

# **BUILDING** BOUNCE<sup>®</sup>

how to grow emotional resilience



**MARCUS WARNER**

**STEFANIE HINMAN**

“Why do some get stuck and others bounce? I started reading with the intention of discovering the answer and wound up seeing myself in these pages. Liberating! Life-giving! Your desire to help someone else discover joy may be a gift to your own heart.”



**Chris Fabry**

Radio Host

Award-winning author of more than 80 books

“*Building Bounce* brings that essential transparency to know you are reading reality. Marcus and Stefanie tell stories together that combine the great truths we usually cannot apply in ways that just fit and make sense. Reading this book will be nearly useless but *practicing* this book is going to change your life and relationships. I want everyone I know to be *Building Bounce!*”



**Jim Wilder**

Author | Neurotheologian

Life Model Works

“There are many things we like about *Building Bounce!* One is the clarity. Marcus and Stefanie wrote a remarkably clear book that puts words to essentials we need in order to develop emotional resilience to be our best selves. Second, this book is compelling! Once you pick it up, you will not want to put it down. Putting the *Bounce* principles into practice changes you, your character, your relationships and your life. Much like baking a cake, growing emotional resilience requires specific ingredients for success. When done right, the results are magnificent! Read *Building Bounce*. Give copies to your friends. Our world needs this!”



**Chris & Jen Coursey**

Authors | Speakers

THRIVEtoday

“Marcus and Stefanie have done an excellent job blending complex topics like attachment theory, brain science, and biblical principles to create a simple approach to building resilience. Regardless of your current ability to bounce back from difficult situations, you will likely find the information and exercises throughout the book practical and simple to use. I’m excited to have this book as a resource both personally and professionally!”



**Melissa Finger, MS**

Executive Director | Counselor  
Seek First Ministries

“There is a new and better psychology grounded in neuroscience breakthroughs that is displacing much of the past guesswork in this fascinating and noble field of study. Oddly, much of what the research has unveiled confirms the ancient wisdom of the Bible. It’s easy to see in retrospect. In *Building Bounce*, Warner and Hinman reveal how this better psychology relates to and integrates with the outstanding biblical value and virtue of relational-joy-based resilient endurance. They provide practical explanations, examples, illustrations and practices that make such transformation concrete and authentic. Read this game-changing book!”



**Pastor Michael Sullivant**

CEO  
Life Model Works

“In the course of life, some people’s life pursuit causes them to achieve something called ‘convergence.’ It is when a lifetime of study, skills, relational capacity, inquiry, and wisdom converge into a distilled sense of vision that not only guides that person’s life, but also gives them the ability to convey truth to others that can be readily assimilated. In *Building Bounce*, Marcus, aided (and perhaps catalyzed by) Stefanie, demonstrates convergence, and offers it bountifully to others. I have read Marcus’ other books as well. This one is his best so far, beautifully conveying his heart for ministry and relationships. Stefanie brings her treasure trove of skills working with some of the world’s most wounded. Together, they offer to every reader the opportunity to have a better and more fulfilling life in every dimension. I cannot overstate the profundity that this superbly written and wonderfully organized book offers to absolutely every reader.”



**Rt. Rev. Dr. Bill Atwood**

Bishop of the International Diocese  
Anglican Church of North America

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## author notes

### STEFANIE

In my first five years out of college, I worked at a residential home for children with severe behavioral disorders and a local hospice. The children I worked with had seen more adversity, trauma, and loss in their few short years than most people experience in a life time.

I often found myself wondering if our best practices of care were really helping. I could work for hours with a child on emotional expressiveness or learning to feel safe. However, if the family system or community culture wasn't emotionally safe, the child would be punished for expressing their emotions or worse re-traumatized by the adults in their lives who were stuck in old dysfunctional patterns of relating. I learned that children can only heal and grow in family systems and community cultures that give them the physical, emotional, and spiritual nutrients they need to heal and grow.

Even though I often felt discouraged in those early years, there was one crucial question that emerged. This one question still drives me as a mom and a therapist...

“Why do some kids bounce back after trauma and some get stuck in it?”

Child after child, family after family, patterns began to emerge. There were certain key factors that created strong healthy families, and strong healthy families create strong healthy kids.

I was then asked to help create a resilience building program for children. Up until this point there had been

research on what makes adults resilient but very little on children.

This question became the focus of my work. But it was motherhood that became the most motivating factor in my search for finding how to equip children to thrive in a world filled with adversity. After years of research, study, and practice, I learned a few things that I consider very good news...

- 1) No matter how old you are, you can learn to become more resilient.
- 2) The more resilient you are, the more resilient the children who depend on you will become.

## MARCUS

*Building Bounce*® is about growing your ability to bounce back from hard experiences. Some call this resilience. Others call it hardiness or grit. The idea is not to prevent feeling pain or negative emotions. Nor is the idea that you should be happy all the time. Building bounce is learning how to grow both your capacity to handle stress and your skills in bouncing back from it.

A few years ago, I learned about Stefanie Hinman's curriculum for helping children build emotional resilience. It was packed with practical tools and teaching. I was impressed, and we discussed writing a parent resource together. After much discussion, however, we decided to write this book because it isn't just children who need to learn how to build bounce. We live in a world that seems to be increasing in adversity and decreasing in joy. All of us could benefit from extra bounce.

Our goal in writing this book is to explain the theory behind growing resilience and to provide practical tools you can use both in a variety of settings such as growing your

own emotional capacity, parenting your children in ways that build joy, and helping others who live low-joy lives learn the skills that grow joy.

We call this the ABCs of Building Bounce because we have reduced the essential practices for growing resilience to A-B-C.

- » Appreciation
- » Beliefs
- » Connections

People who bounce back quickly from upset emotions practice appreciation regularly, take their thoughts captive and foster healthy beliefs, and develop strong connections with God and others. In this book, we hope to walk you through the theory and practice that will help you live with greater bounce!

Reader Note: For clarity we've generally marked "I" statements throughout the text with the narrating author's name. However, if you read "I" or "me" in the text and it is not clearly attributed to an author, it is likely Marcus writing.



# CHAPTER ONE



## the secret to emotional resilience

Life is hard. We all get overwhelmed at times. But some people seem to be able to handle hardship better than others. They bounce back from their upset emotions faster than most. It may even seem like some people are just born happy. But is this true? Is there a secret to the emotional resilience that gets people through life? If so, don't you want to know what it is?

Thanks to the latest brain science,<sup>1</sup> we now understand that there is a secret to emotional resilience. It can be summed up in one word—joy. The more joy you have, the more hardship you can handle. High-joy people bounce back from the hardships of life faster than low-joy people. The more normal it becomes to feel joy, the easier it is to handle upsetting emotions. The faster you return to joy after getting upset, the easier it is to feel like yourself.

Joy is often seen as the “icing on the cake” of life. It's a nice surprise when it happens, but we don't think of it as foundational to life. However, joy is like the air in the ball that makes it bounce. If you don't have enough joy, the ball doesn't bounce back properly. It can even go flat.

Many adults struggle with depression, anxiety, and other emotions that drag them down and can feel overwhelming. These emotions will take over one's life, so people who struggle in this way tend to be highly motivated to find a solution. For most of my life, I (Marcus) described myself

1 | Most of the brain science research in this book is based on the writings of such authors as Jim Wilder, Allan Schore, Daniel Siegel, and Daniel Amen.

as “slightly depressed.” A few years ago, I had a series of panic attacks that took me off guard and started a year-long battle with anxiety that left me very motivated to figure out how to “bounce back” from both low-level depression and high-level anxiety.

It has helped me to think of my capacity for joy as a container capable of growing. It grows bigger every time it hits its joy limit. To grow this container, three essential tasks need to be done: 1) Repair, 2) Relational Joy, 3) Rest.

Repair relates to emotional healing and spiritual warfare. It involves taking thoughts captive and healing memories that fuel negative thinking. This type of repair can be thought of as patching the leaks in your joy container. *Building Bounce* will not be addressing issues of repair. We recommend *Understanding the Wounded Heart* and *What Every Believer Should Know About Spiritual Warfare* for guidance on repairing the holes in your joy container.

Relational joy means becoming more intentional about time with people, especially family, and also time with God—especially time spent in appreciation.

Rest represents margin. It is impossible to grow joy if you have no Sabbath and no sleep. Exhausting yourself and then crashing is not the same as resting. Rest requires a healthy routine.

We wrote *Building Bounce* to give you a simple process for building a rhythm of relational joy and rest and for helping others build theirs. The process for building this rhythm can be remembered as easily as A-B-C.

## THE ABCS OF BOUNCE

The ABCs of building bounce are appreciation, beliefs, and connections. People who form strong habits around

these three practices will grow emotional resilience. Here is a quick summary of the ABCs.

**A – Appreciation.** We have combined quieting and appreciation into one step. The practice of appreciation should lead to both joy and peace. Sometimes we need to quiet before we can appreciate, and sometimes appreciation helps us quiet. Appreciation is needed in order to train your brain to focus on what there is to enjoy in life. Staying in a state of appreciation for five minutes or longer two or more times each day is an important habit for growing the joy center in your brain.<sup>2</sup>

The fastest way to jumpstart growing your capacity for joy is to spend five minutes writing out what you appreciate, where you feel that emotion in your body, and then sharing what you appreciate with someone else. Sharing appreciation with others takes it from simply being a task we perform to an experience of relational joy. Doing this twice a day as an ongoing habit will help you grow your capacity to bounce back from hard emotions.<sup>3</sup>

**B – Beliefs.** Your brain needs to be trained to build a narrative that is anchored in optimism. Optimism can be defined as the belief that God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Romans 8:28). When our brains are anchored in optimism, we see our lives as a story of redemption.

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2 | We will have more to say about the joy center later. It is the part of your brain that grows with the experience of joy and rest.

3 | A study at Indiana University (“The effects of gratitude expression on neural activity” published by Prathik Kini, Joel Wong, Sydney McInnis, Nicole Gabana, and Joshua Brown) showed that half an hour each day spent writing letters of appreciation significantly improved emotional resilience. **In a personal conversation with Marcus Warner, Dr. Jim Wilder said** he routinely gave his clients the assignment of practicing appreciation for five minutes twice a day for two to three months, which resulted in significant growth in their emotional capacity.

When pessimism reigns, we see our lives as a story of ruin. Too many of us have brains that have been trained to only focus on what there is to fear in life. We have a hard time disconnecting from the negatives long enough to practice

WHEN OUR  
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appreciation and share joy. To help us build beliefs anchored in optimism, the apostle Paul encouraged us to spend time thinking about whatever is good, true, lovely, excellent, and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8).

One tool for helping you manage your beliefs is a simple journaling exercise. Ask God to show you what beliefs are driving your upsetting emotions. Write the thoughts that come to your mind. List them—anywhere from one to four thoughts. Then ask Jesus to show you what replacement thoughts He has for you. Write those down and share them with someone else. Exercises like this can help with moderate level emotions. If you are struggling with a deeply entrenched belief system, there is other healing work that will need to be done.

**C – Connections.** Isolation is a killer when it comes to growing joy. Knowing that you are not alone with your problems and emotions is important to building bounce. Feeling safe, calm, and connected helps you grow your capacity to deal with hard things. Knowing you belong to a people gives you the security of knowing others will walk through your hard issues with you. Most of us, however, wait for others to create connection with us. Instead, we want to equip you with skills that can help you create connection wherever you go.

Not only is it important to create connection with people, but it is also important to create a connection with God. A strong connection with God serves as an anchor even in

those times when you are cut off from others, and it gives you confidence that, no matter what happens, you are never alone.

For all of these reasons and more, learning the skills to create connection is essential to building bounce. An example of a skill that can help you build connection is being intentional about making people smile. You can't make everyone smile, but, if in the course of the day, you see four people and you can get three of them to smile, you will increase your joy—and theirs! I often do this with baristas at coffee shops, people helping me check out at stores, as well as with people I know. One simple way is to show curiosity about something you notice.

For example, one cashier seemed very preoccupied and hadn't smiled at anyone in line. I (Marcus) made it my goal to get him to smile. I noticed he had tattoos on one arm, and I said, "That's an interesting picture. Is there a story behind that?" He immediately made eye contact and told me how it always made him think of a friend. So, I smiled at him and said, "That's a very honoring thing to do." He smiled, and I smiled too as we finished our business, knowing I had added a little joy to his day.

The goal is to make someone's day a little brighter by spreading joy. This makes them feel seen and valued. Plus, when you share joy with someone else, it increases your joy. It's a win-win.

## WHAT IS JOY?

As an experience in the brain, joy is always relational. This surprises some people, because they are often alone when they feel joy. They may also have a lot of relationships that don't produce joy, so the idea that joy is dependent on relationships feels a little scary. However, the part of your brain that experiences joy is located in the non-verbal right

hemisphere of the brain. This part of your brain is where most of your relational circuitry is. It is also where you react to situations faster than you can think about them.

You feel joy, sadness, shame, anger, and other emotions involuntarily. They happen before you think about them. This means joy is not a choice. It is a feeling.<sup>4</sup> It is a reaction you have to being happy to be with someone. If you want a good picture of this, ask a grandparent, “When your grandchild sees you and squeals with delight, do you have to choose to feel joy?” You will probably get a laugh. At moments like this, you often start smiling before you even realize you are doing it.

From your brain’s perspective, joy can be defined as relational happiness. Joy is the feeling of being happy to be with someone. Joy creates a twinkle in our eyes, a smile on our faces, and floods our bodies with positive energy.

WE NEED A  
RHYTHM OF JOY  
AND REST IN  
ORDER TO LIVE  
AT OUR BEST.

Not long ago I (Marcus) was in a coffee shop with my adult daughter, when she got a phone call from an old college friend. I still smile when I remember how she reacted. As soon as she saw the name on her screen, it was like someone dropped a joy bomb in the cafe. She simultaneously exploded out of her chair, laughed with delight, caught my eye to excuse herself non-verbally, grabbed her phone, and went outside to talk. Through the window, I could see the twinkle in her eyes and the excitement in her body language as she walked back and forth talking with her friend. That is the power of joy.

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4 | Rejoicing is a choice. Praise is a choice. Appreciation is a choice. There are many choices you can make that lead to joy, but the experience of joy is an emotion that happens in the relational center of your brain, and we can’t simply choose to have that feeling.

The counterpart to joy is peace. Joy is the high-energy feeling of shared excitement. Peace is the low-energy feeling of contentment. It is the feeling of being safe, calm, and connected. Throughout the book, we will often refer to joy as the key to emotional capacity. It should be understood, however, that we always mean the rhythm of joy and rest that includes peace and contentment. For example, joy should always end in rest. If you spend time with friends playing board games and eating nachos (or whatever makes you smile), the joy you feel should lead to a time of quiet later. The high joy followed by the low-level quiet creates a complete experience that grows your capacity for joy.

### **Is joy a choice?**

The idea that joy is a choice has been comforting to many people, so let's take a moment to explore this idea. Joy, as we are defining it, is an experience that takes place in the right hemisphere of the brain. It happens in the right orbital prefrontal cortex as dopamine, oxytocin, and other chemicals flow there. This part of your brain—we call it the joy center—grows as we experience a rhythm of joy and rest. Whereas joy is experienced in the right hemisphere of the brain, choices take place in the left hemisphere of the brain. The flow of activity in the brain moves from right to left. This means that I cannot simply choose to have a feeling. However, this does not mean there are no choices I can make and nothing I can do if I don't feel joy.

What the left side of your brain excels at is problem solving. In this case, the problem it is trying to solve is how to feel more joy. While it can't simply flip a switch and activate that feeling, the problem-solving part of my brain can choose to do things that make joy more likely. Appreciation or praise are great examples. I can choose to rejoice in the Lord by praising Him and practicing appreciation. At first

this may be a “sacrifice of praise” because I don’t feel the emotions. But eventually, if my relational circuits re-engage and my joy center gets back online, the feelings will come.

When it comes to joy, the primary job of beliefs and choices is to help us get the relational circuits in the right hemisphere of our brain back online. We will have a lot to say about how we do this later in the book.

When people say they are choosing joy, it is more accurate to say they are choosing a different attitude or focusing on a new perspective. Such choices can make joy more likely, but it is not quite the same thing as choosing joy.

## Joy and the Brain

Contrary to popular opinion, no one is born happy.<sup>5</sup> As an infant, you have the capacity to experience joy for a moment here or there,<sup>6</sup> but this part of your brain is largely undeveloped at birth. This part of your brain only grows through human interaction. Babies and toddlers who experience lots of relational happiness through engagement with other people will experience tremendous growth in this part of their brain. Babies and toddlers who don’t experience relational happiness will enter childhood without fully developing the part of the brain that experiences joy. This underdeveloped capacity for joy can affect them for the rest of their lives if something isn’t done to intervene and build that capacity.

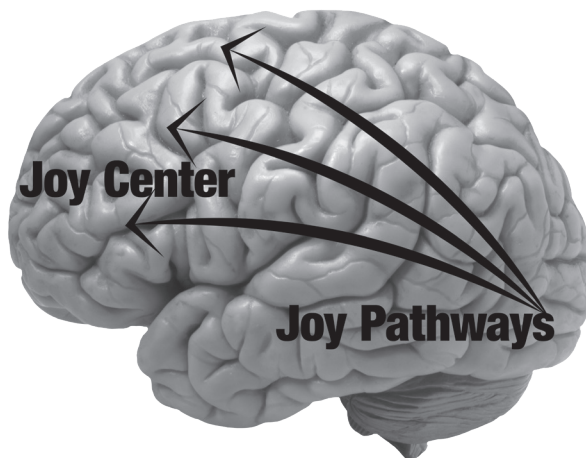
5 | There is evidence that some people are born with a genetic predisposition to joy. (See the online article by Kelly Miller at PositivePsychology.com “Is Happiness Genetic and What Causes It?”) However, predispositions increase the likelihood of something happening; they are not direct causes. Our point here is that joy is not present at birth. It can’t be present, because the part of the brain (the prefrontal cortex) that experiences joy is undeveloped at birth.

6 | E. James Wilder, *The Complete Guide to Living with Men* (Pasadena, CA: Shepherd’s House, Inc.) 1993, 1997, 2004. ‘At two to three months of age a region of the brain, **which was not developed at birth**, begins to grow. This area, called the right prefrontal cortex, will become the top of the command center in the brain” (p. 16 – bold type added).



Emotional resilience depends on two physical changes in the brain that every child needs to experience. The first change is the development of a large joy center. The technical term for this part of your brain is the right orbital pre-frontal cortex. This part of the brain is unformed at birth and needs to grow or it will have disastrous consequences for a child's ability to bounce back from hardship. This doesn't mean they will have no capacity to deal with stress, but that the lack of development increases the inevitability of attachment issues, addictions, and emotional and relational overwhelm.

The second important brain development is the creation of joy pathways. These are neural pathways that are formed as neurons first link together in a chain and eventually get wrapped in white matter—a process called myelination. As we noted before, these pathways are completely unformed at birth. No child is born with the ability to bounce back from painful emotions. These pathways are formed and grown through practice as adults meet babies, toddlers, and children in their big emotions and help them quiet and recover. Let's take a closer look at these two crucial elements of building bounce.



## The Joy Center

Infants and toddlers who live in high-joy environments can quickly grow large joy centers in the front right side of their brains. In the best cases, the joy center can grow to fill a quarter to a third of the right side of your brain.<sup>7</sup> Growing a large joy center increases your capacity to feel joy and

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share it with others. You feel joy more easily and share it more spontaneously when this part of your brain is well-developed.

In sharp contrast to this, infants and toddlers who live in low-joy environments don't get the relational interaction they need. Consequently, they develop much smaller joy centers and a much lower capacity for joy. A baby who is surrounded by a happy family with lots of people willing to engage with them in both joy and rest will thrive. A baby who is surrounded by angry people, anxious voices, and hopelessness will not only miss out on the good stuff they need in order to grow joy, they will experience trauma from these overwhelming emotions if they are left to deal with them by themselves and not comforted relationally.

The good news is that your brain's capacity to experience joy has the ability to grow for as long as you live. This is one of the main reasons we wrote this book. No matter how large your joy center is now, you can learn skills and habits that can increase its size and, with it, your capacity to live with joy.

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7 | *The Complete Guide to Living with Men*. 'This area, known as the prefrontal cortex, comes to occupy 35% of the adult brain' (p. 12).

## Joy Pathways

Around eighteen months of age, a child's body begins to produce a new set of hormones and chemicals that create some pretty significant changes. For the first time, these little ones can experience extreme emotions. Instead of anger, they can feel rage. Instead of fear, they can feel terror. During this stage of development their brains need help from mom, dad, and others to learn how to bounce back from these big new emotions. Every time someone validates their emotions, comforts them, and helps them recover, their brains build stronger pathways back to joy from their upset emotions.

Ideally, a child will be helped to recover so often that their brain builds something like a series of highways connecting the joy centers in the front of their brain to the various parts of their lower brain where they feel upset emotions. When these joy pathways develop and get strong, it can become normal for a child to be able to bounce back from all sorts of negative emotions in 90 seconds or less. So, how do joy pathways develop? The answer is a simple process psychologist Jim Wilder calls VCR.<sup>8</sup>

## VCR

The process for building these “joy pathways” in the brain can be remembered as VCR—Validate, Comfort, Recover. We will have more to say about how this works later in the book but want to introduce it to you here. Validation happens when parents and other adults meet little ones in their big emotions and provide a safe, calm presence. We share their upset emotion with them. With infants, this has to be done non-verbally.

8 | Marcus Warner and Jim Wilder, *Rare Leadership* (Chicago: Moody 2016) pp. 168-171.

For example, I (Marcus) watched my dad comfort my daughter when she was a baby. She was crying really hard, but Grandpa picked her up and validated her emotions. He looked her in the eyes and imitated her upset emotion by sticking out his bottom lip, making a sad face, and saying in a soothing voice, “What a sad story!” He then began to gently bounce her on his knee and tickle her under chin until she stopped crying and soon started laughing. The whole process took about two minutes. By validating her emotions and comforting her, he helped her recover. As a result, her brain began to form a pathway from sadness back to joy. The more often she experienced that VCR pattern when she was sad, the bigger and faster the pathway between sadness and joy grew.

VCR needs to be reinforced at every stage of development. Before a child learns language, they can still be validated in their emotion, comforted, and helped to return to safe, calm, and connected. Every time a baby cries and a trusted caregiver is able to pick them up, identify with the overwhelming emotion, and whisper, “It’s going to be okay,” as they pat the child on the back, the child is building neuro-pathways back to safe, calm, and connected.

### **SAD-SAD: Learning to name emotions**

As the baby grows into a toddler and starts to use their words. It will become important that the child is able to name what they are feeling and express themselves in healthy, age-appropriate ways. This can be difficult at first. If you have ever been around a two-year-old throwing a temper tantrum then you know what it looks like when a child is feeling big emotions and doesn’t have the skill to express themselves well. Instead of shaming the child, however, the parent can help by modeling healthy emotional expression and by teaching the child to name what they are feeling.

Naming emotions helps to normalize them. Normalizing emotions is important to validating them. Everyone has feelings. They are part of being human. Emotions come and go like the weather. They are not good or bad, but they may feel good or bad. Feelings color our world in ways that impact everything we do.

Just like the colors of a rainbow, there is a broad spectrum of feelings, and they can vary in intensity. Some emotions—like fear and anger—are high energy. They unleash hormones and chemicals that make it feel like someone has stepped on the gas and revved up our emotional engine. Other emotions—like sadness, shame, and despair—deplete our energy. They can make it feel like someone has slammed on the brakes so that we don't feel like doing anything.

Feeling emotions without being able to name them is like swimming with one arm. It can be a struggle to make any progress in bouncing back from the way we feel. One tool we find helpful we call SAD-SAD. It is a list of six core negative emotions that everyone feels.

Dr. Jim Wilder has identified what can be called “the big six negative emotions.” These are right-brain generated emotions. This means they are reactionary and happen faster than thought. By way of contrast, there are left-brain generated emotions that are driven by beliefs. For example, fear is a right-brain reaction to a perceived threat. It is a direct result of our fight, flight, or freeze center getting triggered. Anxiety, on the other hand, is a left-brain reaction to what we believe. It is related to our imagination. Anxiety comes from imaginig a scary future. That anxiety can grow to panic or dread when the scary future we imagine feels inevitable.

In *The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled Marriages*, Chris Coursey and I (Marcus) call these big six negative emtions SAD-SAD emotions to make them easier to remember.<sup>9</sup> For our

9 | pp. 75-76

purposes here, we will look at these emotions from both a right-brain and a left-brain perspective.

The right brain generates these emotions when there are triggers related to our attachments/connections. The left brain generates similar emotions when there are problems with our beliefs.

When our connections don't create joy, they tend to create one or more of these six feelings. For example, if I walk in the door and notice that you don't seem happy to see me, I can feel sad before I have time to consciously think about what is happening. Once I start thinking about it, I may believe that you are definitely not happy to see me and perhaps feel shame as well. This may even trigger hopeless despair if I feel like this is a pattern that is impossible to change. Beliefs and connections (attachments) can both contribute to these core emotions.

- » **Sadness:** I have lost something that brought me joy (an object, a relationship, a dream, etc.).
- » **Anxiety** (or fear): I am in danger, or I believe I am in danger. Fear is a right-brain reactionary response to danger. Anxiety is a left-brain response to the fear we imagine, whether it is true or not.
- » **Despair:** My situation is hopeless. Resolution looks impossible.
- » **Shame:** I don't bring you joy. There is something bad about who I am. I feel like hanging my head and hiding.
- » **Anger:** I want injustice or pain to stop. (I want you to stop using that tone with me; I want this feeling to end; I want to stop that mom from treating her child poorly).
- » **Disgust:** Related to the sensation of needing to vomit—it's the feeling that makes you want to say, "Yuck!" I look down on someone or something and feel like avoiding them.

Learning to use these words to name emotions is an important part of validating yourself and others.

## A JOY WORKOUT

At the end of each chapter we will provide some sample exercises you can do to start building bounce. You can think of it as a joy workout plan. Since this was the introductory chapter, and you learned a little bit of everything, we won't overwhelm you and ask you to practice something related to all of the ABCs. We will start with appreciation.

### **Take a 5-minute joy break.**

Now and then I'll catch myself noticing how beautiful the sky is or how much I am enjoying something in my environment, but then I keep on going instead of taking a five-minute joy break to simply soak in the moment.

Make it your goal this week to take a five-minute joy break twice each day. Here is a suggested pattern to follow.

During your first joy break, think of a memory that makes you happy. Here are some questions that may help you engage with the memory.

1. Where were you?
2. What was the weather (or the atmosphere, if inside) like?
3. What do you remember about the way you felt?
4. What sensations did you feel in your body?
5. Who else was there?
6. What happened?
7. How does it feel to go back and relive that experience?

During your second joy-break, notice something in your environment that you like. It might be a picture, a decoration, the view out of the window, children playing—whatever you notice that makes you smile. Take a minute or two and just enjoy looking at it, then draw a picture of it or write about your experience and thank God for the little joys in life.

To take this a step further, it helps increase joy and build connection to share our joy with others. Consider calling someone or meeting with someone to tell them about your experience.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The next chapter will introduce the idea of emotional capacity and how it develops. We will then explore some basic brain science and the attachment theory that helps us understand how we build bounce. Chapters 4-8 will then explore the ABCs in greater detail, providing a number of exercises you can use both for your own growth and for working with others.

The good news is that wherever you are starting this journey, growth is possible. People used to believe we were victims of the wiring in our brains. We now know that our brains can be rewired. We want to help you learn how to train your brain by building habits that increase your ability to bounce back from the hard things in life.

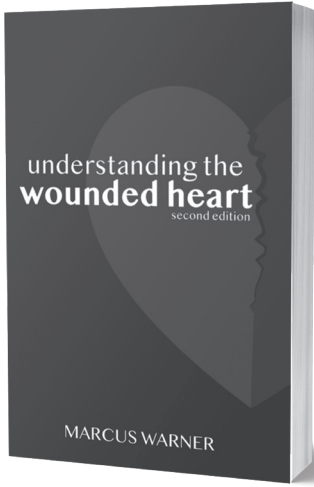


## BEHIND THE ABCS

“ABC” is an attempt to simplify five core habits or skill sets that help us build bounce. These skill sets are:

1. **Quieting** – The number one predictor of good emotional health is the ability to quiet. Quieting is about learning how to calm our bodies and minds after they have been triggered and learning how to practice being quiet without the need for distraction on a regular basis.
2. **Appreciating** – The fastest way to grow joy is to practice appreciation. We do this by training ourselves to dwell on what there is to enjoy in life and sharing that joy with others. This goes beyond saying thank you to taking five minutes or more to soak in the feeling of joy and appreciation.
3. **Thinking** – Beliefs drive left-brain emotions. When our thought life is out of control, our emotions are generally out of control as well. Quieting our minds from racing thoughts, replacing negative thoughts, and learning how to dwell on life-giving thoughts are crucial skills for building bounce.
4. **Forming joy bonds with people** – Just as left-brain emotions are driven by beliefs, so right-brain emotions are driven by our attachments. Instead of joy, too many of us bond with other people in fear, which keeps us disconnected and alone with our troubled emotions.
5. **Forming a joy bond with God** – It is not uncommon for people to form a fear bond with God that causes them to avoid Him or focus on performing for Him rather than actually connecting with Him. A strong joy bond with God means you will never be alone with any emotional pain you have to endure.

We have combined quieting and appreciation into a single skill because they work together to form a single experience. Appreciation can help you quiet, and quieting can make it easier to feel appreciation. We also combined forming joy bonds with God and others into the single idea of building healthy connections. We hope the ABC acronym will make it easier for you to remember and practice these five skills.



the world wounds us  
the devil lies to us  
we vow never to let it happen again  
we spend our lives picking the fruit of our wounds  
**It doesn't have to stay this way.**

Flesh-filled homes breed conflict and pain.

*Spirit-filled* homes grow the maturity to  
handle hard things in loving ways.



These and other resources can be found at  
[www.DeeperWalkInternational.org](http://www.DeeperWalkInternational.org)





Deeper Walk International is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit bringing together biblically-balanced teaching on emotional healing and spiritual warfare that helps people who feel stuck break through to new levels of freedom in their walk with God.

We teach about God's grace, life in the Spirit, spiritual warfare, and authentic community. What sets our training apart is how we bring it all together, then make it simple and transferable, so that people understand what it takes to walk in freedom and grow in maturity.

We call this approach to ministry "heart-focused discipleship."  
Find us at [DeeperWalkInternational.org](http://DeeperWalkInternational.org).

## author books

### MARCUS WARNER

*The 4 Habits of Joy-Filled Marriages* with Chris M. Coursey

*The Solution of Choice* with Jim Wilder

*Slaying the Monster*

*Rare Leadership* with Jim Wilder

*Understanding the Wounded Heart*

*The Spirit-Filled Home*

*What Every Believer Should Know About Spiritual Warfare*

*A Deeper Walk Guide to Advent*

*How to Grow Joy*

*REAL Prayer*

*3-2-1 Bible Study Method*

*D.I.D. Primer*

*Toward a Deeper Walk*

*The Deeper Walk Guide to the Bible*

### STEFANIE HINMAN

*The Amazing Marvelous Milly*