even as the Creator, because His creation needed Him to pay for sin. He was the only One that could make this payment since He is the only One with the power to overcome sin and death. As He walked this earth He was asked His purpose. His

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answer? To find and save those who are lost! (Luke 19:10) He eventually did just that. He died in our place on the cross, murdered by His creation so that He could provide forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

As amazing as that story is, what makes it truly amazing is the understanding that HE DID NOT HAVE TO! He did all of this because we needed Him to, not because He was incapable of doing anything else. At any point in the journey to the cross, Jesus could have decided that He did not want to go. He could have decided to go back to heaven or to simply start over. But He didn't. He decided to do what needed to be done because of the eternal impact it would have on people that could not save themselves. It was a decision made in spite of the circumstances and not dictated by events outside of His control.

As our supreme example for life and living, Jesus demonstrated the power of a decision!

***Doing God's will is first a decision and then a series of choices to continue to do so.***



# Chapter Four

## Making Changes

*There is a time for everything, and a season  
for every activity under the heavens.  
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

As you attempt to make needed changes, you must rely on God in the process. Be patient with God and with yourself. One of life's frustrations is that God's timetable is rarely the same as ours. We are often in a hurry when God isn't. You may feel frustrated with the seemingly slow progress you're making in life, but remember that God is never in a hurry, and His timing is perfect.

Believe God is working in your life even when you don't feel it. Spiritual growth is sometimes tedious work, one small step at a time. Expect gradual improvement.

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As you begin to accept God's timing for your changes, the important thing is to choose one strategy at a time and stick with it. ***The goal is to improve gradually.***

**Here are some principles to follow:**

### **1. Slow Down**

***Slowing down is the key to getting any skill under your belt. The goal is to get to the point where you can do something smoothly, not necessarily quickly. By slowing down you get better control and higher precision.***

### **2. Start with a Goal in Mind**

***Know what you are trying to accomplish. You need to have a destination before you ever take a first step. Prior to starting anything, try to visualize what it will look like when it's done. Pray and then create a Godly vision and work towards it.***

### **3. Take One Piece at a Time**

***Trying to learn complex skills all at once is a quick road to failure. Break them up.***

## CHAPTER FOUR - MAKING CHANGES

### 4. Push Yourself to the Edge of Your Abilities

*Finding the sweet spot at the edge of your current competence is the key to developing skills. Don't aim too high or too low. You need to find that place where you don't feel comfortable, but it is not so bad that you want to quit.*

### 5. Get Feedback

*Getting valuable feedback from yourself while you are fully immersed in an action is impossible. Ask for help!*

### 6. Repeat

*Mastering anything requires that you make a lot of repetitions. First you must learn the skill, and then you need to repeat it until you feel comfortable with it.*

### 7. Vary Your Approach

*Nothing is more destructive to learning than being bored with the task. Avoid mundane routine by varying your approach to provide a variety of ways to complete the task.*

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### 8. Count Good Repetitions

*By now you probably know that it is not about more time, **but about the quality of that time.** Thinking that more hours will produce better results often traps us. Instead of focusing your attention on minutes, try to **count anything that will tell you whether you are moving forward or not.***

### 9. Record the Data and Review

***Keeping a daily journal** can be very helpful when you are trying to become an expert in any field. By tracking your progress, you can see if you are moving ahead or not. You can also investigate the effectiveness of your learning methods and strategies.*

### 10. Find Someone Who is Better

*Feeling like you are good enough? **Find someone who is better and see what happens.** Constantly try to surround yourself with people that are better at what you are doing and watch how they work. Study them. Your learning will accelerate.*

## CHAPTER FOUR - MAKING CHANGES

### *What does God say about Making Changes?*

The Bible tells us that one of the highest goals God has in store for each one of us is our transformation in Him—and *this transformation is accomplished by the renewing of your mind*. The Bible tells us that God wants to transform us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. He wants to make us into better and more holy people, both on the inside and the outside.

The Bible tells us that we are to try and “**put on**” the good qualities that God wants us to have operating in our personalities, and to “**put away**” negative qualities. This is where many have a hard time. We find ourselves wondering, *Where is the love, joy, peace, sound mind, and self-control that the Bible promises me once I fully commit my life to Jesus? Why is it that I still have a problem with controlling my anger and my frustration about so many other things?*

Once you know the Bible tells you to have self-control over your temper and over your critical

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attitudes, then it will be your job at this point to actually ***“put away”*** these kinds of negative and destructive qualities from your personality.

Imagine someone has just cut you off in traffic. Your normal response may be to react in an angry and aggressive manner. You want to make sure that they know you were not OK with them cutting you off! Your bad temper has now been fully triggered like it does every time someone cuts you off in traffic. At this point, you must make the best effort you can to try and control your temper. You will have to put on the Godly quality of self-control in order to douse the fire inside you. You will need to directly engage with your temper every time you find yourself in a situation that will trigger its release. At first, you may not have much success, because the release of your temper has become such a habit. It has become an automatic response to certain situations. But if you keep at it, over the course of time you will start to get more self-control. Self-control is one of the qualities that God wants to impart and work into your personality. By attempting to put on this

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very positive quality, you will not only be able to overcome a bad temper but other negative qualities as well. A lot of people beat themselves up over their inability to overcome negative behaviors because they are only relying on their own strength. We think if we would just try harder, we should be able to master something. But really, no lasting change can come about without God's power at work in our lives. We encourage you to tap into that power and pray without ceasing!



# Chapter Five

## Moving Forward

*Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

***Luke 9:62***

The question that most people ask when dealing with trauma in their lives or when working to become resilient in the face of future trauma is, “Where do I begin?” How does one move forward when the circumstances of life feel like they are pulling you away from anything meaningful or productive?

While it is impossible to boil down the resilient life to a series of steps, it is important to have benchmarks or signs along the way that keep us moving forward and prevent us from turning back. The pull will always be to those things that are

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comfortable and familiar, which, unfortunately, can also be hurtful and destructive. Intentional living—moving from one benchmark to another—is the only way to ensure that progress will be made.

*So, how do we go forward? D.A.R.E.*

*Decide*

*Accept*

*Reject*

*Embrace*

*Decide that you will move forward.*

It all begins with a decision to move forward. Most people would like to overcome their past and live a resilient life, but they never DECIDE to take the steps that are necessary to actually see it happen. The one thing that you will never lose is your ability to decide to move forward. This is where it begins.

*Accept who you are—be an authentic person.*

There comes a point in our lives when we must stop living behind the expectation of others and the facade that we have built and begin living an authentic life.

## CHAPTER FIVE - *MOVING FORWARD*

When we live a life of authenticity, the burden of being someone we were never created to be is lifted and we are free to be who God intended.

### ***Who is an Authentic Person?***

- 1. A person of virtue and sincerity*
- 2. A person who does what is right in spite of obstacles*
- 3. A person of honesty*
- 4. A person who is uplifting and encourages others*
- 5. A person who holds himself to a high standard in all things*
- 6. A person of his word*
- 7. A person who meets the needs of others*

***Reject the things that will pull you back.***

We must all decide fundamentally that we will not allow anything to keep us from living the authentic life that we were created to live. We need to reject habits and people who will pull us

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back to the life we are moving away from.

***What are those things?***

- 1. Flexible standards*
- 2. A blurred vision of who God made you to be*
- 3. An unguarded mind*
- 4. Friends who do not share your values*
- 5. A lack of authentic, accountable relationships*

***Embrace each opportunity to move forward.***

Do not allow yourself to fall into the trap of believing that because of something in your past or a failure in your present that you cannot move forward. Embrace the opportunity in front of you to grow and move forward by the grace of a God that loves you and has a plan for you. Failure is not fatal unless you allow it to prevent forward movement. Any person who lives an authentic life can bounce back as long as he or she is willing.

## CHAPTER FIVE - *MOVING FORWARD*

### *What does God's Word say about Moving Forward?*

Hebrews chapter 11 is an incredible passage of Scripture. I encourage everyone to read it. For many who have been around church, they may be familiar with this chapter of Scripture as “The Hall of Faith.” It is aptly called this because it lists many of the heroes of the Old Testament and recounts their great faith that allowed them to do amazing things. We read stories about people like Noah who built a ship when there was no rain only to be saved during a worldwide flood. We read about Moses who parted the Red Sea and Joshua who led the Israelites to march around Jericho until the walls of the city fell to the ground. So many wonderful stories of faith are recorded in this one chapter. These stories are encouraging and motivating. If we are not careful though, we can read these and conclude that people of faith had an easier time being faithful, when in fact they had to make faith-filled choices every day. We need to embrace the fact that to have faith does not mean to live without life's trials. That is

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why I am so thankful that Hebrews 11 does not just record these amazing stories as the only pictures of a faith-filled life. Toward the end of the chapter there is another group of people called simply, “Others.” These men and women of faith, like the previous examples used, did not live easy lives. In fact, we are told that they struggled immensely, as people who trusted God, until the end of their lives and never experienced the same level of success as others.

Hebrews 12:1, referring back to these heroes who persevered under incredible hardship, issues an amazing challenge. The passage was written to encourage and challenge us to persevere in faith, especially in the midst of our trials. *“Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...”* What kind of race will YOU run? Is it a race you define a purpose you set for yourself?

The “race” is the Christian life. It’s a marathon, not

## CHAPTER FIVE - *MOVING FORWARD*

a sprint, and we are called to stay the course and remain faithful to the end. In 2 Timothy 4:7, Paul used this same example near the end of his life: *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

Paul is still encouraging the men and women of today toward the rewards of staying in the race—*of never giving up*. A marathon is a strenuous test of fitness and endurance. The race set before us requires faith, stamina, commitment, and discipline in order to live faithfully.

The race is *“set before us”*. We did not select the course. ***God established it.*** This race we run for Christ. We stay the course in spite of trials. As we run, we must *“fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”* Because He perfectly finished His race, He is the only One who can help us finish ours. We look away from all distractions because He is already at the finish line.

The race demands that we do away with “everything that hinders”—sin and whatever else threatens our

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relationship with God. Anything that will slow us down or trip us up must be eliminated.

Understanding that the race God set out for us is a lifelong marathon, we must commit ourselves to run to the very end. A daily regimen of prayer, worship, reading God's Word, and examining our lives for impediments will help. We will persevere by maintaining a Christ-like attitude even in the midst of trials.

No matter how long the race may be, we keep our eyes on Jesus, *"...the Champion Who initiates and perfects our faith!"*

### ***What does Jesus say about Moving Forward?***

Instead of looking for an easy way out and shrinking back, Jesus challenges us to take the "narrow gate" in Matthew 7:13. *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it."*

Jesus is saying that even though the easy way may seem tempting, it will ultimately draw you further

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from your destiny in Christ and at the same time make you steadily weaker as you lose contact with God. The benefits of forging ahead in a new life with Jesus far outweigh the temporary joy of the life you once lived. When you focus on Biblical living and the legacy that is created, you will learn to do the right things for the right reasons, and everyone you have influence over will be positively impacted by the new choices made.

If you've allowed the world's temptations to constantly sway you toward what is easy, but sinful, it is still not too late to grab hold of God and move forward. Decide to no longer allow the world's appeal to overpower you.



## **Conclusion:**

### ***Take the Next Step***

*“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.”  
Immediately He received his sight  
and followed Jesus along the road.  
Mark 10:52*

***This journey will not be easy, but what of any worth is?***

*Where do you begin? What's next?*

***Take the next step.***

Stop hanging on to a past that has artificially prevented you from moving forward and stop trying to figure out how it all works. Just take the first step, and then the one after that, and the one after that, and then get up tomorrow and do it again. Eventually, all of those steps will have moved you away from the past that had defined you and move you to the life that you were created to live.

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This will never become easy, but moving forward will allow you to live a life that leaves a good legacy for the next generation.

The enemy tries to keep us from moving forward through fear. But instead of giving in to our fears, we can choose to be bold, confident, and courageous through Christ. God doesn't want us to live timid, weak, fearful, boring lives. He wants us to be bold, confident, and courageous. It is amazing what God will do through a person who simply steps out in faith. When God starts you on His path, it's hard to see the enormity of His vision for your life. If you choose to follow that vision, you'll be met with plenty of opposition, but you will never regret following Him. Choosing Jesus means choosing a new and life-giving journey.

Whatever the next step is for you, just decide that you will take it! For some of you, the next step is to accept Jesus Christ into your life. For others, it may be to be baptized. Maybe you need to join a church, get into a small group, begin to tithe, find a ministry, go on a mission trip, or invite a friend to church.

## CONCLUSION: *TAKE THE NEXT STEP*

Although the next step is different for everyone, one thing is universal: We all have a next step that must be taken. God will never be finished taking you deeper in faith. *There is always a next step.*

You must understand that God isn't going to help you with step two, three, and four until you take step one. If you're asking God to help you with something, He may be asking **you**, "*Why haven't you done what I've already told you to do?*"

Faith is more than believing, thinking, talking, or having convictions about Jesus. Faith is action. It is movement; it is activity. Faith is something you do. In fact, the Bible says in James 2:14, "*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?*"

Now is the time. Let go of whatever has been holding you back and begin to follow the plan for your life given by your Creator. It will not be easy, yet it will be fulfilling. Only when we are living according to His plan can we fully be the people that we were created to be.

## **PATH TO RESILIENCY**

*It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus,  
Who has become for us wisdom from God—that is,  
our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

**1 Corinthians 1:30**

# Appendix

## *Having a Relationship with Jesus Christ*

Before you can be truly resilient you must have a personal relationship with your Creator. It is only as you align to His will for your life that you can fulfill the purpose for which you were created.

Having a relationship with Christ is really just coming to the place where you understand and accept that the Bible is true when it talks about who Jesus is and your need for Him as Savior. While there is no “*magic*” process or words to enter in to a relationship with Christ, the following can serve as a guide for anyone who sincerely desires to give their life to Him.

### **1. RECOGNIZE YOUR CONDITION.**

In order to find the way to eternal life with God, I must admit I am lost in sin. Romans 5:12 teaches us that since Adam and Eve, the first man and woman on earth, a sin nature has been present in all people. Romans 3:23 says, “*For all have sinned, and come*

## PATH TO RESILIENCY

*short of the glory of God.*” Sin is any act contrary to God’s laws and commandments, and those sins that I have committed separate me from God. Sin has a penalty. Romans 6:23 says, *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The “wage” or payment for our sin is spiritual death, and eternal separation from God.

### **2. RELIGION AND GOOD WORKS ARE NOT THE ANSWER.**

Religions try to create their own ways to God. Their systems may seem logical, but they cannot bridge the gap created by our sin. Proverbs 14:12 says, *“There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* In other words, our thoughts and ways are not what matter. God’s Word, the Bible, provides true answers of grace and forgiveness. In Ephesians 2:8–9 the Bible says, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

### **3. THE GOOD NEWS - JESUS CHRIST PROVIDES THE WAY!**

Even though we were lost and separated from God, He loved us, and because He is love, God sent His

## **APPENDIX - *HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST***

Son to die on the Cross and raise from the dead three days later. John 3:16 explains *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, He became the payment for our sin. Now, we do not have to pay for our sin ourselves. By His grace, salvation is provided. In Romans 5:8, the Bible says, *“But God demonstrated his love toward us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

### **4. BELIEVE, REPENT, AND RECEIVE CHRIST.**

In order to have a relationship with God and an eternal home in Heaven, we must stop trusting ourselves, our works, and our religions, and place our full trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sin and eternal life. In Roman 10:13 the Bible says, *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* That is a promise directly from God that if you will pray to Him, confess that you are a sinner, ask Him to forgive your sins, and turn to Him alone to be your Savior; He promises to save you and give you the free gift of eternal life. You can make that decision today by praying from your heart, something like this:

## PATH TO RESILIENCY

*Dear God, I know that I am separated from you because of sin. I confess that in my sin, I cannot save myself. Right now, I turn to you alone to be my Savior. I ask you to save me from the penalty of my sin, and I trust you to provide eternal life to me.*

—Amen

***You'll never regret that decision!***

If you have just trusted Christ,  
we would love to know about your  
decision and give you a Bible  
and some other materials to help you  
learn more about that new relationship!

**Give us a call at 951-240-3011**

*and let us know today!*

## About the Authors



**Chad M. Robichaux**  
**BCPC, MBA**

*Founder & President,  
Mighty Oaks Foundation  
USMC Force Recon Veteran  
Best Selling Author  
Pro MMA Champion*

Chad M. Robichaux is the President and Founder of the Mighty Oaks Foundation, a leading military non-profit serving the US Military active duty and veteran communities with highly successful peer-to-peer faith-based combat trauma programs and combat resiliency conferences. Chad and his team are dedicated to helping America's military Warriors and their families suffering from the "unseen wounds" of combat such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Their effort is on the front line to intercede and end the climbing 22 per day veteran suicide rate and the tragic divorce epidemic in military families. In its first five years, the program had over 1,200 alumni and reached tens of thousands

## PATH TO RESILIENCY

active duty service members through resiliency conferences.

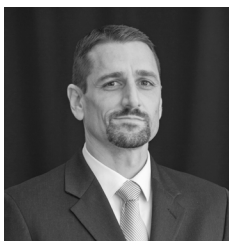
Chad is a former Special Operations Force Recon Marine and DoD Contractor with eight deployments to Afghanistan as part of a Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) Task Force. He has earned an MBA and is a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor with a focus on PTSD. Chad and his wife, Kathy, have three children. After years of deployments their family personally faced the challenges of PTSD. They now share a story of a victory in Christ through the struggles our Warriors face returning home and have dedicated their lives to sharing that story to mentor others like them. Chad is a widely sought-after public speaker and subject matter expert on PTSD, military, and veterans' issues. He has testified in Veterans' Courts regarding combat trauma and PTSD, wrote a best-selling book on the subject and has been featured on such media outlets as *Fox News*, *Forbes*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *USA Today*, *Christian Post*, *Focus on The Family*, *The 700 Club*, and a short biography film by *I Am Second*.

In addition to Chad's military service, he has served our nation as a Special Agent with the US Federal Air Marshal Service and the US State Department as a Surveillance Detection Senior Program Manager.

## PATH TO RESILIENCY - *ABOUT THE AUTHORS*

Chad is also a Medal of Valor Recipient for his bravery beyond the call of duty in law enforcement.

Outside of his work with veterans Chad and his sons train and teaches Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. He is a 3rd Degree Black Belt and a Former Pro MMA World Champion who has used his platform to advocate for civilian support of America's Warriors returning home while competing in the sports biggest events such as NBC's *World Series of Fighting*, Showtime's *StrikeForce*, MTV2's *Bellator FC*, and *Legacy FC* on HDNet & AXStv.



**Jeremy M. Stalnecker**

*Executive Director,*

*Mighty Oaks Foundation*

*Former USMC Infantry Officer*

*Pastor*

Jeremy Stalnecker is the Executive Director of the Mighty Oaks Foundation. The Mighty Oaks Foundation is dedicated to helping America's military Warriors and their families suffering from the "unseen wounds" of combat such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

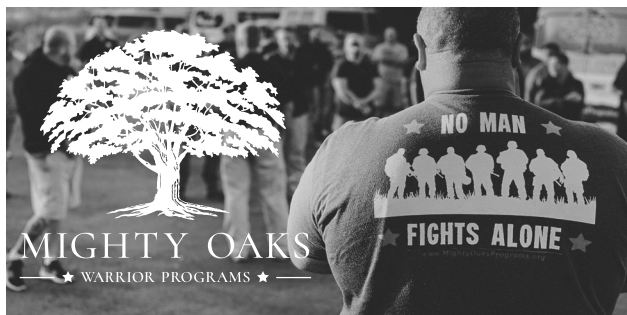
While growing up in San Jacinto, CA, Jeremy's only

## **PATH TO RESILIENCY**

goal in life was to leave home and join the Marine Corps. This dream was finally realized with an active duty commission in 1999. Following Infantry Officer Course in Quantico, VA, Jeremy was assigned to First Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division as an infantry platoon commander. Serving first as a rifle platoon commander in a helicopter company and then as the platoon commander of the counter-mechanized platoon, Jeremy learned valuable leadership and communication skills that he continues to use today. In January 2003, Fifth Marines, as a part of the First Marine Division, deployed to Kuwait in support of what would become Operation Iraqi Freedom. As the war began, First Battalion, Fifth Marines would be the infantry battalion used to breach the berm separating Kuwait and Iraq and would secure the first major objective of the war. This led to a road march that would see the battalion occupying Baghdad and seizing the presidential palace in northern Baghdad on the Tigris River. Throughout this movement, Jeremy and the counter-mechanized platoon would provide navigation and lead security for the battalion. While in the Marine Corps, God was working in Jeremy's life to turn his heart toward full-time ministry. Just one month after returning from Iraq, Jeremy became a staff member of his home church at Coastline Baptist in Oceanside, CA. Here he gained ministry

## **PATH TO RESILIENCY - *ABOUT THE AUTHORS***

experience that would serve him in many areas. In his role as an Assistant Pastor, he counseled and mentored many couples and individuals while also maintaining other church responsibilities. Because he was so near to Camp Pendleton, most of those that he worked with were either Marines or the family members of Marines. In 2008, Jeremy and his family took on a new responsibility when he became the Senior Pastor, just east of San Francisco Bay at Bay Area Baptist Church in Fremont, CA. In this capacity, he continued to minister to families and individuals in a wide range of areas. After serving as senior pastor for nearly seven years, he accepted a full-time position with the Mighty Oaks Foundation. This brought together both his ministry experience and military background in a way that allows him to serve and minister to hurting veterans, service members, and their families. Along with his wife, Susanne, and their four children, Jeremy works to reach the hurting and provide the healing found in Christ.



**LEGACY PROGRAM FOR MEN** - Our six-day intensive peer to peer program serves as the catalyst to help Warriors discover the answers to the big questions in life. Challenges related to the struggles of daily military life, combat deployments and the symptoms of post-traumatic stress (PTS) surface during these six days, and the Legacy Program for Men teaches how to fight through these challenges, which might have been limiting their personal success.

**LEGACY PROGRAM FOR WOMEN** - The Legacy Program for Women is a process of learning to become a Virtuous Woman – “The Proverbs 31” woman. This five-day retreat leads spouses and military women through a time of learning, exploration and growth with an aim to cultivate virtuous characteristics in a safe, open, nurturing environment.

**MARRIAGE ADVANCE: LOVE NEVER GIVES UP** - Our three day Marriage Advance Program is designed for couples to gain a better understanding of the struggles they each face. We structure conversations around needs, expectations, goals and forgiveness to help couples move forward.

**MILITARY RESILIENCY PROGRAMS** - We believe that “*Spiritual Resiliency*” is comprised of three pillars: *mind, body and spirit*. Our Military Resiliency Programs are designed to properly equip our nation’s Warriors on the front end of conflict, so they and their families can have a true “*Spiritual Resiliency*” and a mindset that is preventative of the hardships that many of them face.

*These programs are NO cost to our Warriors.*

*To support or learn more please visit:*

**[www.MightyOaksPrograms.org](http://www.MightyOaksPrograms.org)**

An official program of Mighty Oaks Foundation, a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization

## *The Mighty Oaks Journey*

The Mighty Oaks Foundation, began as a grass roots ministry out of WoodsEdge Community Church in Texas, and is a story of God's transformational power to turn tragedy to triumph. It is a journey starting with one man's brokenness after combat, one women's willingness to fight for her family, their faith in God's promise that we can rise from the ashes and be Mighty Oaks of Righteousness (Isaiah 61:3)... and the obedience of everyone afterward's bold actions to pursue God's call.

Chad and Kathy's testimony of overcoming the challenges posed by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after service in the War of Terror, led to their calling to assist individuals who are going through the same struggles they have experienced. In a moment where Chad felt called to do this work, he realized he wasn't the only one who suffered. Countless other Combat Veterans faced the same challenges he did; ending in 22 suicides a day and staggering rates of military families ending in divorce. Chad wondered to himself, *"Why doesn't someone do something about this,"* and eventually realized that the answer was clear: *"Why not me?"*

Many great men stepped in to mentor Chad and Kathy past their struggles, but none more than Steve Toth and Pastor Jeff Wells of WoodsEdge

## **PATH TO RESILIENCY**

Community Church. It was through this church that Chad and Kathy Robichaux were later ordained and commissioned by Pastor Jeff as ministers and sent to begin the Mighty Oaks ministry to America's Military Warriors and Families. Years later Mighty Oaks continues to preserve their foundational values with a grassroots approach while operating on a national level to empower veterans to not only begin healing, but to be a positive impact on the world around them.

In 2011, the first program for men took root in Westcliffe, Colorado with all non-active duty veterans. While initially developing the programs that would become Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs, they served alongside the Dave Roevers Foundation for over a year.

As new Warriors attended Mighty Oaks Programs they continued to find hope and purpose beyond their service. Being challenged by a peer-to-peer model of the program, the Warriors continued to rise up to the challenge and grab hold of a future worth living again, and as the Warriors left they sent their brothers back to experience what they had at Mighty Oaks. This made the program grow—rapidly. That growth led to a shift from the retired veteran community to a door being opened to reach service members still on Active Duty, where we began to receive Marines and Soldiers on official “military orders.”

## THE MIGHTY OAKS JOURNEY

During this time of growth in 2012, and due to the increasing demand from the US Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Battalion West, Dave Roever introduced Chad to B. Wayne Hughes Jr. to explore the possibility of taking “Mighty Oaks” to El Paso De Robles, CA, which translates to “the path of the oaks.” (*We say this was a wink from God Himself!*) Wayne had a heart to see the Lord’s hand over our returning American Warriors, and wanted to run a Veteran’s program at his ranch—on the condition that if he liked the program, he’d build a lodge to host Mighty Oaks. The timing for the growth to support the Marine Corp could not have been better, and a partnership between Mighty Oaks and Wayne’s organization, “*Serving California*”, took root and SkyRose Lodge was built. Thus, SkyRose became the primary location of the Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs and the growing influx of Warriors and military families, along with three other subsequent primary locations; Blaylock Ranch in Junction, TX, Warrior Retreat at Bull Run in Haymarket, VA, and The Wilds in Columbus, OH (opening in January 2018).

With over 1,200 alumni by 2016, Mighty Oaks continues to receive Active Duty Warriors on official orders from the branches of the US Military as well as veterans and spouses at our programs. MOWP is a top resource to the US Military, having trained and equipped tens of thousands of Warriors in combat readiness through “Resiliency Conferences” at bases

## PATH TO RESILIENCY

across the country. Additionally, we take great pride in empowering our Mighty Oaks Alumni Corps to establish pre & post care “Outposts” across the country.

The Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs began with one church, as the local ministry of a family who wanted to help others in the same way that they had been helped in their fight against PTSD. We have expanded in location but our vision remains the same: to assist our nations Warriors and families by challenging and equipping them, and empowering them to spread that help to the sphere of influence God has given them. Over our five years, we have served our Warriors with the utmost commitment and have not lost one alumni to suicide, and continue to work toward ending the horrific national veteran suicide statistic of 22 per day. Together, we can all strive toward the common goal of ending the war at home by finding a hope and a future, and by aligning with the very purpose for which God created us. We will continue to lead others to rise from the ashes and become Mighty Oaks!

Fully paid scholarships are available for all MOWP programs for active duty or veteran military personnel, as well as their spouses, by applying online. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>For more information on programs, or on how you can participate in donating or supporting MOWP, visit:

**[www.MightyOaksPrograms.org](http://www.MightyOaksPrograms.org)**

**Testimonials of just some of the pastors who have utilized Mighty Oaks speakers to minister to their congregations:**

*“Chad and the Mighty Oaks team first visited The Life Church in May of 2014. We were expecting an engaging presentation to honor veterans for Memorial Day, but we received so much more. There was so much depth to his presentation about life’s challenges and how to overcome those challenges with Jesus Christ as the ultimate Healer. Chad’s personal testimony showed our congregation how to have victory over so many of life’s entanglements; from depression to marital struggles, and how Jesus can be our bondage breaker. Since then, Chad and his team have also been used to speak at Men’s and Student events. They are now Life Church favorites!”*

**– David Baird, Senior Pastor  
The Life Church (Manassas, VA)**

*“With disarming honesty and faith, Chad and Kathy Robichaux have shared their story here in Brentwood. And God has used their story to rekindle faith and hope in weary hearts, and rekindle love in tired marriages.”*

**– Dave Mason, Pastor  
Brentwood Neighborhood Church (Brentwood, CA)**

*“I have yet to see anyone in public speaking have such a dynamic effect on people that causes them to make such radical but positive changes in their lives. Chad Robichaux’s integrity, his trustworthiness and faithfulness to all that he does, has been a fantastic influence on our leadership team and on the church as a whole.”*

**– Ron Woods, Lead Pastor  
The Assembly (Broken Arrow, OK)**



# MIGHTY OAKS

— ★ FOUNDATION ★ —

The mission of Mighty Oaks Warrior Programs is to reach our nation's military warriors and families who face unique life challenges due to their service to America. Whether it be pre-deployment resiliency, post combat trauma or dealing with the transition after their military career has ended, our programs meet them right where they are and provide effective tools to strengthen their lives, marriages and families.

[MightyOaksPrograms.org](http://MightyOaksPrograms.org)



