

Resilience Knows No Gender

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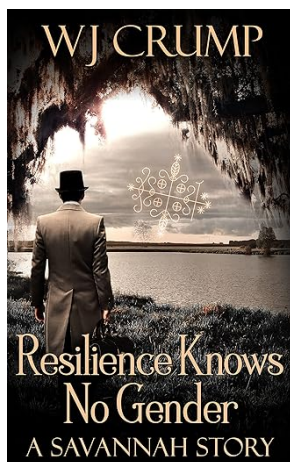
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Book Title: Resilience Knows No Gender

Author: W.J. Crump

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Resilience Knows No Gender explores the intersection between culture and resilience. Prompted by his numerous invitations to discuss resiliency with medical students, Dr Crump takes the reader on a journey to find the origin of career longevity and resiliency. With this book, Crump takes a sabbatical to reflect on his medical career and write as he approaches retirement. He explores his wife's Cherokee heritage and the gender roles that shaped his childhood, and invites the reader to travel through history by drinking Mae's Hoodoo tea. Mae, a local woman, gives him the tea to drink to help with his writer's block. The tea enables a deeper connection with the past, such that some ideas in the book are altered by a blend of historical accounts and current reality. Dr Crump's reflections are influenced by both the tea and his personal and professional experiences. The tea allowed him to suspend the rigor of evidence-based medical practice and simply write in the stream of consciousness. "My learning the hoodoo tradition had given me another outlet for my need to heal the suffering, in another time and place," he writes (pg 7). The tea also provided him with an opportunity to be mindful of the simple things such as the rich smells of a salt creek and the sounds of the busy Spanish Moss Street.

The book is set in Savannah, Georgia, incorporating old and new cultures of Catholic, Gullah, and Haitian traditions. Initially, Dr Crump provides a preliminary definition of resilience as a way to achieve success. "The definition I had settled on was that the resilient individual not only adapted well in the face of threat, trauma, and significant adversity, but used the pain of the experience as a source of personal growth" (pg 14). Crump refers to the horrors of slavery and cases in which the enslaved people's resiliency secured finances that brought them freedom. Observing the modern-day, newer brickwork along a wall downtown reminded how "those to be sold into slavery were chained while waiting for sale or transport" (pg 39). "The stories support that these enslaved people were allowed to keep a portion of revenue gained. No doubt some of the resilient folks were the first to reach out and grasp freedom" (pg 46).

Crump also offers examples of gender differences and how his experiences were shaped by male and female dominance. "But at every step, gender roles directed the route" (pg 91). For example, he recalls seeing a snake and automatically referring to it as a male. Furthermore, Crump explains the sacrifices made by women to be able to fight as men during the Civil War. The willingness of these women to disguise themselves as men and risk their lives serves as another example resiliency.

The stories throughout the book are relatable as they invite the reader to reflect on their own experiences, both personal and professional. Readers may even fall in love again with some of Savannah's southern charm as featured in the book—Mercer, Oglethorpe Avenue, Hunter Area Field, Tybee Island, Spanish Moss, and Savannah College for Art and Design are all represented. In a more practical turn, the book concludes with a discussion of how to incorporate a resilience curriculum as an ongoing tool for medical students and physicians to achieve longevity in their career. Dr Crump keenly observes how overtime work in a health care system with constant change leads to burnout and hinders physicians' paths to resilience: "The curiosity needed to understand the people with the diseases dies a slow death" (pg. 100).