PRELIMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS

Building Resilience
Wednesdays, 8 weeks,
7:00-8:50 pm (PST)
July 07 – August 25

Instructor:
Antoine de Morree, PhD

Summary
In times of stress, resilience is key. Luckily, resilience can be learned. In this interactive course, you will learn research-based techniques to help you build resilience, navigate setbacks, and identify your purpose. Drawing on the latest research in neuroscience and psychology, this course will teach you how to find solid footing when you feel overwhelmed and a way to find the strength to bounce back. The course will first focus internally. You will learn to understand what goes on in your mind when you feel sad, angry, or happy. Students will acquire a framework to analyze and discuss their own minds and emotions, together with exercises to help them evaluate and guide those emotions. The course will then focus externally on how to deal with others. When you are ready to bounce back, can you pull others along? When others are causing you stress, can you face them constructively? And, when others in distress need your support, can you offer it? You will learn techniques to improve your interactions with others. Specific applications will help you prepare to deal with difficult situations, difficult people, and difficult conversations. The highly interactive sessions will include small-group discussions based on personal reflections, guided exercises that can be self-explorative (meditative) or communicative (spoken), along with information from published research.

What will you learn in this course?
Through this course you will gain:
 Understanding how resilience is both innate and learned;
 A framework to analyze and discuss your emotions;
 Three specific techniques to build internal support;
 Three specific techniques to improve interactions with others.

What will this course look like?
This course is designed to improve your response to stressful situations. All aspects of the course have been created to further this goal, and, as participants in this class, you will have the opportunity to bring your own thoughts, experiences, and
reactions together with the course material. With this in mind, the best things you can bring to this course are your insights, your reflections, and your enthusiasm.

Class sessions:
Weekly class sessions will take place on Zoom. Classes will be highly interactive and involve both a lecture component and a student participation component, which can be in the form of group discussions, personal reflections, and self-explorative (meditative) exercises. Because of this interactive component, it is strongly suggested that you attend the live class sessions.

Class recordings:
Recordings will be made available to all students. However, recordings will only cover the lecture part of the class, and not any of the breakout-group activities.

Homework:
This course has little conventional homework. Instead, you will gain techniques to work with your mind. You will be asked to try out these techniques and reflect on that experience in class. In addition, reading materials will be recommended. These reading materials are not required for your participation in the course but serve as a foothold to further your understanding and to help you delve deeper into a particular topic.

Assignments:
Assignments will include the following:
1) Weekly short reflections at the end of every class session sharing one thing you learned or one remaining question you have from that day’s class.
2) Weekly “experiments” where you will be asked to put the insights from class material into practice in your life and then reflect on your experience in class in small breakout groups.
3) A final written class reflection detailing what you will take away from the course and what mindsets you aim to cultivate in the future.

Class culture & policies:

Zoom etiquette:
The Zoom room will be set to automatically mute participants and keep your video off upon entry. If you are in a noisy area, we ask that you keep yourself muted unless you are actively participating or asking a question. If possible, you are strongly encouraged to leave your video on during class so that we can see each
other’s faces and build our class community. This goes in particular for the small breakout group sessions.

With this in mind, however, it is a difficult time for everyone, and we should all strive to be flexible, understanding, and accommodating of one another. I encourage all of you to make our class time together special. For some of you, that might mean a time that is free from distractions, while for others it might mean eating dinner during class or sitting down for class with your favorite beverage.

Life happens, so if you need a stretch break, bathroom break, tea refill, or to care for a pet or child or loved one during class, please feel free to turn your video off for a few minutes to take care of yourself & others.

**Grade Options & Requirements:**

- **No Grade Requested (NGR)**
  This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance will be provided.

- **Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)**
  Students must participate in all of the live sessions. If you are late, please join when you can. If you cannot attend a session, but are in need of grading, please reach out to the instructor.

- **Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)**
  Students must submit written reflections in addition to participating in all live sessions.

Letter grades will be assigned according to these general standards: A=Excellent (90-100%), B=Good (80-89%), C=Satisfactory (70-79%), D=Minimal Pass (60-69%).

**Class days:**

- July 7
- July 14
- July 21
- July 28
- August 4
- August 11
- August 18
- August 25
**Weekly Schedule***
*exact course topics, readings, and assignments subject to change

**Introduction**

Week 1. (July 7) Resilience, deconstructing and building.
Guided discussions on what is resilience, and how can we study and learn it. You will reflect on and discuss your own perspectives.

The second hour of class will delve into the evolution of the mind. How do mind and emotion work, how did they evolve, and how can mind and emotion enhance or inhibit our functioning?

**Part 1: Looking inward. Understanding and navigating mind and emotion**
The first aspect of resilience is understanding what goes on in your mind when you feel sad, angry, or happy. You will gain a framework to analyze and discuss their own minds and emotions, together with exercises to help them evaluate and guide their emotions.

Week 2: (July 14) Finding solid footing in times of stress, by tapping into inner support.
When you feel alone, it is important to find support, either externally or internally. This session will include a technique to find internal support.

Week 3: (July 21) Awareness and attention.
Our mind has a powerful attention spotlight. Being able to adjust what is in focus and what is not is of great help in times of adversity.

Week 4: (July 28) Personal values and identities.
How you think of yourself and how you think others see you has a great influence on how you feel and act. This session will delve into the use of identity to recharge.

**Part 2: Looking outward. Resilience when dealing with others.**
The second aspect of resilience hinges on how you deal with others. When you are ready to bounce back, can you pull others along? When others are causing the stress, can you face them constructively? And, when others in distress need your support, can you offer it?

Week 5: (August 4) Finding purpose
Focus on a positive future helps to navigate out of a stressful situation. This session will explore how to find purpose and meaning.

Week 6: (August 11) Dealing with opposites.
The things that cause stress are often also the things that bring happiness. Students will learn to navigate those opposite feelings.

Week 7: (August 18) Compassionate leadership
Leaders must recognize stress among their teammates and help mitigate it. You will
learn how initiate and continue dialogue with someone experiencing stress.

Helping others is psychologically beneficial. This session also delves into how to help others when you feel resistance.

**Conclusion**

Week 8: (August 25) Shared experience.
We routinely compare ourselves to others but too often focus on the wrong things and are left feeling that the grass is greener on the other side. You will learn how comparisons can be a strength and how they can be detrimental.
We will also discuss what is next and how you can continue building resilience after the course ends.

**About the instructor**

Antoine de Morrée, PhD is an Instructor in Neurological Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine and has made seminal contributions in stem cell research. He has won multiple competitive awards including an MDA Career Development Grant for his research and his work has been published in top scientific journals including Science and Nature. As elected leader of 2,100 postdoctoral scholars, Antoine successfully lobbied for major policy changes in healthcare and transportation benefits at Stanford University, for which he received two leadership awards. Antoine is author of the book “Magnetic: how great leaders persuade and inspire” (2020, Kendall Hunt Publishing) and the textbook “Becoming Magnetic: a communication handbook for future leaders” (2021, Kendall Hunt Publishing). Antoine did his postdoctoral training at Stanford University and holds a PhD in Human Genetics from Leiden University, The Netherlands, and MS and BS degrees from Utrecht University, The Netherlands. He is a Stanford-certified compassion facilitator.