

# Resilience: People

Self-Facilitated Retreat Guide

*Part 2 of 3 in the  
Resilience Self-Guided Retreat Series*



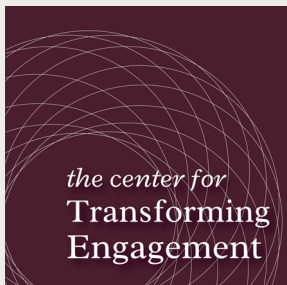
*the center for*  
Transforming  
Engagement

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This self-facilitated retreat was created by the team of the Center for Transforming Engagement, which exists to leverage the power of relationships to equip leaders and teams for positive social change through developing personal, social, and ecological resilience.

This team is composed of individuals who are diverse in training and occupation (pastors, counselors, educators, gatherers and relationship facilitators), generation, ethnicity and culture, family configuration, and gender identification.

Learn more about our frame for resilience through [The Resilience Report](#). Discover more about our offerings and team at [transformingengagement.org](https://transformingengagement.org), and follow on instagram [@transforming\\_engagement](#) to be the first to know about free resources and new releases.



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*All scripture from The Message, NavPress, 2014, modified for gender-neutral pronouns for the divine.*

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# Welcome

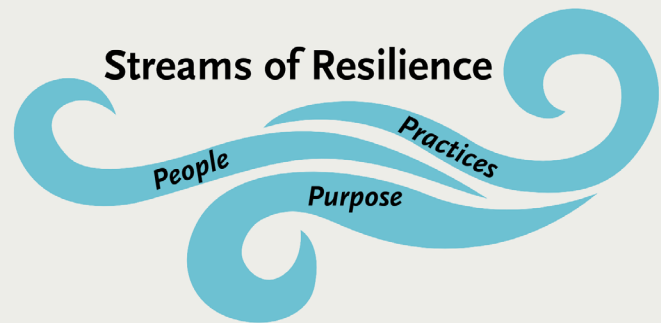
*When you invest in your personal resilience, you are also building the resilience of the communities around you.*

It can be hard to take the time to step back from everyday responsibilities to engage in the deeper questions of life – but it's vitally important to long-term wellbeing, not only your wellbeing but also the wellbeing of those who rely on you. Stepping back to reflect and make changes allows you to step back in with more vitality to serve and more clarity of purpose.

This retreat is focused on “People,” one of the three streams of resilience. Having “people resilience” means that you have mutual interpersonal relationships.

It means you have someone to call when you have exciting news to share, when you experience personal tragedy, or when you need a ride home from a doctor's appointment. It means that someone is going to show up at your door with food when life gets overwhelming, and someone that you care for who says *thank you*. It means that there are supportive people who know all of you – your weaknesses as well as your strengths, your failures and triumphs, your fears and joys.

It also means being a kind person to yourself: having the self-awareness and self-compassion you need to sustain the health of those relationships.



Mutual relationships are important to both your physical and emotional health. A longitudinal study at Harvard University found that “Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy throughout their lives. Those ties protect people from life's discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes.”<sup>1</sup>

As you'll see in this retreat, other kinds of people-support are important too, like supportive colleagues, medical and spiritual professionals, and communities of belonging. As you begin this retreat, we welcome you to the community of the Center for Transforming Engagement, and we commend you for taking the time to care for yourself and to grow your resilience.

<sup>1</sup> “Good genes are nice, but joy is better.” The Harvard Gazette. April 11, 2017. Retrieved from <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>

*“Loneliness kills. It's as powerful as smoking or alcoholism.”*

*– Robert Waldinger, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School*

# How to Use This Retreat Guide

You can choose to work through this self-guided retreat on your own or with a few friends. You'll find prompts for both an individual retreat and a small group retreat. If you're doing a personal retreat, we suggest using "Questions to reflect and write on." If you're with others, we suggest using "Questions to discuss." That said, you are welcome to mix and match as meets your needs.

This retreat is shaped like a liturgy, following the pattern of Gather – Transform – Send. This Resilience: People guide is the second in a series of three; the others focus on Practices and Purpose. Though this guide is designed to stand on its own, you might consider setting aside time for the other retreats in the coming season.

## What You'll Need for This Retreat

- 1-2 hours
- Journal or paper and pen, for each participant
- A timer, or a clock with a second hand
- *Optional:*
  - *Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers*
  - *Candles*
  - *Food and drink to share during conversation, if meeting with others*

# Gather

Embodiment is one of the most important parts of being a person, yet we often lose touch with the connection between body and spirit in the midst of everyday stress. So we invite you to begin this retreat with a reunion between body and spirit. Focus your attention on the present moment. Prepare for the possibility of encountering the divine with us in new ways. Start with a body scan, then take some time to practice a statio divina, and then transition with a prayer.

## I Body Scan

- Get in a comfortable position, feet on the ground.
- Take a couple of deep breaths, feel the breath down into your center and exhale slowly.
- We are going to breathe through our body beginning at the top of our heads, breathe in and imagine your breath filling your head, your brain, your scalp. Exhale.
- Next breathe in and imagine breath filling your eyes, your ears, your nose, your throat. Exhale.
- Breathe in and fill your neck, shoulders, and arms with your breath. Notice if there is any tightness, and breathe into any place that feels constricted or tight. Exhale.
- Next, breathe in and fill your lungs, feel your chest, your heart, your waist, and your stomach. Again, notice any places that feel tight, breathe into those places. Exhale.
- Breathe in and fill your legs and your feet all the way to the tips of your toes with your breath. Noticing any place that feels stretched, tight or constricted. Exhale.
- Take a final breath in, count to four, hold it on the count of four, and exhale slowly on the count of four.

# Gather

## I Statio Divina

*“Statio is a monastic practice of stopping one thing before we begin another. It is the time between the times. In monastic spirituality it is common for the community to gather in silence before beginning prayer.”*  
— Joan Chittister

Statio Divina is latin for “divine stillness.” So go ahead and pause for 2-5 minutes to:

- quiet your heart, mind and body
- sit in gratitude to consider where you are and what you are about to do;
- recognize your connection to the larger body of Christ.

## I Prayer

After the Statio, we invite you to conclude with prayer.

*Eternal One  
Silence  
from whom our words come;  
Questioner  
from whom our questions arise;  
Lover  
of whom all our loves are hints;  
Disturber  
in whom alone we find our rest;  
Mystery  
in whose depths we find healing and ourselves;  
enfold us now in your presence;  
restore to us your peace;  
renew us through your power;  
and ground us in your grace.  
Amen.*

*Ground Us In Your Grace* – Ted Loder, Guerrillas of Grace

# Transform

*People* is the most important stream of resilience. When we list the streams of resilience, sometimes we'll say them as "*people, people, people, practices, purpose.*" Strength in this stream begins with being a kind person to yourself through self-awareness and self-compassion, and expands into relationships with others and in community.

Often, others are the first to notice when we're not doing well, the ones to offer support as we find our way back to resilience, and the ones who offer us hope and encouragement in our lives and work. People are the foundation of sustaining practices and pursuing purpose. The below exercises will build self-awareness and self-compassion as well as giving you an opportunity to build the support you need.

## I Lectio Divina

*"Lectio divina provides us with a discipline, developed and handed down by our ancestors, for recovering the context, restoring the intricate web of relationships to which the Scriptures give witness but that are easily lost or obscured in the act of writing."*

– Eugene Peterson

Read through Psalm 139 three times. You may want to use a [Bible Audio App](#) so that you can simply listen.

The first reading, *listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you.*

Reflect for 2 minutes. You may want to write down responses.

The second reading, listen again. *How might God be speaking to you through that word or phrase?*

Reflect and write for 2 minutes.

The third reading, listen yet again. *How might God be calling you to act in response to that word or phrase?*

Reflect and write for 2 minutes.

# Transform

## I Psalm 139

God, investigate my life;  
get all the facts firsthand.  
I'm an open book to you;  
even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.  
You know when I leave and when I get back;  
I'm never out of your sight.  
You know everything I'm going to say  
before I start the first sentence.  
I look behind me and you're there,  
then up ahead and you're there, too –  
your reassuring presence, coming and going.  
This is too much, too wonderful –  
I can't take it all in!

Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out;  
you formed me in my mother's womb.  
I thank you, High God – you're breathtaking!  
Body and soul, I am marvelously made!  
I worship in adoration – what a creation!  
You know me inside and out,  
you know every bone in my body;  
You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,  
how I was sculpted from nothing into something.  
Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth;  
all the stages of my life were spread out before you,  
The days of my life all prepared  
before I'd even lived one day.

Investigate my life, O God,  
find out everything about me;  
Cross-examine and test me,  
get a clear picture of what I'm about;  
See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong –  
then guide me on the road to eternal life.



# Transform

## I Questions to reflect and write on (individual)

After the third reading, allow extra time for reflecting on the below questions.

- Use the word or phrase you heard as a prompt for a stream of consciousness written reflection. Where does that word intersect with your life story? What might that word be calling you to next?
- The opening of the psalm emphasizes that God is already anywhere that we are. Wherever we go, God is already there. Remember a moment when you recently felt isolated, exhausted, or burnt-out, with the knowledge that God was present with you and is witnessing that moment with you right now. What does that change of your memory and experience of that moment? Write that moment as a loving God sees it.
- The psalmist writes, "*I am marvelously made!*" In what ways are you marvelous? Name the traits, features, and characteristics that God instilled in you.
- The psalmist writes, "*I can never comprehend God's thoughts!*" The psalmist knows themselves as marvelously made and vitally important, but also recognizes that they are not omniscient or all-important. Where do you recognize your limitations? How do you allow yourself to have limitations?

Complete the Personal Community portion of the Mapping Your Community activity (at the end of the Retreat Guide).

### Map Your People (individual or group)

Fill out the Personal Community portion of the Mapping Your Community activity at the end of the Retreat Guide. After, write or discuss:

- What do you feel when you look at your map?
- Are there any types of support that you're lacking and would like to cultivate?
  - > If so, what's one action you can take to connect with a person who might be able to offer that type of support?

# Transform

## I Questions for Reflection:

Take 10 minutes to complete the Personal Community portion of the Mapping Your Community activity (at the end of the Retreat Guide). If you are doing this retreat on your own, take some time to journal your responses to these questions.

If you're participating as a small group, please discuss the questions below. Note: Your sharing is not a sharing of the names and relationships of your map, but a reflection on your network of support.

- What was it like creating your map?
- What do you feel when you look at your map?
- Are there any types of support that you're lacking and would like to cultivate?
  - > If so, what's one action you can take to connect with a person who might be able to offer that type of support?

Some ways of showing love seem universal. Others can be particular to an individual or can be culturally specific. Some common ones are kind words, tangible gifts, physical touch, acts of service, and quality time together, though that list certainly isn't exhaustive.

- What are behaviors that make *you* feel loved?
- What behaviors do you do to demonstrate your love to others?

# Send

To prepare for parting into the journey of our lives, we pack the key learnings from our conversations as we orient ourselves towards hope. The below practice can guide your reflection on the dark valleys and green fields you have visited together in these reflections, to take those thoughts and feelings into your evening and your life – sustenance for resilience in the days ahead.

## Visio Divina Instructions

*“Visio divina invites us to see and explore the entirety of an image in God’s presence and to go beyond our simple first and second impressions to a deeper place where we can be surprised.”*

— *Therese Kay, in Meeting God through Art*

Vision divina is Latin for “divine seeing.” Visio Divina is a method of praying with images or other media. You will listen to Psalm 23 while meditating on the art (use a [Bible Audio App](#), or there are readings on YouTube). After each reading, pause so you can reflect on and write down what you notice:

- What do I **see** in this image?
- What does the illumination make me **think** about?
- What does the illumination make me **wonder**?

# Send



*Holy Spirit Coming* (2013) by He Qi

## 1 Corinthians 13: 1–7

If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing. If I give away everything that I have and hand over my own body to feel good about what I've done but I don't have love, I receive no benefit whatsoever. Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.

# Send

## | Prayer

After the visio, we invite you to conclude with a prayer.

*Christ Has No Body But Yours - St. Teresa of Ávila (attributed)*

*Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which God looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which God walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which God blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which God looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.  
Amen.*

# Mapping Your Community: Support in your personal realm



First, list anyone in your **innermost realm of life**: significant others, house mates, children, pets. You may want to visualize this by drawing it in a house.

Next, list the names of your **family** support. This may be your biological family of origin or "chosen family," the people to whom you are so emotionally close and committed that you consider them family even though you are not biologically or legally related. Perhaps this is a circle near the house, or a concentric circle surrounding it; examples are on the following page.

List the names of your **friends** support. These are people who don't need you in any productive or professional sense; people from and with whom you can safely practice needing, asking for help, and setting and maintaining boundaries.

Finally, list your **existing support system** for any of the personal need-based support roles. Some such roles (by no means an exhaustive list) are below.



**Emotional:** Counselor or therapist

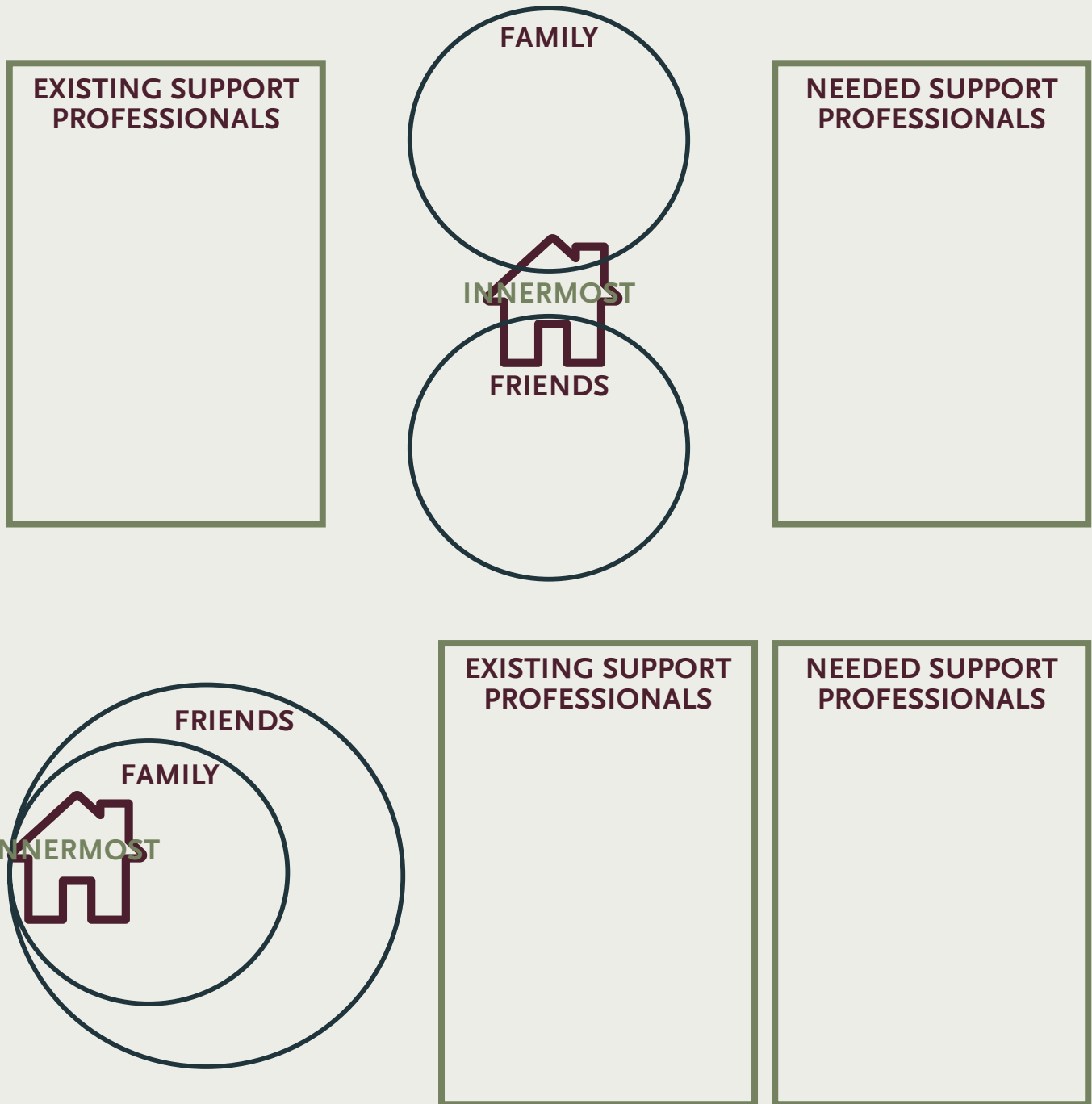
**Spiritual:** Spiritual director

**Physical:** Nutritionist, massage therapist, naturopath, acupuncture, etc.

**Physical (active):** Personal trainer, community of yoga or martial arts practitioners, sports team members, walking buddy, etc.

**Holistic:** Life coach or professional-specific coach

# Mapping Your Community: Example Layouts



# Gratitude

Thank you for spending this time to grow your personal resilience. We hope that you have a renewed vision for the rhythms and routines of your life and a plan to deepen the People stream of your resilience. It's this cycle of reflection followed by action that leads to positive personal transformation, which leads to community transformation.

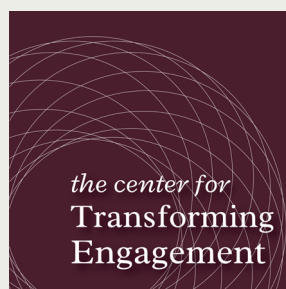
If you enjoyed this guide, we also have self-guided retreats for the Purpose and Practices streams of resilience. Follow us to learn about new releases.


We've developed additional offerings to support the resilience of Christian leaders, organizations, and congregations. We invite you to further develop your resilience and deepen your relationship with us by exploring these resources. To be the first to know about community opportunities and other new resources, follow us on instagram [@transforming\\_engagement](#) and sign up for the emails at [transformingengagement.org](https://transformingengagement.org).

- [Free online course: Resilience 101](#)
- Other [online courses](#) for individuals and groups
- [Guided group and church resilience programs](#)
- [Free downloadable resources](#)
- [Podcast: Transforming Engagement](#)

*We'd love to hear your experience of this resource! Email us at [transforming@theseattleschool.edu](mailto:transforming@theseattleschool.edu) with "Resilience Retreat" in the subject line.*





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