

Bennett's *Raw Coping Power* is inspiring; it will show you exactly how to cope with stress and also how to prosper from it. Yes, prosper! A remarkable book!

Marshall Goldsmith, Author of The New York Times bestseller
What Got You Here Won't Get You There

RAW COPING POWER

FROM STRESS TO THRIVING



Joel B. Bennett, PhD

Foreword by **Kenneth R. Pelletier, PhD, MD**

Praise for "Raw Coping Power"

*Dr. Bennett is an undisputed leader in the field of organizational wellness and particularly stress management. Having worked with him and observed his commitment to moving research into practice, I am excited about the excellent literary work he has produced. **Raw Coping Power** is more gentle than its title suggests; but just as serious. Using true stories for insight and impact, Dr. Bennett directs the reader to look within to his own path and then lights the way to make the journey easier. I felt that my friend was with me and I believe he was. He will be there for you, too. This is a powerful inspirational resource that will build strength and resilience for anyone. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.*

Connie Tyne, Vice President of External Affairs
The Cooper Institute

Resilience is among our most essential attributes, but it is routinely subject not only to wear and tear, but neglect. With obvious expertise, clear compassion, keen insight, and genuine wisdom, Joel Bennett explains why, and how, to cultivate this inner source of strength - and live a better life as a result.

David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP
Director, Yale University Prevention Research Center

***Raw Coping Power** skillfully provides the principles and lenses you need to help you to tap into life differently. Having coached and counseled individuals and groups about body-mind-spirit, I've heard amazing stories about inner strength and getting back to just being. What I really like about **Raw Coping Power** is the tool box that nudges you along this path of self-exploration and life fulfillment. As a 4th stage prostate cancer survivor, I wake every morning recognizing I've been given another day to move beyond the "C" word and choose to thrive, experience and share my joy. Be open to the journey, be open to just being. Let **Raw Coping Power** unleash the raw, life energizing, spirit deep within you.*

William B. Baun, EPD, CWP, FAWHP
Wellness Officer, MD Anderson Cancer Center
President, National Wellness Institute

*Dr Joel Bennett is a bona fide thought leader, his work spot on, timely, and powerfully practical. **Raw Coping Power** is an accessible "system", helping individuals, teams, and workplaces to tap their inherent capacity to transform stress into a positive learning force. This book both inspires AND shows the way! With decades on the front lines of the wellness and integrative medicine revolutions, I enthusiastically declare this program "required" for executives, department heads and consultants. The system, formatting, stories, examples, and exercises make the concepts and ideas accessible and implementable. Excellent contribution, Dr. Bennett!*

Dr. Roger Jahnke, OMD

Author, "The Healer Within" and Director and Chief Instructor of the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi

*We all complain about stress, but with Dr. Joel Bennett's new book **Raw Coping Power** you can now re-envision those complaints as positive stepping stones to a life of thriving and flourishing. This book is a handy guide for revealing the hidden teaching power of stress. By blending real-world stories with research, Dr. Bennett makes a compelling case that each of us has a mostly untapped power to thrive, and the exercises actually take you there! A must read for anyone, especially those who wish to reveal new potential within their daily lives.*

Michaela Conley, MA, MCHES, CSMS

Founder and President: Health Promotion Live, HP Career.Net

Raw Coping Power: From Stress to Thriving is condensed wisdom wrapped in a high impact tool kit. Rather than kill us, successful stress skills enable us to live well – to thrive! The sympathetic arousal of the stress response is essential to survival while activating the parasympathetic system enables us to positively thrive. We need both, as Dr. Joel Bennett knows. His 7 basic principles and 10 different lenses are well anchored in this core psychophysiology and leading edge science as well as practice. The 31 tools available enable the user to select the best fit for their individual and collective wellbeing.

James Campbell (Jim) Quick

Professor of Leadership & Organizational Behavior

John and Judy Goolsby – Jacquelyn A. Fouse Endowed Chair

The University of Texas at Arlington

Raw Coping Power: From Stress To Thriving takes on stress in a refreshingly new way. Dr. Bennett presents us with a way of leveraging stress to our advantage by helping us see how we can reframe our experience of stress differently and respond in a way that helps us thrive. In this book “coping” does not mean toleration. Instead the author demonstrates how we can find the choices we really do have and act on them in self-enhancing ways. Stress is the vastly ignored area of wellness and yet is often the linchpin to health and well-being. Previous books on stress have usually looked at stress from a two-pronged approach of providing cognitive strategies for reducing our production of stress and providing physiological methods for minimizing our body’s stress response. Joel Bennett takes things much further providing a way for individuals, organizations and helping professionals such as wellness coaches, therapists, counselors and healthcare providers to be of real value to those they serve.

Michael Arloski, Ph.D., PCC, CWP
CEO and Founder Real Balance Global Wellness Services, Inc.
Dean of The Wellness Coach Training Institute

Have you been looking for a source that provides a positive take on many of life’s challenges, one that provides a framework for addressing these challenges, and tools that you can use and share with others? You need look no further. Joel Bennett has compiled a framework for looking at life’s challenges that identifies principles for assessing the situation in his book **Raw Coping Power**. To complete this framework he provides a set of tools that you can use either by yourself or with others to build resilience and thrive.

Professor Lois Tetrick, PhD
George Mason University

Building one’s ability to be resilient and “bounce back” in the face of adversity or challenge is foundational to improving one’s sense of personal wellness or well-being. **Raw Coping Power** by Dr. Bennett is a virtual blue print and proven prescription for improving one’s ability to cope with stress and enhance well-being. His real life examples and practical techniques will help anyone at any point on their path to well-being.

David A. Sharar, Ph.D.
Managing Director, Chestnut Global Partners
Research Scientist, Chestnut Health Systems

*Fortunately, more and more employers recognize the importance of integrating an effective organizational and individual response to managing stress while building resilience. With **Raw Coping Power**, a very timely and evidence-based work, Dr. Bennett offers employers a valuable and proven resource for creating thriving organizations as well as thriving individuals.*

Kathy Greco, LMSW

Vice President (leading EAP industry specialty company)

*This book offers a useful guide to the discovery of your inner strength. We all need guidance to do better than we may realize was possible when we just follow the path of normal everyday life. Dr. Bennett has gathered a collection of insights that inspire, instruct and perhaps test the limits about what you think you can achieve. This book is an antidote to the demanding pace of our modern world, and offers a fresh perspective that is both optimistic and realistic about all the little things at work, at home, and in our heads that can keep us stuck in a rut and feeling hopeless at times. Taking care of yourself allows you more energy to share with loved ones, work colleagues and your community. The principles, perspectives and tools described in **Raw Coping Power** are based on the experience of someone who has spent his career studying and assisting leaders and organizations in how to be healthier - how to thrive in spite of the problems and limits that seem to be in place. Joel is well-respected as a scientist and trainer and has earned the right to focus his considerable intellect on this topic. Now you can benefit from his wisdom and wit. Reading this book can radically change you for the better. At the very least, following these practices may allow you to see yourself in a different, more positive, and more stress-free light.*

Mark Attridge, PhD, MA

President, Attridge Consulting; Workplace Health Researcher

RAW COPING POWER

FROM STRESS TO THRIVING

JOEL B. BENNETT, PHD

ORGANIZATIONAL WELLNESS

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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CONTENTS

Foreword	i
Preface	v
Introduction: Images of Adversity, Stories of Resilience	1
1 The 7 Basic Principles	17
2 The 10 Different Lenses	45
3 The 31 Tools for Thriving	81
4 This Is Your Nudge	171
Appendix	175
Definitions	183
Resources	191
End Notes	199
Acknowledgments	215
About the Author	219

KEY LISTS

The Principles	17
The Lenses	74
The Tools	95

To all who find the inspiration
to make the best of a difficult situation
and then patiently go about changing the world.

Some people grumble that roses have thorns;

I am grateful that thorns have roses.

Alphonse Karr

Foreword

PERSONAL AND JOB-RELATED STRESS—as source points for many problems—are perhaps the most overlooked areas in public health, in the workplace, and even among providers of health promotion and wellness programs. Research clearly shows that stress is a direct cause of a large proportion of diseases and decreased productivity, yet we spend most of our health care dollars on addressing the symptoms of stress rather than the stress itself. This blind spot is most egregious in the area of workplace wellness.

There is currently an overemphasis on health risk assessments and coaching and campaigns for diet, exercise, and specific topics such as hypertension, diabetes, tobacco use, and other commonly occurring risk factors and chronic diseases. All this is important work, but if employees work in an unhealthy and continually stressed work environment, these efforts will have limited impact.

To be blunt, employers risk wasting their financial and human resources when they only focus on the short-term gains from wellness without addressing the long-term consequences of stress.

What is equally amazing is that there is an extensive and growing body of research showing that well-designed stress management programs work. The key term in that last sentence is “well-designed.”

This means more than time-limited lunch-and-learn programs that educate employees on personal coping methods.

To be clear, it is very important to train workers in mind/body practices that help them reduce anxiety and depression and alleviate somatic symptoms—all of which get in the way of morale and productivity. At the same time, we know that these programs have optimal and more lasting effects when employers make efforts in the social environment at work, especially efforts that create compassionate leadership and positive teamwork, where workers encourage each other and have fun getting and staying healthy.

So we have a dual challenge. First, to get at the root of many health and productivity problems, we must address stress in the work setting and do so with clear intention and systematic efforts. Second, to do this most effectively, we must find ways to engage employers such that they start translating insights from science into practice—common practice, shared practice. This is not an easy challenge for many obvious reasons.

Perhaps the most important one is that employers—as a reflection of society in general—either are too busy to notice that stress is the problem, or if they do see it, they don't have the time or the tools to do anything different. Or even more common is the “chicken-egg” phenomenon whereby employers feel that they can't take the time to make these efforts because it will hurt productivity to do so. We are stuck in an outdated paradigm, in what Charles Tart called “a consensus trance.” Given growing recognition of the costs of stress and disease, it may be time to wake up from this trance and start meeting the challenge.

We are now ready to take on that challenge. Just in the past few years a growing number of studies, popular books, and training programs have been designed to enhance resilience. This is a promising sign. What is even more exciting—and is a core premise of

this book—is that we can now look at stress in a whole new way, as Dr. Bennett is showing us: as a positive lever for bringing about transformation in our personal lives and in the work setting. Such an idea suggests that resilience may only be a stopping point along the way to even greater thriving and flourishing.

Clearly, the perspective, the principles, the lenses, and the tools he offers in *Raw Coping Power* are designed to facilitate such thriving and flourishing. They are designed to help us all meet the dual challenge described. The question is whether these ideas and tools will fall into the hands of those who can practice them and influence others to do so.

Actually I am very optimistic. It is a wonderful thing when we can take information and insights from science and deploy them for the greater good. My hope is that you will be part of that growing positive force.

Kenneth R. Pelletier, PhD, MD
Clinical Professor of Medicine
Clinical Professor of Family and Community Medicine
Professor of Public Health
University of Arizona School of Medicine
And University of California School of Medicine (UCSF)

Preface

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK IS TO help you wake up to what you already, at some level, know to be true about yourself and about life. That is, you have within you the ability to meet life head on, take the good with the bad, and actively make any type of stress your friend and your teacher.

I hope you will come to the realization not only that stress is part of life, but that you have some inkling there is more to it. That you can use difficulty and adversity to get your life back on track, keep your life moving in a positive direction, or actually transform your life into something much more wonderful than you have imagined. I want you to see this realization as a gift and greet difficulty with natural boldness and intelligence. You can do it! You have it in you.

The strength of the human spirit is perhaps the most cherished topic of all writers. I am talking not only about fiction but about the work of historians, biographers, business writers, self-help authors, and documentarians. They have as much to say as movie-makers, poets, novelists, playwrights, and the creators of comic-book super heroes.

If you are a parent, you probably know this striving at a deep level. You want this same resilience in your children, and you get anxious if you think they don't also have it within them. If you are an entrepreneur or business leader, you also know that you have to keep up with the many changes and trials of an ever-changing economy. At some point you realize that, as Marshall Goldsmith, the executive coach, says, "what got you here won't get you there" and so you reinvent yourself.

So there is obviously an abundance of cultural material available in every society, throughout history, and in our families and businesses attesting to the fact that we can survive challenge and adversity, and we can actually grow from and shine because of them. Further, we also love stories that dramatically describe people and groups as they overcome obstacles and achieve even higher levels of functioning and consciousness.

So why then does everyone complain about stress? Has the world become more stressful of late? It would seem just the opposite. The further back in time we go, the harsher were the stressors our ancestors faced. Is it possible that we only believe we experience more stress today, again at some deep level, because we need to have challenge, something to test our mettle, prove our resilience, and make us stronger? This is certainly something to consider.

But there is also the fact that we now live in a more time-compressed world. On one hand, our rapidly emerging technologies make life less harsh for many while, on the other hand, these same technologies lead to a 24/7 barrage of information, with associated expectations, multi-tasking burdens, and potentials for conflict.

I would even venture to say that many of us have clamored for a front seat on the "stress bandwagon" or have gotten a wee bit drunk on the "stress Kool-Aid." We love our smartphone apps, various

technical gadgets, the Internet, and other inventions that we adopt to lessen stress but that ultimately add to our strain.

This may be one of the greatest paradoxes of our modern world. Through the advances of science and technology we create external tools and aids that we believe will help us to save time and have more comfortable lives, but because of the ways we go about creating and using those tools, we actually experience less time and create sometimes highly demanding and compressed situations. We like to “do” so much with our stuff that we forget to just “be” with the simple pleasures. As John Lennon sang: “Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans.”

I believe that one solution to this paradox is to turn our attention away from “doing” things with these “external” tools and return to a state of “being” in which we cultivate or tap into those “internal” tools that give us greater strength, happiness, and integrity. And that is the purpose of this book. But this changing direction—from the exterior to the interior—is quite difficult for many reasons. Chief among them is that our society does not currently value such “being.”

You probably know what I mean if you use a computer, smartphone, or an electronic tablet for your occupation or if you spend any personal time surfing the Internet, downloading apps or music, or chatting on Facebook. But you may *really* experience what I mean if you feel compelled to stay current on these ever-evolving miracles of communication or if you suspect that you may be spending so much time with them that you neglect key parts of your life.

But these pressures (job-related or self-imposed) are just one reason why turning inward is difficult. There is another reason, and one that I think is a thousand times more important. It has to do with the fact that you have likely fallen asleep. One way of knowing whether you have fallen asleep is if you spend an inordinate amount

of time in external activities: watching movies or reading stories about how *others* have been strong and resilient. That is right. The first sentence of this preface made it clear that the answer is inside you, not outside.

I want you to wake up to something and start using that precious and powerful inner resource to change your life. The cultural aides—movies, stories, games, videos, self-help guides—are helpful to the degree that they spur you on. But you also need the knowledge, the vision, and the tools to put that inspiration into effect. The question to ask yourself is not whether you are asleep but how do you awaken.

Just asking this question will be the first step. If you make the effort, you will be led to some self-knowledge. The principles in the first chapter of this book are intended to help you wake up to your own inner knowledge and to step off the “stress bandwagon” that everybody is on.

But you have to go past just self-awareness. You also have to start seeing. A new pair of glasses may help. Actually, a new set of lenses. These are provided in the second chapter of the book. And I am not making this stuff up. The research is showing us a new way of seeing the world that points clearly to this inner capacity to transform crippling stress into healthy resilience. Three cheers for science!

Now what I am about to say may lead some readers to question whether they should purchase this book or have regrets about doing so. First, I believe that if you really know—that is, you can deep down know that stress will *always* be your friend and teacher—then you may not even need the principles to guide you. Second, if you currently see *all* stressors as guiding your (stress-to-thriving) transformation, then you may not even need the lenses I share. The goal of both inner *knowing* and deep *seeing* is to abide in the place of strong *being* inside yourself.

This raw coping power is much more a state of being than it is a state of doing. The goal is *being* rather than *doing*, and the new lenses

will hopefully be your corrective lenses to lessen the stress associated with always doing, doing, doing and enhance the health benefits associated with being.

Third, if you have knowledge and corrective lenses, then you don't really need the tools also provided in this book. As I said before, the "real" tools we need are already within us. We have just fallen asleep and have forgotten they are there. The best among all types of counselors—psychologists, wellness coaches, therapists—really help us get back in touch with our own inner resources anyway.

So, to repeat. You do not need this book if you are already awake. You know your own raw coping power, you have the vision to see how to use it, and you practice it regularly. By regularly, I mean every day.

But I am betting—and I did take the time to write this—that you might need at least a little help in one of these areas. I am betting that you could use a reminder or two, some tips, or just a good solid nudge. Maybe something to get your life back on a solid and even keel. Interestingly, it is the keel of a boat, or the origin of the phrase "even keel," that will provide our first story in *Raw Coping Power*.

The keel of a boat is the center spine or structural beam around which the entire hull of the ship is built. It is often the very first thing that is built and laid into place to form the "cradle" of a ship. There is an important ceremony when shipbuilders lay the keel as it represents the real structural birth of the ship. Historians believe that much of the expansion of early civilization and of world exploration depended upon the creation of the keel in early ship building following the Egyptian empire. In other words, without the sturdiness and structure that a keel provided, other smaller boats such as canoes and rafts lacked the resilience to weather long voyages of exploration, commerce, and the expansion of a country's domain.

The phrase or idiom "even keel" is reported as meaning a "state of normality; when the ship's keel is perfectly horizontal and her fore

and aft draught are the same” (from Merriam-Webster) or “in a state of balance; steady; steadily” (from Dictionary.com). In common usage, we use sentences such as this: “If Jane can keep on an even keel and not panic, she will be all right” or “Try to keep on an even keel and not get upset so easily.”

The truth is that, in real ship maneuvering and sailor jargon, a ship that floats on a perfectly even keel will be almost impossible to steer (for example, Aircraft Carriers). It is customary to be a bit “off-center” to keep good momentum and steering capacity. Yes, not only is the phrase “even keel” inaccurate, it is not really the ideal situation.

Why do I talk so much about keels? First, remember that, at one time, a keel on a boat provided the structure that led to a revolution in world exploration. Second, it would seem that to keep moving forward in life, we have to always be a little off-course—not too much, just enough to stay on top of things. These two features about keels serve as an image for your own raw coping power.

We each have our own keel, our raw coping power. I could say, “Wake up and find your keel” or “You have a lot more strength than you know.” And, as we move through life, we are always off-course, sometimes only slightly and sometimes in wide, even crazy, arcs. I could say, “Pay attention” or “Don’t worry about staying on an even keel too much and instead see what you can learn from these disruptions” or just “Keep steering!”

And so this book is written to help you do all of these. I appeal to different sensibilities in hopes that some messages might work better than others. Some readers will learn most from the principles, while others will enjoy the lenses more. Still others will gravitate to using one or more tools. In a way, I am inviting you to build a new ship for your life—a whole new way of looking at stress. And in a way, I hope this book helps you find your keel for that new ship.

RAW COPING POWER

From Stress to Thriving (in life and business)

In *Raw Coping Power: From Stress to Thriving*, Dr. Joel Bennett explores new ways to address the growing problem of stress in society and the workplace. Each individual, social group, or workplace has an innate capacity to transform stress into an opportunity for greater health and productivity. Stress is both a friend and teacher. We can tap into this truth through stories, reminders, a certain vision, and practice of simple tools, which the author supplies in a systematic manner, along with additional resources, research notes, and a definition section. This practical guidebook is a great resource for individuals, trainers, life/wellness coaches, and therapists.

With obvious expertise, clear compassion, keen insight, and genuine wisdom, Joel Bennett explains why, and how, to cultivate our inner source of resilience.

David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP
Director, Yale University Prevention Research Center

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Michaela Conley, MA, MCHES, CSMS;
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William B. Baun, EPD, CWP, FAWHP;
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