

IMAGINE YOUR LIFE REPRESENTED by a line plotted on a page. The line moves from left to right, from the past into the present, and it extends a little bit more with each passing day. If your life was uniformly calm and pleasant, neither aggravating nor exciting, that line would be flat and level. We'll call that your baseline, and it's where you're most comfortable emotionally, mentally, and physically.

But the line is rarely flat, of course. It undulates, rising and falling like an irregular wave to mirror the highs and lows of your life (see Appendix One for an example). There are minor squiggles all along the line because that's how life works: Traffic makes you late for an important meeting and the line drops a bit; the meeting goes better than expected and the line rebounds, maybe even bounces up a little. There are bigger swells and deeper troughs, too, successes and disappointments, some more intense than others. Occasionally the line spikes, representing your greatest achievements, and sometimes it plummets—maybe your spouse divorces you or maybe you get fired.

Maybe you step on a land mine.

It's difficult to function in either those deep troughs or at those dizzying peaks. What you want—what you *need*—is to return to that baseline, to that state of pleasant calm that is neither aggravating nor exciting. That's what it means to be resilient.

Resilience often is mistaken for durability. A person who

APPENDIX ONE

LIFE PLOT

Life

