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THE INNER GAME  
of  
STRESS

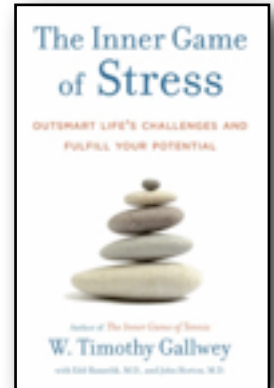
Renowned sports psychology expert W. Timothy Gallwey teams up with two esteemed physicians to offer a unique and empowering guide to mental health in today's volatile world. **The Inner Game of Stress** applies the trusted principles of Gallwey's wildly popular Inner Game series, which have helped athletes the world over, to the management of everyday stress—personal, professional, financial, physical—and shows us how to access our inner resources to maintain stability and achieve success.

# Build a Personal Shield

by Timothy Gallwey with Edward S. Hanzelik, M.D.  
and John Horton, M.D.

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## You can protect your stability by building a personal shield.

The shield can be made out of inner abilities of your own choosing. The last one I made for myself consisted of five inner resources that I thought would best protect me—clarity, hope, understanding, awareness, and courage.

I can change what I put on my shield at any time depending on what I feel would be most valuable to protect me.

Besides the shield, I choose to wear the soft but powerful armor of understanding, and carry a sharp, bright, lightweight sword of clarity that can cut through any confusion, doubt, or foolish

concept. I usually keep these two in place as they are always necessary. In their practice, John and Edd witness every day how powerful such shields can be for people with life-threatening and terminal illnesses, and how much better they work than other psychological defenses or medications.

Recently, I participated in a remarkable filmed dialogue with Pete Carroll, the head football coach of USC. I'm sure Pete will go down in history as one of the greatest. And he is definitely a man who uses personal shields in the extremely high-pressured environment of competitive college football.

I knew Pete had read *The Inner Game of Tennis* in his early years as a coach, so I was

interested in seeing if and how he applied what he understood to coaching football. When he invited me to do the dialogue, he said he had applied his understanding of the Inner Game to his fundamental approach to coaching. He humbly said that one thing he wanted to discover was whether he had gotten it right. I found, as we spoke, that he used the Inner Game in all aspects of his personal life as well.

The meeting took place at Heritage Hall, which is the inner sanctum of USC football. There was a small group of about fifty invited guests.

One of the questions I asked Pete was how he dealt with the most stressful moments in a football game. His answer was spontaneous and intriguing to me. First, he said that he

welcomed and appreciated those moments above all others, because they brought out the best of his and his team's inner resources. He said that there were only three or four moments like that in a game, and he looked forward to each of them. He spoke with such innocence and confidence that he was immediately credible.

Another insight Pete shared was that he had created a great deal of inner stability by working with his team to develop contingency plans for the critical moments. He said, "It's all about contingencies." He noted that once he had drilled his team in practice on each of the contingencies that might face them, he was able to say, "We have been here before. We know what to do."

I was impressed with Pete's ability to accept any situation and see it as an opportunity. It is challenging for many people to accept, much less prepare for, the possible contingencies they face. They prefer to live in denial, which makes them very vulnerable to stress when unexpected things do happen. But having workable contingency plans is a very practical way to build stability.

Pete told me how necessary it was that he have a personal shield that protected him from the opinions of the players, fans, and alumni. He listened to their opinions, but he knew he had to reach his own judgments. He was the CEO, able to freely decide.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing I saw in Pete Carroll was his alertness to any negative thinking or doubt. His motto was "Win Forever!" But these were not just words for him. In conversations, thoughts and actions, he left no  
No Limits For Me

room for Self 1 fears and uncertainties to enter his mind. He built his shield on the practice field, and he used it in every conversation about football and coaching he had with anyone. The rare defeats he sustained he felt deeply, but bounced back immediately into the stability of his philosophy and practice. He has developed a shield against stress.

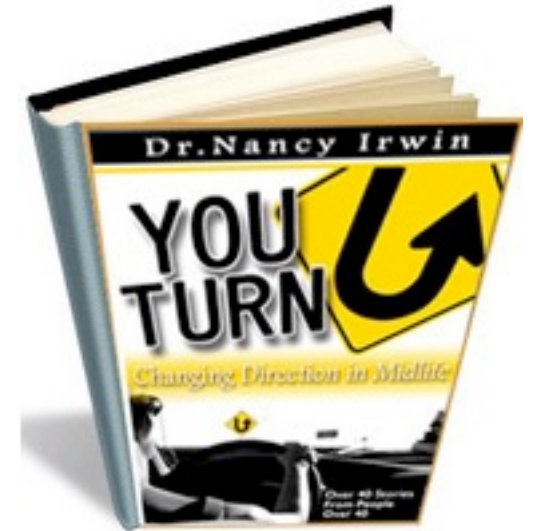
We usually have unconscious psychological defenses to protect ourselves, but they generally develop without our awareness when we are young, and they frequently become restricting and burdensome. Building your own Personal Shield is a chance to create a conscious, effective defense, which you can use to protect yourself from stressors.

#### Exercise: Build Your Shield

Consider a stressful situation you are facing right now. Go to your list of inner resources and choose four or five that could be constructed into a shield when you are in the midst of the situation. Draw a shield like the one illustrated and carry it with you as a reminder. ###



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