Chapter 1
Introduction

Our species is defined by the tools that we use (psychommercials.com, 2011).

The subjective reality of the socialized being can be transformed. "To be in society already entails an ongoing process of modification of subjective reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 156). We live in the mix with those we know, those we will encounter, those we wish to encounter, those we would prefer to avoid, and the vast majority of those we shall never know, certainly not intimately. We exist as individuals, but blend into the ever-changing patterns of communities the fabrics of cultures and the tapestries of civilizations. We are, as individuals, unique, of course, but have commonality with others. It is the commonality that serves to form bonds between people. We want as much to be unique as we want to be part of a collective. With some people, we have solidarity. With others, we have conflict and, at times, we experience difficulties forming new relationships. Sometimes we experience internal conflict, and sometimes the experience of conflict enrages us or repulses us to move in a different direction. A world without interaction with others, except for respecting purposeful cloistered periods of isolation from interaction with others for internal reflective thinking and prayerful meditation, would be shallow and pointless. In a way, we appear as representations in the hearts and minds of others. Hence, validation, acknowledgement, and constructive criticism are all nurturing and important to provide stimulus for interpersonal growth. "The self does not exist except as a social construct" (Dr. Mark Schulman, president of Saybrook University—San Francisco, CA, personal communication, June 9, 2012). Even our own patterns of communication must be examined to identify any specific notions of defeatism. We can talk our way into things and out of things. Reshaping negative patterns replaced by more positive themes will, doubtlessly, aid in the transformation of the inner capacities of the individual.

This theme overlaps with J. L. Moreno's (1889–1974) theories about sociometry, a field that addresses the phenomenon of rapport, who attracts or repels us, whom do we find to be irrelevant to our lives. Sociometry, as developed by Moreno (1943),

E.A. Kreuter, *Fostering Resilience for Loss and Irrelevance*,
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4614-5773-2_1,

is a theory that suggests "…a measure can be developed for a deeper understanding of society and a key to the treatment of its ills" (p. 299). According to Adam Blatner, M.D.: "Relevance is a very intriguing theme: I happen to be very gifted, graced, clear about my own relevance, having built several quasi-mythic narratives around it, and drawn from socially-approved role definitions: The quality of feedback from wife and adult children make a difference" (Adam Blatner, personal communication, May 20, 2012b). Blatner (2012a) feels that "50% of people have low to weak connections in the following areas:

- Meaning of their work, contributing to the world being a better place (morale);
- Meaning of their relationships, feeling helpful to valued others;
- Feeling that one's participation in certain social groups, clubs, activities, is valued, and that one is missed; that one's services are appreciated."

> The too busy quality that results in lack of strokes, thank yous, expressions of appreciation, makes for the harshness of urban life. Small-town or regional habits of greetings, acknowledgements, courtesy, promotes slight surges of relevance. Relevance in turn is a component of self-hood. (Adam Blatner, personal communication, May 20, 2012b)

In a lecture by Robert Bellah (1986), he quoted Alexis-Charles-Henri Clerel de Tocqueville (1805–1859), a French political thinker and historian who said that our fathers only knew about egoism (an excessive or exaggerated sense of self-importance):

> Now we have this new thing: individualism. "Individualism," and this is one of the places where he comes as close as he ever does to defining it, is a calm and considered feeling which disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and withdraw into the circle of family and friends; with this little society formed to his taste, he gladly leaves the greater society to look out after itself. (p. 1)

"Our life has a distinct inner aspect in addition to the outer. Many people are so involved in outer things that they hardly know there is an inner, let alone how to explore it and what is there" (Van Dusen, 2001, p. 108). Exploring is a necessary first step in order to attempt true and lasting transformation. Washburn (2000) states: If wisdom cannot be taught, it can be pursued. And this, of course, is the purpose of disciplines like yogic concentration leading to absorption, Buddhist mindfulness leading to insight, and Christian prayer leading to contemplation (p. 207). Transformation itself is not acquired through one-stop shopping, but through the complexity of dynamic change in permanent and significant ways, leading to improvements in a person's lifestyle, effectiveness, resilience, and connected relevance to the world of which they are an equal part. But, before we attempt to fix anything wrong, we must openly explore the concept of loss and how loss can undermine a person's life. Today, people are in a state of flux. "It almost seems as if modern man, and especially modern educated man, is in a perpetual state of doubt about the nature of himself and of the universe in which he lives" (Berger, 1963, p. 50).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), "Knowledge of everyday life is structured in terms of relevances. Some of these are determined by immediate pragmatic interests of mine, others by my general situation in society" (p. 45). There are endless connections possible in most lives. We can take advantage of luck and hard work, or

we can ignore and move past the dynamic process of connecting. Sometimes we can revisit connections forgone or lost, and sometimes we experience failure to seize the moment, equaling loss. Either way, we can grow. The purposeful or unplanned loss of connections, such as an old college buddy, can make room for new connections more suitable to the person we have become. We are not meant to collect people or continue each and every relationship we form in our lives.

As the flower that goes unpicked from its bed survives to be adored by others, so too the love we scorn or are unable to secure remains available for others. The same is true for jobs. Not every grape must be picked from the vine as we are not alone in the world and others are hungry. We may, though, need to examine our foregone opportunities to help others if altruism and goodwill are important to us. Perhaps the greatest measure of the resilient person is one who helps another become better, expending personal energy, willingly, to serve another human being. Perhaps a person who is lacking resilience may be less inclined to extend their energy toward helping others.

The construct of relevancy can be applied to how people live, work, and form relationships to other people as well as to institutions. Fromm (2006) wrote that people care about how to be loved and how to be lovable. "In pursuit of this aim they follow several paths. One, which is especially used by men, is to be successful, to be as powerful and rich as the social margin of one's position permits" (p. 1). Often, during everyday common occurrences in the average life, circumstances are encountered that impact positively or negatively on our interior sense of relevancy.

The phenomenon of loss is not always clear. Boss (1999) defines ambiguous loss as an unclear loss that defies closure. "For many, the psychological family in our hearts and minds is as important for assessing stress and maintaining resiliency as the physical family we live with" (Boss, 2006, pp. 1–2).

Resilience can be developed on a deeper level. "Resiliency is a constant and positive adaptive trait" (p. 27). Boss (2006) defines resiliency as "…the ability to regain one's energy after diversity drains it" (p. 27).

Therapists encounter people "searching to find themselves." "Are they truly lost?" What may be happening is that people may be examining the world around them, looking for deeper answers, which may exist in the noir places in our lives where we fear to tread. Gergen (2000) sees "…significant signs of renewed commitment to these beliefs, signs that people are becoming increasingly concerned about their spiritual well-being, their moral values, and their emotional capacities, and wish to locate a solid, objective basis for centering themselves and giving direction to the future" (p. 199). According to Williams and Davis (2002), "Increasingly, we believe that life coaching is an evolutionary step beyond traditional therapy. We don't believe traditional therapy will become extinct but will be more associated with the clients who need clinical services" (p. 40).

Relevancy is defined as a relative state of feeling of attachment to what, according to the individual, are the major elements of one's life: family, career, peer network, social network, organizational affiliations, and other aspects of a full life. The word "connection" can be considered synonymous to relevancy. Erikson (1998)

wrote about biological processes upon which a human being's existence depends, which involve a body, the psychic process organizing individual experience by ego synthesis, and the communal process of the interdependence of persons (pp. 25–26). In studying these processes and how they may fail, the resulting phenomenon of "somatic tension, individual anxiety and social panic" (p. 26) can be studied. Such tension plays out, for example, in the form of self-doubt wherein the positive momentum of a life endeavor is derailed by the phenomenon of loss of courage (fear). At least some of the debilitation we face is caused directly by our own negative thinking.

Erikson referred to the efficacy of clinical work to approach human behavior in terms of one of these processes: "…for each item that proves relevant in one process is seen to give significance to, as it receives meaning from, items in the others" (p. 26). Erikson (1946) discussed the sense of identity having sources within the individual and is sustained by identifications with others in one's surrounding.

"As part of a social network, we transcend ourselves, for good or ill, and become a part of something much longer" (Christakis & Fowler, 2009, p. 30). Connectedness provides an important element of meaning in one's life. Isolated individuals may experience feelings of loneliness or abandonment. Living apart from others and separating oneself from the rhythm of society can develop into a person resembling the lifestyle of a hermit. Common reference points are lost. A person living this way can become distant from connected relevancies to their former world where they might have been connected to a family, a career, a social network, or other aspects of a cultured society.

Bennett-Goleman (2001) discussed the importance of relationships, which are the basic connections in people's lives:

> An added benefit of breaking the chain of habit inside ourselves comes from how it reverberates through our relationships. Any relationship is a system, a web of causal interactions, so that how one person acts elicits a given reaction in the other person. Systems theorists and family therapists tell us that one way to alter a system is to change how one part of it acts, thus altering how other parts react. Changing ourselves, then, offers a way to break our relationships out of destructive ruts. (p. 258)

Even living within the bounds of a metropolitan city, a person can appear to be totally disconnected to anything civilized or normal. It may even be easier for a person to become lost in a large city as opposed to a small-town setting where, generally, everyone knows everyone else. An example is a mentally ill homeless person who wanders the streets, spending much of their time muttering about and scaring passersby. Such a person will, for the most part, be ignored. It is a sad sight. Few offer any help. Some stare or look disgusted. The person, while of course human, acts in a way that appears animalistic or dangerous. They have no discernible connections to anything relevant in polite society. At most they may seek refuge in a local shelter though many homeless actually prefer living on the streets. They will cause people to be afraid or to mock them. Food may be obtained from food pantries or begged for on the streets or, sometimes, rummaged out of trash cans. Industrious persons collect bottles and cans to recover deposits. A portion will be fortunate to find programs designed to help them acclimate back into society as fully functioning beings.

Others may resort to crime in order to survive as the lines of ethics may blur with each passing night on the cold, lonely streets, leading to increasing distortion between abiding the law and the desperate efforts to survive the harshness of life.

Such a soul is truly lost in society and appears not to have any relevance or connections. Their interiority (a person's mental or spiritual being) may consist of considerations of what they had or where they were at a previous point in life. Some will know how it was lost; others will have lost conscious awareness of their prior life. Some become involved with illegal narcotics and, as a result, will become even more lost, even to their own selves.

The connections between humans are vital components of maintaining relevance within. "In short, humans don't just live in groups, we live in networks" (Christakis & Fowler, 2009, p. 214). These authors feel that the connections people form have origin in the theory of natural selection. Further, the tendency of a person to be selfish may be a survival instinct. "If you have several opportunities to cooperate with the same person, one way to get that person to help you is to promise future cooperation" (p. 219). Belonging to groups may help a person to feel good about their life and give living greater purpose. Joining a group probably meant increased chances for survival. We can refer to animals that travel in herds. They do so not only for social reasons but also for protection. Similarly, some species travel in packs (e.g., wild dogs) because they can hunt as a group much more efficiently than on their own. As well, birds fly in formation as it is found that doing so increases their flying efficiency by over 10%. Regardless of the status of wealth, everyone needs some form of purpose in life in order to feel fulfilled. It is for this reason that extremely wealthy people continue to devote some time to charitable or civic organizations or other forms of philanthropy. Some wealthy people who have reached high levels of success in one aspect of life may try to reach similar success in other ventures: politics, for example. There is a marvelous aspect of human resiliency that drives even the most successful people to stay connected and continue to break new ground in different arenas.

"I take spirituality to involve the lived transformation of self and community toward fuller alignment with or expression of what is understood, within a given cultural context, to be 'sacred'" (Rothberg, 2000, p. 163). In a sense, people who have achieved critical mass in terms of material wealth may still hunger for ways to fulfill themselves.

Nelson (2000) stated:

> Thus, the subtle contact of spiritual knowing emerges only when we let go of whatever ontological anchor that secures us and realize that reality is but one face of one looking glass and spiritual freedom is to consciously leap through it as an act of intentional creative play. (p. 80)

Attachment, as a distinct construct, is the depth of one's connections with others within a shared cause and the level of responsibility inherent in the role. For example, consider an individual who is president of a local charitable organization who is actively engaged with the membership, attends and chairs most meetings, contributes a meaningful amount of personal time to the activities of the organization, and

is well regarded as being critical to the continuance of the organization. Such a person has a deep positive attachment within one important element of his or her life. In this way, he/she feels relevant and, justifiably so, feels good about him or herself on a daily basis. He/she is likely viewed by society as relevant by any measure. The "spillover" effect of such positive feelings carry over to other aspects of the person's life. These positive feelings enable a person to manage what Schneider and May (1995) referred to as the "primordial poles: freedom and limitation" (p. 5). Groups come and go. The Women's Club of New Rochelle, NY, just celebrated its 100th anniversary as an organization. In its prime, which was during World War II, there were about 800 members. Membership dwindled to about 40 and, finally, was disbanded in 2012. Club President Mary Jane Reddington said: "It's bittersweet, after 100 years, it's very sad to have this happen because at one time, it really was the most prestigious organization in New Rochelle. We accomplished so much" (Rauch, 2012, p. 1).

The freedom to give juxtaposed to the limitation of one's discretionary time creates a definite balance in a person's life but also a certain tug and pull depending on the current day, and other conflicting obligations might be going on. Some people may become overprogrammed. They have agreed to be on too many committees and take on too much responsibility. This can lead either to burnout or laxity in the service to one or more organizations. One way to actualize a person's inner spirit is for the person to be involved in causes, giving of the self in the service of others. However, it may also have a detrimental impact in other areas, such as problems balancing between activities with the inherent limitation of time. This delicate balance may need fine-tuning. Therefore, individuals who have the luxury of time to donate a portion of their time are well advised to commit where such commitment adds to the pleasure and satisfaction of life and not tear away at the fabric of life.

Bringing a humble presence to all endeavors can lead to a more authentic presentation of the self. This approach will help draw people in rather than repel them. Even when giving of one's time, doing so humbly would likely enhance the reception of the gift by the receiver. In contrast, falsely portraying oneself to others can have devastating consequences. For example, overstating or overselling on job applications and interviews or boasting contrary to the evidence may backfire and cause problems. Humble people may do better by understating their backgrounds and, instead, letting people find out how good they are.

Bowlby's attachment theory is related to the material presented in this book based on the premise that "…individual social behavior may be understood in terms of generic mental models of social relationships constructed by the individual. Attachment theory concerns the nature of early experiences of children and the impact of these experiences on aspects of later functioning of particular relevance to personality disorder" (Fonagy, 2003, p. 2). Bowlby's (1980) theory suggests a universal human need to form close bonds. "Bowlby proposed that the quality of childhood relationships with the caregivers results in internal representations of working models of the self and others that provide prototypes for later social relationships" (p. 4). "Closely attached people who become separated through ambiguous loss suffer a trauma even greater after death. To regain resiliency, revising one's attachment is essential" (Boss, 2006, p. 162).

People either tell the truth about their past history or they fabricate stories. They may be partially honest and partially mysterious when it comes to self-disclosure. In Bowlby's attachment theory:

> There is a strong link between the kinds of attachment patterns found in infancy and the narratives people tell about themselves several years later. Put briefly, securely attached children tell coherent stories about their lives, however difficult they have been, while insecurely attached children have much greater difficulty in narrative competence, either dismissing their past or remaining bogged down in it, and in neither case being able to talk objectively about it. (Holmes, 2001, p. 9)

Humility applied to efforts toward accomplishment of goals will serve to help a person make a positive initial impression. Therefore, humility becomes intertwined when a person is portraying their accomplishments or abilities. The overly competitive environment facing people today may influence the competitive spirit beyond healthy levels. For example, a salesman who cheats by selling to customers outside of his defined geographic zone enriches himself at the expense of another salesperson. While the sale helps the company, the manner must be examined as a selfish act. Should the salesman's inappropriate act be detected 1 day and the commission reversed and the salesman then terminated for dishonesty, it is possible, then, that the person will develop a greater sense of humility and conscience. However, this is far from guaranteed. The top barrier to occupational fraud and abuse is a statement usually contained in an employee manual that states the company's disciplinary protocols for employee dishonesty.

How do we see ourselves in the world? Laing (1990) referred to a person who has a "…sense of his presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person" (p. 39). He referred to such a person as "ontologically secure," a person who maintains a sense of his own and other people's personal reality and identity given the encounters of hazards of life (p. 39). A person with a serious illness may begin to feel isolated from their former friends and coworkers. Chronic pain and protocols for medical treatment may limit opportunities for interaction, adding to the suffering person's dilemma. Therefore, the previous feelings of ontological security begin to dissipate as the person slowly begins to realize that life has changed, perhaps dramatically. Friends come by less often, and when they do, visits are shorter and maybe awkward. Boredom can also become a factor for a person hospitalized or resident in a nursing facility. Connections to fellow patients/residents may not be so easy given the relative state of health (physical and/or mental) of the accessible individuals.

Perhaps even more severe is the waning frequency of visitors to the incarcerated person. Over time, even relatives may lengthen the time intervals between visits, especially if significant travel is involved. An impact of such decreased effort may be reduced connectedness between the inmate and others, including significant others. Over time, this erosion could lead to complete deadening of once vibrant connectedness.

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), an American philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist, primarily affiliated with the University of Chicago, was one of several distinguished pragmatists. He is regarded as one of the founders of social psychology

and the American sociological tradition in general. Mead argued the antipositivistic view that the individual is a product of society or, more specifically, social interaction, stating that the *self* arises when the individual becomes an object to themselves. Mead further offered that we are objects first to other people, and secondarily we become objects to ourselves by taking the perspective of other people. Are we, then, any more than what we are in the eyes of others?

Alfred North Whitehead, (1861–1947), an English mathematician and philosopher, wrote on subjects, such as algebra, logic, foundations of mathematics, philosophy of science, physics, metaphysics, and education. Whitehead influenced logic and virtually all of analytic philosophy. Whitehead was also a Platonist who "saw the definite character of events as due to the 'ingression' of timeless entities" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2006).

Would a person with a solid sense of self be less likely to become jealous when good things happen to coworkers, friends, or neighbors? An insecure person may feel less worthy when others around him or her achieve things of substance. Perhaps it is human nature to want for the self and to feel inadequate when good things happen around us, but not to us. As an example, let's say a group of workers always plays the weekly lottery and you always join in, but 1 week you decide not to participate for one reason or another. Yet, the drawing for that week determines that the group actually won the top prize and will split a large sum of money. You feel left out but not entitled because you did not participate. None of the winners say anything negative to you nor do they boast. You pretend to be happy for them, but inside are you really happy? Does this experience engender feelings of regret, or do you self-condemn for making what is tantamount to a bad decision, as statistically unsupported as that may be? You watch over the course of the next few months as the winners start to quit their jobs, move to larger homes, buy more expensive automobiles, or take exotic vacations. This may become a test of how secure you feel, which also may become a test of your internal relevancy. Why should something good happening to someone else in any way dilute your internal sense of self?

In a famous quote of Eleanor Roosevelt, "With freedom comes responsibility." Limitations may hamper creativity but reign in excessiveness to some degree. Dread of either extreme leads to potential disability. Frankl (2006) wrote that "…man is self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment" (p. 131). But that is easier said than done—and why that is so is explored in this book. Adding to the concept of such polar opposites, they found that "…dread of either freedom or limitation (due generally to past trauma) promotes extreme of dysfunctional counter-reactions to either polarity" (p. 5).

When attachments are either severed or insufficient to produce lasting daily positive feelings, the person may begin to experience a sense of loss of relevancy. This might manifest as depression or sadness with the person appearing withdrawn and lethargic. Comments made to such a person, taken as negative, may serve as fuel to propel the person into an even deeper morass. For example, telling a person he could have handled a situation better, stated more as a criticism and less as a constructive comment, can lead to a person feeling decreased self-esteem. At least in

some cases, the problem of relevancy may arise not necessarily based on an underlying mild mood deflation (or more severe clinical depression), though the affect may mimic such severe disorders. Treatment of loss of relevancy may be fine-tuned and not lumped into existing treatment protocols used for depression and malaise.

Our actions can lead to habits. "Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 57).

Schema therapy "focuses on healing maladaptive patterns, or schemas, like the sense of emotional deprivation, or relentless perfectionism" (Bennett-Goleman, 2001, p. 11). "Key among the scientific discoveries behind emotional alchemy: that mindfulness shifts the brain from disturbing to positive emotions and that the brain stays plastic throughout life, changing itself as we learn to challenge old habits" (p. 10). "Many of the core issues for certain schemas-notably deprivation, abandonment, and unlovability-revolve around this dimension of connectedness" (Bennett-Goleman, 2001, p. 272).

There are many ways in which people can feel that they have lost relevance. Relevance can be lost due as the technological advancements of a product outpace the technical acumen of the aging salesperson. People who are out of the workforce for awhile may neglect the importance of retooling their skills, which might lead to greater reemployment opportunities. Similarly, auto manufacturers close down their assembly lines periodically so as to allow for retooling when there is a new model ready for commencement of production. It is important to consider the need to adjust to changing times in order to manage through these events, which can reasonably be expected to occur. A loss of relevancy is particularly acute in an actor or singer of renown. For example, the late Whitney Houston (1963–2012) was an American recording artist, actress, producer, and model. In 1996, she told Oprah Winfrey, "[doing drugs] was an everyday thing… I wasn't happy by that point in time, I was losing myself" (Mumbi, 2012). The loss of relevancy can be due to change in style or new acts more suitable to the emerging tastes of successive audiences. Slowly, as the audience and buyers dwindle, so goes the popularity of the act or the person, relegating him or her to become part of the dustbins of history. This phrase is part of a quote attributed to Leon Trotsky (Marxist): When the Bolsheviks came to power as a result of the October Revolution in 1917, Julius Martov (1873–1923), who was originally a close colleague of Lenin and with him founded the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in 1895, became politically marginalized (Cliff, 1986). This is best exemplified by Trotsky's comment to him and other party members as they left the first meeting of the council of Soviets after October 25, 1917, in disgust at the way in which the Bolsheviks had seized political power.

Some will take this in stride; others will feel very let down by the change in tastes that they have not foreseen, not adjusted to, and cannot control. Perhaps the relative resiliency of the individual will dictate part of the severity of the transformation.

What happens to the person who does not win the race or the salesperson who experiences a big potential sale lost to a top competitor? Does this person fade into

the background and get lost to society, or is there a place for the second- or third-place finisher? Then, consider all iterations of that question to the person who comes in dead last. Where does such a person turn? Is there a lesson to be learned by coming in last? Some would say that person needs to scale down his or her sights and choose less lofty goals. But what if achievement in that losing domain happens to be that person's life dream? Do we take that away from them because they lost? Or can we cope knowing that someone (relative, friend, coworker, or client) is trying hard again and again to succeed where past failures suggest giving up?

Because of the potential existence of collateral medical or psychological problems, a person who presents characteristics of a loss of relevancy should be carefully evaluated medically and psychologically. Therefore, treatment of persons deemed suffering from the impact of loss of relevancy may be best handled by focusing first on diagnosed medical issues then on other defined psychological problems. When the person is free of other serious concerns, or even if those concerns are ameliorated to a relevant degree, his/her feelings of loss of relevancy can be more ably approached.

It seems essentially important to remind people that the human condition offers and may even require a never-ending struggle to reach for the stars and try to exceed all expectations. While this may ring true for those highly motivated and internally competitive individuals, there is perhaps a lesson for those in struggle as well. Jaspers (1995/1971) wrote: "We always live, as it were, within a horizon which still surrounds us and obstructs our view. But we never attain a standpoint where the limiting horizon disappears and from where we could survey the whole, now complete and without horizon" (p. 17). Therefore, it may be of some comfort to those struggling with issues to realize and be reminded that we are all in a unique place within our own lives. Some points over the course of a life will bring greater struggle than others. There is, as Jaspers has written, a limitless boundary over the existence of mankind. Because of this, it might be possible for some to achieve levels of success so lofty that they might be considered superhuman. Such is not the case. The person who held the record for the fastest mile only enjoyed that position until another human ran faster. Records, it is said, are meant to be broken. At least, records are meant to inspire competition. The very origins of the Olympic Games were based on the universal desire to compete and to try to be the best, meaning being better than everyone else. Stephen Crane's (1871–1900) poem about a man running along the horizon provides insight:

> I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
> Round and round they sped.
> I was disturbed at this;
> I accosted the man.
> "It is futile," I said,
> "You can never—."
> "You lie," he cried,
> And ran on (2010/1905, p. 24)

In the view of Lawrence Allen Steckman (2012):

The philosopher's tendency is, of course, to try to understand the meaning of "meaning." My academic side says this must be addressed prior to figuring out how

one develops "resiliency" in the face of a sense of a loss of meaning. However, whatever the ultimate meaning of "meaning," various strategies provide a sense of something to which the word "meaning" refers—and this is true even if none of us use that term in exactly the same way [radical translation, Willard Van Orman Quine (1908–2000), an American philosopher and logician in the analytic tradition]—so the standard possibilities:

1. *Christian*—Kierkegaard—faith in the absurd intensifies inner passion, which overcomes the abyss, so the Christian defeat Nietzche's death of God via the leap of faith into the arms of the waiting God.
2. *Atheist*—Nietzche—the world has no inherent meaning; the uber-man must create his own meaning, he dances on the edge of the abyss, along the surface of glistening reality—notwithstanding God is dead.
3. *Pragmatist*—meanings are social constructs and, by growing up in society, we find meanings all over the place—we do not have to hunt for meanings, which certainly do not derive from a God.

Your book is pragmatic—the solution to the loss of meaning is not an inquiry into the meaning of meaning, but an effort to find strategies that get someone to feel something as a means to succeeding in attaining experiences of the type that engenders a sense of a purposeful/meaningful life.

Synopsis of Chapter

1. There exist many ways to explain the phenomenon of resilience and how it can provide relief from the potentially devastating impact of perceived irrelevance.
2. Transformation, as a process, can be catalyzed in the individual to convert patterns of negative thought and behavior toward sustainable interpersonal growth through empowerment and a guided exploration into the deeper meanings of life and its guaranteed dilemmas.
3. The basic human need for connections and collaborations extends back to our early ancestors. If such connections are severed or damaged without replacement or repair, there can be notable erosions in a person's internal self of self-esteem and drive to succeed in life.
4. Attachment brings a certain level of responsibility to others.
5. Loss, as a concept, is not something to fear, but something to understand, accept, and learn to cope with, reliant on internal reserves of resilience and newly learned concepts embraced by courage and fortitude.
6. Relevance can be measured by the quantum and quality of important connections in life.
7. Isolation, whether purposeful or the result of injury or disease, can lead to loss of relevancy.
8. Life is more fulfilling with accepted purpose in the backdrop.
9. Humans are, in some ways, defined by their limitations, but some limitations are fabrications of a person's effort to sabotage the potential of their own life.
10. Pragmatism is suggested as the tool to open new doors toward improvement in one's outlook and response to situations and events.