

# Reappraisal: Value of “Failure”

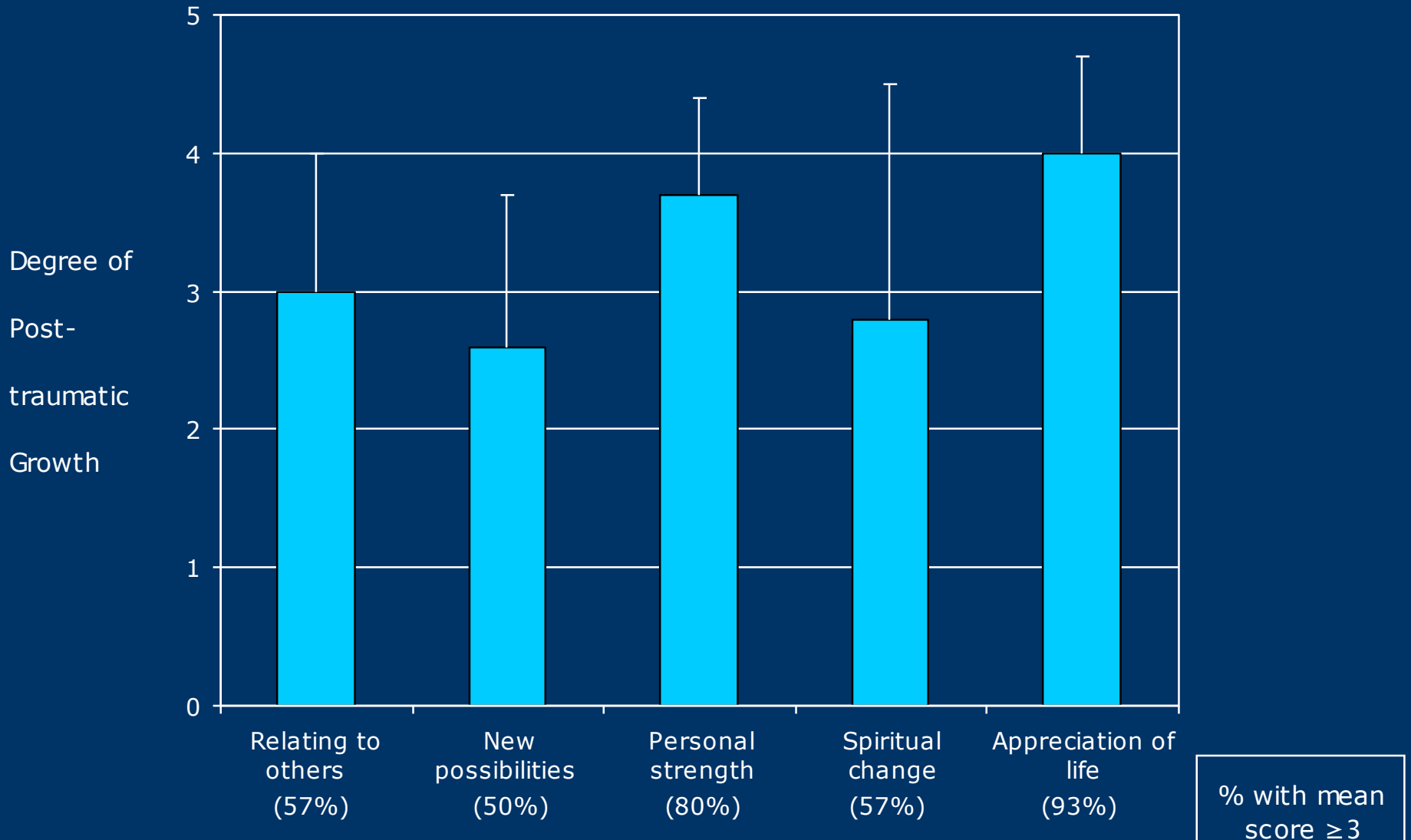
- Thomas Edison: If I find 10,000 ways something won't work, I haven't failed. I am not discouraged because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.
- James Stockdale: To handle tragedy may in fact be the mark of an educated man, for one of the principle goals of education is to prepare man for failure.

# Posttraumatic Growth

Greater appreciation of life  
Enhanced wisdom and maturity  
Shift in values/ perspectives/ philosophy  
New found meaning and purpose  
Greater compassion/ acceptance  
Closer ties with family and friends  
Improve coping skills  
Enhanced self-esteem

-Tedeschi

# Posttraumatic Growth in Vietnam POWs (PTGI)



PTGI = Posttraumatic Growth Inventory; mean score range = 0-5  
n = 30

# Training

# Stress inoculation promotes resilience by providing graded experience of mastering stress

Too little: no growth/ weakening

Too much: weakening/ physical and mental breakdown

Optimal: above comfort zone but not unmanageable

# Stress Management

- Goal is to reduce stress:
  - removing or reducing stressors (e.g. shortening length of deployment)
  - reducing emotional response to stressors (e.g. relaxation training, reappraisal, medication)

# Resilience Training

Additional goal: to grow from stress.

- “Passive toughening”: using normal life stressors to enhance toughening
- “Active toughening”: intentional exposure to progressively increasing levels of stress

# Resilience Training: Attitude

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- Stress is a potential opportunity for growth
- Challenges are to be met and overcome whenever possible
- Achievement rarely comes without enormous work and hardship
- Perseverance and courage are critical



# Training and Brain plasticity

- Experience rewires the brain (use-dependent neuroplasticity)
- The more a skill is rehearsed the more space and wiring the brain devotes to supporting the new skill (e.g. violin players)





# Benefits of Exercise

- Improved physical health
- Decreased depression
- Reduced anxiety
- Increased self-esteem
- Increased physical and emotional resilience

Recovery

# Resilience Training: Recovery

- Must know how to recover
- Rate of recovery is good measure of health and fitness (e.g. cardiovascular, muscular)
- Recover before taking on new stressor
- Be systematic and disciplined about recovery

# Types of Recovery

- Active Recovery
- Walking or jogging
- Yoga
- Stretching
- Tai Chi
- Non-competitive sport: tennis, golf, hiking,

# Types of Recovery

- Passive recovery
- Meditation
- Deep breathing
- Massage
- Nap/ **Sleep**
- Good nutrition
- Reading
- Listening to music



# Meditation

Learning to meditate, observe the mind and body, and direct attention to the present moment allows us to “face whatever comes to us calmly and courageously, knowing we have the flexibility to weather any storm gracefully.”

# Resilience

1. Learn to face fears
2. Cultivate positive emotions/  
humor
3. Actively cope with stress
4. Solidify moral compass
5. Practice religion/ spirituality

# Resilience

6. Seek/ attract social support
7. Cognitive flexibility: reappraisal, acceptance
8. Train: body and mind: exercise, nutrition, mindfulness, recovery
9. Find and imitate resilient role models
10. Extract purpose/ meaning from work and life

# Meaning, Purpose and Mission

# Meaning, Purpose, and Mission

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“Men are strong as long as they stand for an idea.”

Freud

“He who has a why can endure almost any how.”

Kierkegaard

“Man’s heart is restless until he has found and fulfilled meaning and purpose in his life.”

Frankl



People who are impoverished, depressed or suicidal care deeply about much more than just the relief of their suffering. They care sometimes desperately—about virtue, about purpose, about integrity, and about meaning...The best therapists do not merely heal damage, they help people identify and build their strengths and their virtues

Seligman

# Search for Meaning

- The search for meaning is an active process that requires courage, persistence, and dedication to truth.
- It is our responsibility to search for and extract meaning.



# Elizabeth Lukas

- The forces of fate that bear down on man and threaten to break him, also have the capacity to ennoble him.
- The meaning of fate lies in our response to it.

# Survivor Mission

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- Direct outgrowth of personal trauma; a turning of tragedy into activism
- “While there is no way to compensate for an atrocity, there is a way to transcend it by making it a gift to others.” (Judith Herman)







