



# STUDY GUIDE

## BUILDING RESILIENCE: 5 WAYS TO A BETTER LIFE

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**KEY TERMS:**

resilience  
perspective

happy  
mental toughness

fragility  
fate

**NOTE-TAKING COLUMN:** Complete this section during the video. Include definitions and key terms.

**CUE COLUMN:** Complete this section after the video.

What is the opposite of fragility?

What is the correlation between having resilience and leading a happy life?

Why do some of Dr. Marmer's patients sometimes think that an unpleasant experience is much worse than it actually is?

How does one develop resilience?

What did Dr. Charles Krauthammer do as an example of resilience?

## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Dr. Marmer contends that, “Resilience is the opposite of fragility. To be fragile means that just about everything upsets you. And if just about everything upsets you, you will spend a lot of time angry and hurt. And if you spend a lot of time angry and hurt, you will not be a happy person.” In general, what factors do you think contribute towards one becoming more fragile or more resilient? Why is it better to be resilient than to be fragile? Explain.
- Dr. Marmer goes on to explain that, “Resilience is the ability to bounce back from life’s inevitable disappointments, failures, and pains... ..without building resilience – your own internal shock absorbers – it’s not possible to lead a happy and productive life.” What exactly is the correlation and relationship between being resilient and being happy? Explain. Where do you think that people can and should learn coping mechanisms such as resilience?
- As another example of how to build resilience, Dr. Marmer notes that, “Life hits you from all directions – health, personal relationships, work challenges, family issues. To deal with them you need to build up your mental toughness. The earlier in life one starts this process the better. That’s why parents who coddle their children and protect them from every hurt and failure are not doing them any favors. Nor are colleges that provide students with so-called ‘safe spaces.’ To toughen up, you need to push yourself.” Why do you think parents are often too quick to coddle and protect their children in the near term, rather than teach their children coping mechanisms- thus helping them more in the long run? Do you agree with Dr. Marmer’s point here? Why or why not?
- Later in the video, Dr. Marmer advises that, “You, too, probably have more strength than you realize. Find out. Finding that strength will give you resilience.” In what ways, exactly, can strength help you to build resilience? What are some ways, specifically, that you can find such strength? Explain.
- Towards the end of the video, Dr. Marmer reminds us that, “...the ability to change your life lies as much within you as in external circumstances. You can then avoid those behaviors that expose you to failure or difficulty. Focus on your power, not your helplessness. And the greatest power anyone has is the capacity to change.” What are some examples of behaviors that might expose you to failure or difficulty? In what ways, specifically, can you ‘focus on your power?’ Explain.

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: College Safe Spaces

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “VAKULSKAS: Safe spaces hurt students in long run,” then answer the questions that follow.

- Why are some colleges choosing to call their campuses ‘safe spaces?’ What are Marquette professors choosing to do, and why? Why does the safe space ideology exist, in theory? Why did the Marquette Law School cancel a speaking engagement for President Feigin? Why do students need controversy? What does the author have to say about ‘avoidance?’ What is college supposed to prepare students for? What does the author suggest at the very end of the article?
- The author of the article asks, “...where do we draw the line between what makes someone feel unsafe and what makes someone feel just uncomfortable? How would you answer that question? Why is that such an important distinction to make and such an important question to ask? Explain.
- Which points in the article do you agree with, if any? Explain. Do you support having ‘safe spaces’ on campuses? Why or why not? Do you think that safe spaces are better than resilience for people in the long run? Why or why not?



# QUIZ

## BUILDING RESILIENCE: 5 WAYS TO A BETTER LIFE

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1. It's not possible to lead a happy and productive life without \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. building a home
  - b. building fragility
  - c. building confidence
  - d. building resilience
  
2. Parents who coddle their children and protect them from every hurt and failure are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. doing important work
  - b. helping them build resilience
  - c. not doing them any favors
  - d. fostering mental toughness
  
3. The greatest power anyone has is the capacity to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. claim victimhood
  - b. change
  - c. be happy
  - d. whine
  
4. To lead a happy life, resilience is essential.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
5. What is resilience?
  - a. The ability to ride through life without internal shock absorbers .
  - b. The ability to be upset by everything.
  - c. The ability to focus on all of the undeserved bad things that have happened.
  - d. The ability to bounce back from life's inevitable disappointments, failures, and pains.



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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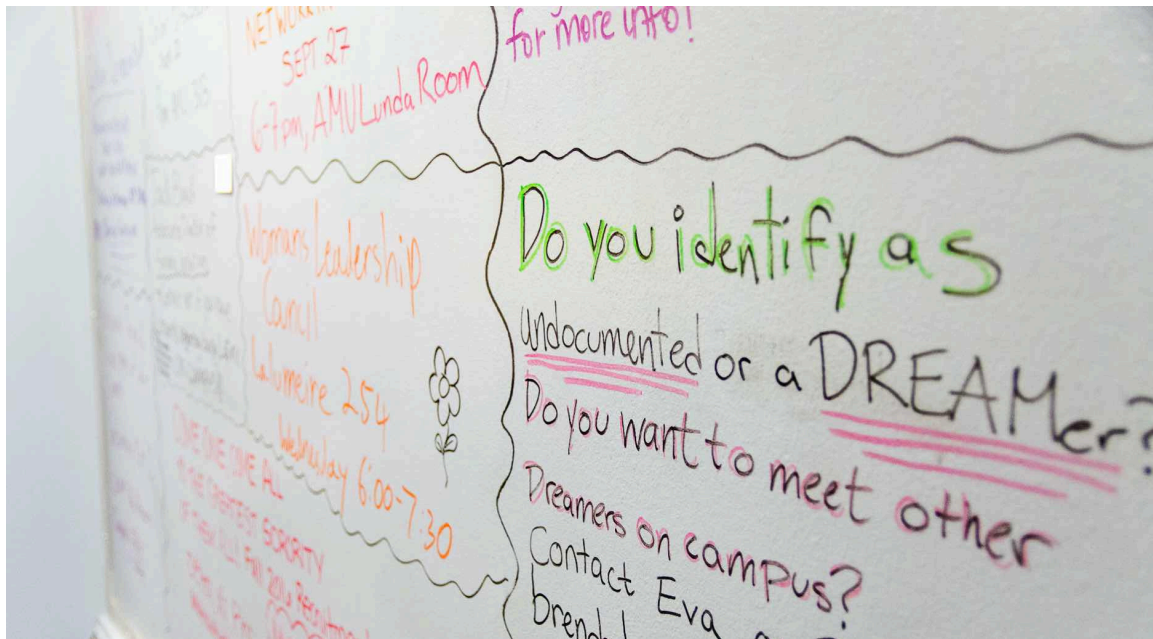
<https://marquettewire.org/3955601/featured/vakulskas-safe-spaces-hurt-students-in-the-long-run/>

# VAKULSKAS: Safe spaces hurt students in long run

Abby Vakulskas, Columnist • October 4, 2016 • 3 Comments

In what has turned out to be a controversial move, many colleges are choosing to call their campuses “safe spaces.” These schools adopt practices in order to protect victims of sexual assault, LGBT students and others who may feel vulnerable to discrimination.

Some are more stringent than others, and while Marquette’s approach seems to be more flexible, we’re definitely part of the debate.



Some Marquette professors implement trigger warnings in their classrooms in hopes of protecting students sensitive to certain topics.

Photo by Austin Anderson

As reported by the Wire this week, some Marquette professors choose to declare their classrooms safe spaces and encourage trigger warnings — being cautious of language used in the hope of sustaining a safe learning environment. For example, maintaining sensitivity around or even avoiding the use of the word “rape” can protect victims who may be in the class from being re-traumatized.

I like the concept. Especially as a psychology major, I think it’s very important to take students’ mental health into account and don’t believe it’s something done often enough. I appreciate the fact that someone is looking out for people who need extra support, particularly when they don’t feel supported by everyone else.

And I do maintain the belief that no one can know what's going on in someone else's life. Plenty of students on this campus carry around pains and insecurities that they will never disclose even to their closest friends.

In theory, it seems that the safe spaces ideology exists to protect students and create an environment where they can learn without fear of being hurt. Unsurprisingly, overwhelming research, including findings from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard, acknowledges that fear thwarts learning. It's hard to concentrate on academics if you feel scared, discriminated against or negatively singled out in the classroom.

In reality, however, I question whether implementing safe spaces is the best course of action.

There are a myriad of articles out there denouncing college safe spaces, and though many are a bit harsh, they do have a point. At the core of the safe spaces idea, the intentions are good. However, where do we draw the line between what makes someone feel unsafe and what makes someone feel just uncomfortable?

A New York Times op-ed titled "In College and Hiding From Scary Ideas" tells of campuses where controversial speakers were canceled and debates were shut down. In fact, Marquette Law School announced on Thursday the cancellation of a classroom discussion with Milwaukee Bucks President Peter Feigin in fear that the event would be "disrupted by the general public," according to what university spokesman Brian Dorrington told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Feigin recently called Milwaukee "the most segregated, racist place I've ever experienced in my life" at a speech in Madison, and although Dorrington said Marquette's primary concern "was not security," it felt it was best to cancel the event.

We don't need hate speech in our universities. We don't want people to feel threatened. But we do need controversy. We need to be exposed to things we disagree with and be uncomfortable. It is only by doing this that students can question authority, form their own views and learn what is really valuable to them.

So while it is concerning that students who have been traumatized could be triggered by a word like "rape" in class, the fact is that you can't go through life avoiding certain words. Rape is discussed on TV, in books, in the media, in everyday conversation.

Avoidance may feel better now, but it won't help a traumatized student lead a healthy life in the long run. If a victim has gone four years without being reminded of trauma but encounters those reminders on the first day of work in a real career, he or she may not be able to handle it.

Wouldn't it be better to get used to hearing the word in a controlled environment, such as a class discussion, when there are free resources like the counseling center to support you if it gets difficult?

College is supposed to prepare students for the real world, and unfortunately, the real world is not always a nice place. If students are exposed — gently, here in the classroom — to ideas and practices that radically contradict their own, they will know all the better how to deal with conflict gracefully. Perhaps, instead of dodging sensitive topics, we should practice respectful, open dialogue instead.