

We at TASN ATBS are so glad you chose to read and discuss *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*. (Aguilar, E. 2018. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.) Copies of this book are available for checkout to Kansas educators in our [TASN ATBS Lending Library](#).

Wondering about the logistics of our book talks? We held a 30-minute virtual chat once a month for nine months using zoom. The questions we discussed are included in the pages that follow. The first question for each discussion was always a roll call question, designed to give each person an opportunity to share. 3-4 additional questions provided the framework for additional discussion with an emphasis on using the strategies in this book in each person's current role.

In addition to our monthly discussions, we used an app (Voxer) to engage in a continued group discussion. Each question was designed to be answered in a few words to a few sentences ... but kept our discussion alive and ongoing.

Finally, members were encouraged to share websites and additional articles that related to this topic. See these on the [TASN ATBS Coaching Page](#).

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## TASN ATBS SESSION 1 DISCUSSION

Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 & 3

Roll Call Question: In 3-5 words, after reading the first section, what do you want to be true for you by the end of this book study?

1. Chapter 1, Knowing yourself, discusses living in alignment with your values, finding your purpose, and “doing what you love and are good at” (Aguilar, 2018, p. 32-33). When you consider the educators you coach, would **they** say they have opportunities to do that – do what they love and are good at – every day in their work? How does that affect our roles as coaches?
2. In Chapter 2, Understand Emotions, Aguilar uses the phrase “learning to be in the presence of other people’s anger” (Aguilar, 2018, p. 64). Aguilar was talking about anger born of the injustice of history. Often, we need to support others in professional situations “in the presence of anger”. What are the keys to doing that and moving from anger to a state that will support professional growth?
3. The focus of Chapter 3 is Tell Empowering Stories. Interrupting interpretations discusses acknowledging and changing the “stories” and could also apply to the patterns of distorted thinking. Other resources talk about shifting to a “generative” topic – one that “generates” positive action and growth. So, in ourselves, we recognize non-productive stories, distorted thinking, and even negative core beliefs and craft new stories – generative stories.

How can we “interrupt the interpretations” of others? That is, how can we encourage others to recognize nonproductive patterns and craft a generative topic? Is there specific language we might use?

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TASN ATBS DISCUSSION  
Chapter 4: Build Community

Roll Call Question: In 5-6 words, what kind of community do you need to fuel your resilience?

1. Look at the visual on page 102. Consider a situation where you are working to build trust. How is your intention being assessed in each of these areas? What area will have the biggest outcome in terms of gaining the trust of the individual or team?
2. The table numbered 4.1 on page 107 highlights "Expansive Ways of Listening." Which of these do you consistently use? Which one might you target to begin using even more?
3. How often are you asked to coach an individual or team because of their involvement in conflict as opposed to coaching to support someone as they plan, reflect or make a decision?
4. Aguilar discusses a lack of empathy between all the stakeholders in our schools. Students & their peers, teachers & their colleagues, teachers & students. What might be done to increase empathy in schools? What might be your role?

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### Chapter 5: Be Here Now

Roll call: In a few words, share a triggering incident you've experienced (see p. 127 for an explanation)

1. Aguilar approaches the concept of mindfulness by discussing the what, how & why to share information. How could you support that in people/groups you coach?
2. The section on mindfulness as tool for cultural competence focuses on implicit and unconscious bias. When you notice implicit bias in others, how does it affect your coaching? Does your own implicit bias affect coaching others?
3. When you witness implicit bias, how can you create awareness of that in others?
4. Have a volunteer read page 142 "Implications for leaders." Describe an "appropriate challenge" you've been part of creating or been witness to in schools?

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### Chapter 6: Take Care of Yourself

Roll call question: Chapter 6 begins with this -- "November: Self-care is the root of resilience when you're dragging yourself toward winter break and your emotions are raw." What evidence have you seen of this when coaching in schools?

1. Many coaching models promote exploring barriers and challenges as a basis for promoting growth. Aguilar talks about this in terms of considering "gaps". When wellness is the result of a gap in emotional intelligence, how do you promote growth in self-care?
2. The author discusses the possibility of a relationship between a "martyr complex" and a deficit mindset as it relates to others or to systems (p.154-157). Discuss your feelings about this idea.
3. "*Solvitur ambulando* – It is solved by walking." – Diogenes, 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE Greek philosopher. (p. 159) Many classrooms are committing to brain, movement and energy breaks for students. Have you seen this occurring for adults? What would be the result of engaging in a coaching conversation while walking? What barriers might prevent suggesting this?
4. In reading the information about perfectionism (p. 166-168), were there any surprises as you considered your tendencies in this area? What impact might this have on coaching others?

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### Chapter 7: Focus on the Bright Spots

Roll Call: Is it really that easy? Read "There's more good going on than you think!" (p. 176-178) In a sentence, reflect on this anecdote.

1. During a recent experience, I began a meeting by asking each team member to share a positive story from classroom to start the meeting. All but one person on the team just reworded a negative statement (i.e. well, Sally didn't bite anyone" or "it's 8:30 and so far, the paras haven't texted to say Johnny has hit anybody") That continued during the professional discussions and during lunch when the discussion was more personal. How do you begin to move a group or individual with that culture in a new direction?
2. Think about the Appreciative Inquiry process described. Page 184 lists the "five D" steps. Reread those and an example of how that was used on page 185. Talk about how those steps might work better than traditional consultation to support professional growth.
3. Aguilar talks about recognizing and allowing ourselves to feel sadness. While this may not be new information, are there other feelings (anger, frustration) emerging in individuals or teams because they are not acknowledging sadness?

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### Chapter 8: Cultivate Compassion

Roll call question: On a scale of 1-5, how self-compassionate are you?

1. What words might you use in encouraging someone to become more compassionate as they interact with another colleague?
2. What's a phrase you can use to become more self-compassionate?
3. Aguilar discusses compassion fatigue on pages 209-211. Share an example of that concept playing a role in the interactions between a group of people you've encountered in coaching.
4. On pages 215-217, Aguilar begins with an anecdote highlighting her son's call to "zoom out!" How might using this strategy support others during coaching interactions?

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TASN ATBS DISCUSSION  
Chapter 9: Be a Learner

Roll call question: "Learning is a path to growth & resilience!" I want to learn ...

1. The author addresses time management and its effect on resilience. While that may be easy to observe in those we are coaching, what are keys to addressing it?
2. Discuss the conscious competence ladder (p. 224-226)
3. Think about "Mind the Gap" (p. 227) What "gaps" wouldn't be "narrowed" by simply providing more information to the coaching client?
4. What will you change or do differently as the result of the information in this chapter?



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#### Chapter 10: Play and Create

Roll call question: How did you play or create this weekend?

1. On page 250, Aguilar references Stuart Brown's work on play and refers to the attributes he uses to define and discuss play. Were there any surprises in this information? Did it change your definition of play?
2. Does play have a role in professional coaching? Give an example of embedding playful activities into serious discussions.
3. Based on the information in the chapter, discuss the relationship between courage and creativity.

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### Chapter 11: Ride the Waves of Change

**Roll Call Question:** Think about a person who deals well with change. Which of their behaviors would you like to emulate?

1. Aguilar talks about response to change as being a continuum for dealing with change that goes from “*defensiveness to leadership*” (p. 268) Respond to that ... how do you help change someone’s perspective from defensiveness?
2. The figure on p. 271 is not new information. Think of a recent situation and talk about those three components – what was within your control, within your influence and outside both?
3. How often is fear the real issue? Fear of what? (p. 278-280) Do you usually realize that at the time when it is impacting your coaching? How does that affect how you spent your energy?
4. Four principles that help you manage – and thrive from -- unwanted change:
  - Slow down
  - Evaluate and analyze the situation
  - Use energy where it counts
  - Stay open to outcomes

How could you help a coaching client by introducing those topics? Be specific and share the exact words you would use?

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Chapter 12: Celebrate & Appreciate, Conclusion & Appendix

Roll call question: How do you practice gratitude in your work?

1. Discuss the relationship between appreciation and honest feedback. What strategies support using both in coaching?
2. Many of us function in institutions that are secular. Is there a role for spirituality, as discussed in this chapter, in these settings? How about specifically in coaching practices?
3. What changes have you experienced as a result of this book study?
4. If you were going to recommend this book to a professional colleague, what would you say?
5. Which of the tools in the appendix section will be most helpful in your coaching interactions?