

## Growing as a Leader: Physically

It doesn't matter if you pastor a church, work in a high-pressure corporate environment, sell real estate, or toil as a full-time parent: the pace of our information-driven, globally-connected, twenty-first-century society forces us to accelerate down the tracks of modern life – and many of us feel dangerously close to flying off the rails.

We are multitasking ourselves into oblivion just to keep up. We push, we strive, and we overcome!

And then we collapse.

### Can we keep this up?

Since the outward forces that exert stress on us are unlikely to disappear, our only choice is to look *inward* at ways we can better adapt to our environment.

Is it possible that we can “grow” to deal with the pressures we find ourselves in?

There is a short but powerful scripture passage that can give us guidelines in this area. Luke 2:52 says, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (NIV)

### THE QUICK SUMMARY

As leadership consultants and executive trainers, Bonnie St. John and Allen P. Haines have heard the same complaints from clients for years; periodic burnout, lack of focus and low energy. So they dug into the latest research on neuroscience, psychology and physiology looking for big answers.

Instead they found *small* answers; proof that small adjustments in daily routines, including thought patterns, food and drink, rest and movement can fight the forces that sap our energy and store focus and drive. They call these amazing efficient restorative techniques “micro-resilience.”

Thousands of men and women from all walks of life have already found effortless ways to incorporate these little changes into the busiest of schedules. Dozens of entertaining anecdotes from real people using *micro-resilience* demonstrate that when our brains fire faster, our energy increases and we can cope with almost any surprise, pressure or crisis.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION - [Micro-Resilience](#) by Bonnie St. John and Allen Haines

When thinking of growing physically, it's easy to gravitate toward the big ideas of eating healthy, getting plenty of exercise, and having a healthy sleep pattern. There's nothing wrong with those actions – they are the solid foundation to having a healthy body.

But these are macro-resilient patterns, a set of more time-consuming habits that give us increased energy and better health over the long term. There is really no substitute for these critical building blocks of physical and mental health.

But macro processes like the above examples take weeks and months of diligent, consistent work to show results – time that many of us fail to plan for in our schedules.

Micro-resilience, on the other hand, takes almost no time, and works almost immediately. Micro-resilience techniques can make all the difference in your day.

And one way to start is to take a well-timed drink of water.

*The human capacity for complex thinking and subtle social interaction is as dependent on a consistent supply of high-performance fuel and fluids as a Ferrari.*

Our micro-resilience perspective on hydration differs from the traditional point of view by putting attention on *when* you drink water in addition to how much. When you're under stress or a tight deadline, that trusty water bottle is often relegated to the far side of the desk and ignored. But these are the times when you need that hydration the most.

If we get busier than usual and let our water habits fall by the wayside for a few hours or a full day, science tells us that our ability to hit our targets will decline.

Because your brain is made up of more than 70 percent water, and the rest of our body is closer to 60 or 65 percent, you may not even feel thirsty before your brain begins to experience a hydration shortage. Drinking water *before* feeling thirsty will help maintain optimal body hydration status.

Hydration affects our moods as well. The most consistent effects of mild dehydration include fatigue, confusion, and anger. Poor overall physical health makes a resilient life very difficult, too. Dehydration can have a negative effect on the kidneys, heart, digestion, and skin.

Bonnie St. John and Allen Haines, [Micro-Resilience](#)

## A NEXT STEP

According to *Micro-Resilience* authors Bonnie St. John and Allan Haines, the following tips can make hydration fun and appealing:

- Keep a bottle of water on your desk and another in your car.
- When you feel hungry, drink a glass of water first. Mild hunger and mild thirst can feel similar.
- Ask for water in restaurants if they don't offer it right away.
- Drink a glass of water before and after every meal, covering at least six glasses per day

and helping you reduce your overall food intake.

- Match each ounce of the caffeinated beverages you drink with an ounce of water to offset their dehydrating effects.
- Time your hydration so that you drink the majority of your water during the most difficult and challenging part of your day.

If you are not currently practicing the tips above, make the decision to do so over the next few weeks. After you have integrated them into your regular routine for at least two weeks consistently, review how you feel, noting any improvements.

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