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Submitted by:

Ibtissem GATER
Karim MENDACI

Supervised by:

Pr. Nadia NAAR GADA

Panel of Examiners:

Sarah CHABANE CHAOUCH, MCB Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, **Chair**

Nadia NAAR GADA, Professor, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, **Supervisor**

Dounia BOUTIRNA, MCB, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, **Examiner**

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Dedications

This work is lovingly dedicated to my mother Gater Ouiza and to the memory of my father Gater Ahmed, peace upon him. Though he is no longer part of this world, his love, his presence, and memories continue to shape my life. His affection and prayers help me continue my way and encourage me to succeed.

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To my dearest nephews and nieces.

Ibtissem Gater

This work's dedicated to my mother, father, and my brothers.

Karim MENDACI

Abstract

This dissertation examines the close relationship between trauma and resilience as depicted in David Goggins' memoir, *Can't Hurt Me* (2018). More precisely, it investigates how Goggins' harrowing experiences of childhood abuse, poverty, and racial discrimination not only shaped his psychological development but also propelled his remarkable journey of personal transformation. By analyzing the themes of trauma and resilience within Goggins' narrative, this study aims to illuminate the enduring impact of childhood trauma on mental health and explore pathways to building resilience and inner strength. The dissertation highlights Goggins' own struggles with academic failure, toxic stress, and anxiety, illustrating how he transcended these challenges by transforming mental weaknesses into motivation and sources of strength. Each character in Goggins' story, like the author himself, endures similar adversities, mirroring the writer's own experiences with violence of an abusive father. This exploration of trauma and resilience employs theoretical frameworks from Norman Granz and Judith Lewis Herman, focusing specifically on their concepts of "Trauma" and "Resilience." Through this lens, the study critically examines the traumatic experiences faced by Goggins and how he reframes and transforms these challenges as catalysts for growth. Particular emphasis is placed on Goggins' philosophy of "embracing suffering," which serves as a foundational element in his approach to overcoming adversity. The dissertation also underscores the necessity of timely and effective treatment to cope as well as to heal from a long-term mental health consequence, advocating for a balanced approach to personal excellence that incorporates self-care. Ultimately, this work seeks to understand how individuals can transform adversity into a driving force for both personal and professional achievement while recognizing the importance of maintaining equilibrium amidst the pursuit of greatness.

Key words: Can't Hurt Me, trauma, resilience, anxiety, childhood abuse, anxiety, catalysts.

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I. Introduction

Addressing trauma is very important to foster an environment conducive to learning and personal growth. By recognizing and examining its profound effects on one's behavior, emotional health, and social relationships, contributes to implement strategies that not only support affected people but also promote a healthier environment to live in. Moreover, examining trauma and resilience, through literary texts, is essential for understanding how people reach their full potential while navigating the challenges posed by their traumatic experiences. To study the idea of trauma and resilience in David Goggins *Can't hurt me* provides an opportunity to understand how trauma can have lasting adverse effects on an individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. His memoir *Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds* (2018) is an interesting narrative that explores the themes of trauma and resilience. It reflects the author's life story and his capacity to endure and overcome extreme hardships.

Though trauma remains one of the most difficult topics because of its multidisciplinary aspect, we shall try to deal with it in relation to the ways in which Goggins has approached this issue. *Can't Hurt Me* focuses on the important problems he passed through starting with his early age traumatic experiences, going through awful events which define his path and which affected his adult life. Trauma can take many forms and has many negative effects on a child's life throughout the course of development. Various traumatic events impact the lives of many children, and the effects can manifest differently in each child as he grows up. Yet, before addressing trauma experienced during these early stages of life, it is useful to start by defining many different ways the concept has been explained. Though it is nearly impossible to provide an exact definition of this concept as its definition continues to change depending on the context and the period of time. Trauma can be understood as an emotional response to a terrible event

like an accident, crime, natural disaster, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, experiencing or witnessing violence, the death of a loved one, war, and more. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration explains (2014):

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being (p. 7).

The passage reveals that individual trauma arises from events or circumstances perceived as harmful or life-threatening, leading to lasting adverse effects on various aspects of an individual's well-being. Understanding the implications of trauma is crucial for both mental and physical health. The way people are affected by traumatic events differs from one person to another while the symptoms of trauma can be lax to severe in affecting people's emotional and physical behavior. Trauma is usually accompanied by several physical symptoms, which include fear, feeling disconnected from reality, anger, denial and unacceptability of the event, confusion and difficulty concentrating, depression and anxiety, guilt or shame, blame of the self, social withdrawal, and loss of interest in daily activities. However, these traumatic events can be experienced in various ways. The person can be directly exposed to the event by witnessing it as it happened to others. It can also be by learning of a violent or accidental event experienced by a close family member or friend and by being informed about traumatic events.

In the early nineteenth century, Sigmund Freud provided the first accounts characterizing traumatic events and their clinical implications. His work on the etiology of hysteria and his concept of hysteria remain one of the most important intellectual and research legacies. Freud developed the concept of the unconscious after encountering difficulties while treating a few hysterical patients. Freud explains: "how our hysterical patients suffer from recollections. Their symptoms are the remnants and the memory symbols of certain (traumatic) experiences" (P. 42). Freud analyzed the concept of psychological trauma between 1895 and 1900 to explain his theory about the causes of gangs, especially hysteria, where he

imagined that each neurosis is the result of the effect of an unexpected traumatic event. According to him, there is a deficit in the individual's abilities to react appropriately. Post-traumatic disorder is one type of psychological trauma that comes after violent events. It is a mental illness that results from tragic events. Freud also points out that it was known as a 'shell shock' or 'battle fatigue', which is characterized by intrusive experiences including nightmares, dreams, flashbacks, and avoidance. In most cases, we find the child avoids anything that is related to the events when he finds it difficult to concentrate, he panics and has difficulty sleeping.

Though the traumatized children's lives are difficult, they nonetheless have hope as there are various successful programs treating trauma suffered throughout these periods of childhood. They learn the process of using the positive energy of one's negative experiences to promote healing and personal growth. Clearly, the idea of being Resilient is an important theme for this research as it illustrates how the main character has gone through a traumatic experience and how he coped with it and succeeded in overcoming it by his efforts and perseverance. Although it is recognized that some people are more resilient than others and therefore able to cope better in the face of adversity, the process of resilience building is still not fully understood. According to the American Psychological Association (2014), "resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone." Resilience is a mixture of good developmental achievements over the life course and having a supportive environment, particularly in early childhood. A resilient child raises the odds if he gets a good developmental course despite exposure to significant adversity. The key to resilience is viewed as the possession of a set of attributes that help in negotiating or recovering from adversity.

Closely linked to the domains of psychology, human growth and development, and resilience studies, trauma has its lasting effect on individual emotional, physical, and mental health. It can have a great influence on the person's family relationships, career, and adult life as a whole. Therefore, studying and understanding the causes and consequences of trauma and the ways to deal with it can help the individual to heal and thrive from this complex phenomenon. Because of the large scope of this topic and the different types of trauma, including acute trauma from a single event, chronic trauma from repeated exposure to stressful events, and complex trauma resulting from multiple traumatic events, we shall only explore instances of Goggins' experiences in order to understand how he deals with this complex problem. In other words, the study aims to gain a better understanding of how individuals can overcome adversity and build resilience in the face of trauma. It is important to comprehend how pervasive this issue is affecting our society and our mental health.

Review of the Literature:

David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me* has received the minimal criticism, which can largely be explained by its classification as inspirational narrative, its alignment with self-help themes, cultural resonance, and the tendency for critiques to be tempered by admiration for Goggins' achievements. Readers are often more inclined to celebrate his journey than to dissect it critically, resulting in a largely positive reception despite some valid concerns raised by a minority of reviewers. It is important to notice that the book has only been reviewed by few journals and magazines. Many readers appreciate Goggins' raw and honest storytelling. Most of them consider the author's as a testament to the power of perseverance and mental fortitude.

In addition, the book is too recent, as it was published in 2018. Therefore, it has received very little attention from scholars and critics, who consider the book rather as an autobiographical masterpiece that transcends the conventional bounds of self-help literature. David Goggins'

life experience and how he describes it represents an exceptional perspective on mental fortitude, perseverance, and the concept of self-discipline. In his review of Goggins' work, Doug Cartwright (2021) provides a thorough analysis of the book's core principles, structured around ten challenges designed to help readers push beyond their perceived limitations. These challenges, rooted in Goggins' personal experiences, particularly his journey from a difficult childhood to becoming a Navy SEAL and an ultra-endurance athlete, are meant to foster resilience and promote mental toughness in the face of adversity.

Cartwright (2021) provides insights in his review about Goggins' early struggles, including growing up with an abusive father, dealing with poverty, and facing racial discrimination. The critic points out to the first challenge, through which Goggins' encourages readers to confront the "bad hand" life has dealt them, serves as a foundational exercise in self-awareness and honesty. This challenge aligns with psychological theories that emphasize the importance of acknowledging past traumas as a means of building resilience (Seligman, 2011). By prompting individuals to write down both past hardships and present obstacles, Goggins' advocates for an active engagement with one's struggles, turning passive experiences into opportunities for growth. The notion of accountability plays a central role in the second challenge, where Goggins introduces the "accountability mirror" (Cartwright, 2021). In this context, individuals are encouraged to write their insecurities, goals, and dreams on Post-it notes and stick them on a mirror as a daily reminder of their objectives. This exercise is reflective of cognitive-behavioral strategies that promote self-regulation and goal-setting, which are key components of personal development (Baumeister et al., 1994). Cartwright (2021) highlights how this challenge forces individuals to confront their weaknesses and become accountable to their goals, fostering a culture of continuous self-improvement.

One of the most profound aspects of Goggins' philosophy is encapsulated in the third challenge, which involves stepping out of one's comfort zone to develop what he refers to as

a “calloused mind” (Cartwright, 2021). Drawing from his personal battle with sickle cell anemia and subsequent decision to join the Navy SEALs, which exemplifies the importance of discomfort in achieving personal growth. This approach resonates with psychological research that identifies resilience not merely as the ability to withstand adversity but as the process of positively adapting to stressors and challenges (Southwick et al., 2014). Cartwright’s review underscores this point by suggesting that Goggins’ method encourages readers to confront difficult tasks and incrementally build mental toughness by “doing something that sucks every day” (Cartwright, 2021).

In the fourth and fifth challenges, he emphasizes the concept of turning adversity into a competitive advantage by introducing the idea of “taking souls” by outperforming others in competitive environments, a concept that Cartwright (2021) interprets as a metaphor for channeling one’s pain into motivation. This challenge taps into the psychological principle of intrinsic motivation where individuals are driven to achieve not just external rewards but internal satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Furthermore, Goggins’ practice of visualizing both success and potential obstacles reflects established visualization techniques used by athletes to enhance performance and prepare mentally for challenges (Munroe-Chandler et al., 2008). The final challenges in *Can’t Hurt Me* revolve around maintaining continuous effort and reflection, even in the face of failure. He urges readers to remove the metaphorical “governor” in their minds, a concept that Cartwright (2021) explains as the self-imposed limitations we place on ourselves. This idea is supported by psychological frameworks that explore the concept of self-efficacy, which is the belief in one’s ability to succeed in specific situations (Bandura, 1997). By pushing past perceived limits, he argues that individuals can achieve more than they ever thought possible. Kaelyn Barron’s review of *Can’t Hurt Me* by David Goggins offers a compelling analysis of the themes of mental toughness, self-discipline, and overcoming adversity through sheer

willpower. The critic highlights key concepts like Goggins's "Accountability Mirror" and "The Cookie Jar," which emphasize personal responsibility and drawing strength from past achievements (Barron, 2021). These ideas resonate with broader discussions in the literature on self-improvement and grit, such as those found in Angela Duckworth's *Grit*, where the author explores the power of perseverance and passion in achieving long-term goals (Duckworth, 2016). Similarly, Carol Dweck's work on Mindset emphasizes the importance of adopting a growth mindset to overcome challenges and achieve success (Dweck, 2006). However, Barron's review, like Goggins's book, leans heavily into extreme personal discipline, which contrasts with more measured approaches like James Clear's *Atomic Habits*, which focuses on incremental progress through habit formation rather than pushing the body and mind to their limits (Clear, 2018). While Barron's review does a good job of presenting Goggins's philosophy, further analysis of the sustainability and long-term psychological effects of such extreme discipline, as suggested by other self-help literature, could deepen the discussion.

Issue and working hypothesis

From the above review of the literature about Goggins' *Can't hurt me*, one can notice that few studies have already dealt with his autobiography and little attention has been devoted to the analysis of the themes of trauma and resilience. Therefore, this dissertation aims to approach Goggins' memoir through both psychological and philosophical perspectives by analyzing the notions of trauma and resilience as they are displayed in the autobiography. The intention throughout this dissertation is to demonstrate both themes of trauma and resilience are closely related. It is also important to examine the great impact of past trauma on one's mental and emotional well-being. We shall examine how Goggins' straight forward depiction of his childhood experiences of abuse and racism have shaped his adult life. In addition, we shall illustrate how the tragedies he passed through have profoundly altered his individual's psyche

and self-perception. By examining how these traumatic experiences shaped Goggins' behaviour and ideas, we aim to gain a better understanding of the long-term effects of childhood trauma on individuals.

Childhood trauma has regularly been studied in scholarships of psychology to have a negative impact on mental health outcomes, such as an increased risk of depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other psychological illnesses. It has also been associated with maladaptive coping mechanisms, self-destructive behaviours, and difficulties in developing secure bonds with others. By viewing Goggins' story through the lens of trauma theory, we intend to reveal, on the one hand, useful insights into the complex ways in which early traumatic events impact a person's worldview. On the other hand, we seek to describe Goggin's adaptive techniques for overcoming adversity. Furthermore, his unwavering drive and refusal to make excuses for himself motivate people to recognise their own inner power and tenacity. By embracing the ethos of "taking souls," Goggins' urges people to face their fears and refuse to be limited by their prior traumas or limits. His experience indicates that resilience is not only a trait held by a select few, but a skill that can be nurtured and honed through constant effort and an unwavering dedication to personal progress.

Moreover, *Can't Hurt Me* explores the concept of overcoming adversity and transforming one's mindset to achieve personal growth and resilience. Goggins' methods and principles are useful for fostering long-term psychological resilience and self-improvement among readers. This issue is significant as it addresses whether the strategies outlined in the memoir can be universally applied to diverse individuals facing various challenges, or if they are more effective for certain personality types or life situations. The principles and methods outlined in David Goggins' memoir significantly enhance psychological resilience and self-improvement in individuals who actively apply them, regardless of their initial mental and emotional state.

Methodological outline:

As for the methodological outline, the discussion of this dissertation is organized into two main chapters. The first one deals with childhood trauma in the memoir of David Goggins *Can't Hurt Me*. It seeks to analyze the impact of these traumatic experiences such as childhood abuse, behavioral and emotional disturbance. The second chapter will be devoted to the analysis of the concept of resilience as it appears in the book. The focus will be on how the author builds resilience and mental toughness. In addition, we shall list the different steps to overcome trauma. These concepts shall be explained through reference to the memoir.

In order to reach our goals, we shall focus on the autobiography of David Goggins, which examines the idea of resilience and childhood trauma. Childhood trauma is a destructive, common problem in the world, with far-reaching effects on society. This is due to the high prevalence of trauma and the numerous individuals that are affected. The concept of trauma has always been one of the foremost issues that have been developed in the late 20th century. The term trauma was coined by the Greeks for the wound. It was first used in English medicine, relating its appearance to modernization and the industrialization of people's lives. Our concern will be on the theory of trauma as developed by Judith Lewis Herman and the theory of resilience developed by Norman Garnezy. Individuals who have experienced trauma often face significant challenges in overcoming the complex psychological and emotional effects of their experiences.

II. Methods and Materials

1-Methods

This dissertation, as already mentioned, aims to contribute to the understanding of trauma and resilience through the lens of Goggin's experiences. Therefore, Judith Lewis Herman's theory of trauma and Norman Garmezy's resilience theory provide frameworks for understanding the psychological impact of trauma and the process of recovery. Herman, for instance, emphasizes that trauma is deeply intertwined with its social and political context, and she identifies stages of recovery that include safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection with everyday life.

Judith Lewis Herman's Trauma Theory

Judith Lewis Herman's Trauma Theory emerged during the 1990s after the publication of her book entitled, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1992), which is based on years of working with individuals who had suffered from trauma, including survivors of sexual assault, interfamily violence, natural disasters, and military combat. It contains studies from a wide range of posttraumatic stress disorder, principles of treatment, survivor mission, and trauma psychology. Herman's theory aims to substantiate the psychological effects of a traumatic event. Prior to her research and theories, trauma was simply associated with the physical symptoms of PTSD and was not understood in terms of emotional impact on an individual's life and identity.

The importance of Judith Herman's work is that she is one of the pioneering clinicians in the field as well as a major theorist in the debates about this subject. Trauma is defined by Judith Herman as an experience of violence that is emotionally painful and distressing. It overwhelms an individual's ability to cope with his life after the trauma, to remember and articulate narratives. Various forms of trauma, such as discrimination, death, and poverty, build up serious long-term effects on the health and life of their survivors. These people generally develop a

pathology known as “post-traumatic stress disorder,” which attempts to define a response, sometimes delayed, to the shocking experience. What is the consensus about trauma? Everyone seems to agree that a traumatic event overwhelms the ordinary human adaptations to life, as Herman puts it: “traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death” (p. 33). According to Herman, traumatic events can profoundly impact individuals' mental and emotional well-being. These experiences of trauma may lead to conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues.

Judith Lewis Herman divides post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) into three stages. The first one is called “hyperarousal.” It is the system of self-preservation, which goes into permanent alert as if the danger could return at any moment. Following a traumatic experience, Herman observes that a person's sense of self-preservation appeared to be in a constant state of high alert, which is characterized by a high startle response and strong emotional reactions that are triggered by little provocation and lack of sleep.

The second stage is called “intrusion”, which refers to the phenomenon when traumatized individuals continue to experience the incident long after the threat has passed as if it were still happening right now. Judith Herman explores various theories to understand the root cause of these intrusive memories. She ultimately leans towards the idea that intrusions occur because the brain is attempting to make sense of or control the traumatic memory. This futile attempt to process the memory leads to the persistent and vivid nature of intrusions. The third stage, according to Herman, concerns the “constriction,” which is described as a reaction to trauma characterized by avoidance behaviors. It involves withdrawing from others, narrowing one's perception, and leading a restricted or limited life. This response is considered maladaptive as it hinders the individual from fully engaging with their environment and emotions.

More precisely, Judith Herman's concept of trauma, particularly as outlined in her seminal work *Trauma and Recovery*, is highly relevant to David Goggins' memoir *Can't Hurt Me*. Herman's framework provides a lens through which to understand Goggins' experiences and the transformative processes he undergoes in response to his traumatic past. More importantly, the three stages of trauma and recovery, identified by Herman, correspond to the three key phases in the process of trauma recovery in Goggin's book. They are: establishing safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection with the community. These stages resonate deeply with Goggins' narrative. As far as "Establishing Safety", Goggins' experiences of childhood abuse and instability highlight the destruction of safety that trauma can cause. In his memoir, he discusses how he had to create a sense of safety within himself, often through rigorous self-discipline and mental fortitude. This aligns with Herman's emphasis on the necessity of feeling safe before one can effectively process trauma.

Furthermore, "Remembrance and Mourning" is linked to Goggins, who openly recounts his painful past, including the abuse he suffered from his father. This process of storytelling is crucial for healing, as it allows individuals to integrate their traumatic experiences into their life narrative. Herman argues that trauma resolves only when survivors can articulate their stories, a process Goggins embodies as he confronts his past head-on. Last but not least, Herman's notion of "Reconnection" emphasizes the importance of reconnecting with oneself and the community post-trauma. Goggins illustrates this through his journey from isolation to becoming a motivational figure. His narrative encourages others to embrace their struggles and connect with their potential, thereby fostering a sense of community among those who have faced similar adversities. In addition, Herman discusses how trauma can lead to feelings of shame and guilt, which often inhibit recovery. Goggins addresses these feelings directly by promoting a mindset of accountability and brutal honesty with oneself. He encourages readers to confront their shortcomings without shame, transforming these feelings into motivation for

personal growth. This approach echoes Herman's assertion that acknowledging one's trauma is essential for healing. A central tenet in both Herman's work and Goggins' philosophy is the idea that suffering can be a catalyst for growth. Goggins famously advocates for "embracing suffering" as a means to develop resilience and strength. This perspective aligns with Herman's view that healing involves not just recognizing trauma but also finding meaning in it. For Goggins, each painful experience serves as a stepping stone toward greater achievement, illustrating the transformative power of adversity. Therefore, Judith Herman's concepts of trauma recovery provide a valuable framework for understanding David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me*. The stages of recovery outlined by Herman reflect Goggins' journey from trauma to empowerment, emphasizing the importance of safety, storytelling, and community connection in overcoming adversity. Both emphasize that while trauma can have lasting effects, it also holds the potential for profound personal transformation when approached with resilience and courage.

Thanks to Herman's psychological theory and practice, people changed their way of seeing trauma. Previous to this, trauma has been largely misunderstood or dismissed by society, often thought to be a sign of weakness in an individual. For most of life, trauma was generally considered a weakness. Individuals who underwent trauma could be called weak, overly emotional, or non-resilient. Some of these opinions were rooted in cultural stereotypes regarding stoicism and independence, and they failed to appreciate the mental and emotional consequences of trauma. This stigma made it even harder for people suffering from trauma since they were afraid to open up and be ridiculed. Herman writes that in order to understand the behavior of victim-survivors and the experience of trauma, society must first discard its own biases and "misinterpretations" and look for more effective means of understanding. This has implications for Herman's theory and trauma research as she stresses the importance of an

empathetic and comprehensive understanding of trauma in providing a better chance for victim-survivors to "heal" and reintegrate into social and family life.

Types of Trauma

Trauma can be classified into various types, each single category of trauma has its own characteristics, and its impact on the brain, and emotional well-being. Such as childhood neglect, sexual abuse, sudden loss of a loved one, physical abuse, emotional abuse, violent act, or an accident. In this dissertation we have explored two different types of trauma which are physical abuse, and early childhood trauma; because David Goggins faced physical abuse by his abusive and violent father during his childhood. Moreover, by understanding and grasping the complexities of trauma, it can strengthen greater empathy, foster resilience, and pave the way for recovery, ultimately improving the quality of life for those affected.

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the usage of violence and truculence that can result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment such as pushing, pinching, biting, throwing things at you, choking you, and pinning you down. Anybody can be physically abused. Regardless if that individual is tall, strong, small, or weak. Anyone can be a victim of physical abuse. Being abused at any stage of our lives can lead to mental health issues, like post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. This can also lead to complex PTSD, like flashbacks, avoiding anything that reminds of the trauma. But it also cause emotional regulation problems, forgetting traumatic events completely, kind of repressed memories, or just blocking out, feeling very ashamed and guilty.

In addition, the individual can also have serious problems like social withdrawal and isolation as a result of physical abuse. The children can also struggle with depression and anxiety disorders. Physical abuse can also be Caused by alcohol and drugs, as well as eating disorders. Some visible symptoms, like unexplained bruises and frequent visits to the health specialized in taking care of injuries, broken bones, change in behavior, mood, and suicidal

ideation. To provide quick support and intervention to reduce long-term effects of physical abuse on the mental health, emotional, and physical well-being is more than necessary. Every kid is supposed to live a safety childhood and in a healthy environment. David Goggins confronted physical abuse in his early childhood which led to several dysfunctions, learning difficulties, and disabilities during his adulthood. He suffered from chronic stress, depression, and eating disorders, which led to his suffering and discomfort in his life. Nevertheless, he coped with all the difficulties and embraced hardships, which he uses as tool to build mental resilience.

2-Early Childhood Trauma

Early childhood trauma refers to a kind of maltreatment that happens to children at a very young age because children may not know how to appropriately and effectively express their response to dangerous events. Adults and people's reactions are different from infants and children's reactions. Young children and infants are less able to push, expect danger, or know how to keep themselves safe. Therefore, they may blame their parents or themselves for not expecting such frightening incidents. Children always believe that their wishes, fears, and beliefs can become reality. In addition, these traumatic experiences are the result of violent acts like physical abuse, sexual abuse, or domestic violence. Also, children may experience severe traumatic stress in response to painful medical procedures like chemotherapy, or a sudden loss of a loved one. Traumatic events have a deep and sensitive influence and effect on young children. Their sense of safety and insecurity may be destroyed by loud noises, violent actions, visual stimuli, and any other actions connected with unpredictable frightening events. Therefore, the child may suffer from nightmare dreams and any other fears, like any kind of phobia.

Impact of childhood trauma on mental health

Childhood trauma generally occurs when children experience, witness, or hear about threatening, or dangerous situations. Traumatic experiences are events or situations that threaten physical, or emotional well-being, sometimes overwhelming the ability to cope. Because many children have not developed coping skills, processing these occurrences can be challenging, frequently leading to mental health impacts. The brain response system can become overactive, which leads to a change in the brain structure and function. For instance, the amygdala is the first part of the brain. It is in control of processing emotions and memories. After this part is interrupted, the child will become hypersensitive, which leads to an exaggerated response to stress, anxiety, and fear.

The second part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is responsible for emotional regulation and decision making. After this part is interrupted, the child will have difficulties in building healthy relationships with others and an exaggerated risk of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. In addition, the person suffer from difficulties in controlling his emotions, and behavior like hyperactivity. The third part of the brain is neurochemistry, when chronic stress and trauma destroy the neurotransmitters to the brain such as serotonin and dopamine, which play a significant factor in regulating moods and emotions. After this part is interrupted, the child will suffer with difficulties in coping with stress and an exaggerated risk of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety. The fourth one is the hippocampus.

This part of the brain is responsible for many complex functions like language learning, attention, and problem solving, when this part is interrupted. The child will suffer from difficulties in learning and memorization. Therefore, for those who have experienced trauma, it can have lasting effects on the mental health. If trauma is left untreated. After not addressed, these issues can get worse. Prodrome of trauma can manifest differently depending on the type of trauma, and child's age. Early childhood trauma can prevent the child's ability to build a

secure attachment. It may even result in difficulties with emotional regulation and social interactions with the environment.

Norman Garmezy's resilience theory

Norman Garmezy's resilience theory and David Goggins' book *Can't Hurt Me* share a common theme, which consists in the power of resilience in overcoming adversity. Garmezy focuses on the idea that individuals can thrive despite facing significant challenges. He identified protective factors like individual characteristics, supportive relationships, and social support that help people bounce back from adversity. Correspondingly, *David Goggins' Can't Hurt Me* is a memoir that details his journey from a troubled to becoming an elite endurance athlete. Goggins emphasizes the importance of mental toughness, selfdiscipline, and pushing past perceived limits. His concept of the 40% rules suggests that most people only use 40% of their potential , and by pushing past this ,they can achieve extraordinary things . Moreover both Garmezy and Goggins highlight the resilience in overcoming obstacles and reaching one's full potential .Goggins' personal story is real life example of Gramezy's theory in action.

Resilience can be defined as an adaptive, dynamic process of returning to initial psychosocial functioning after a period of maladaptive functioning due to the disorganizing effect of psycho traumatic factors. The concept of resilience is popular in health and social services research. Over the past 40 years, the term has been shaped and transformed from the idea of a trait that can be nurtured in an individual to a concept with an emphasis on environmental factors. Based on the results of the literature search, it can be stated that psychological resilience is the ability to adapt positively to life conditions. This is a dynamic process capable of development. Further, research will determine the structural components of resilience. Dr. Norman Garmezy was a clinical psychologist and is often noted as being the founder of research in resilience. His research began with a focus on schizophrenia and mental

illness and shifted to research on stress resistance, competence, and resilience. Garmezy was the founder of Project Competence, a longitudinal study into positive outcomes in at-risk children. His research was based at the University of Minnesota in the United States of America. He defined resilience as “not necessarily impervious to stress. Rather, resilience is designed to reflect the capacity for recovery and maintained adaptive behavior that may follow initial retreat or in capacity upon initiating a stressful event” (p.459.). He makes the point that all children experience stress at some point, and resilient children are not “heroic” compared to those children who “meet similar situations with retreat, despair, or disorder” (p.459). To be resilient, Garmezy states that one needs to show functional adequacy (the maintenance of competent functioning despite an interfering emotionality) as a benchmark of resilient behavior under stress”. (p.466).

The concept of resilience brings a current perspective to the study of human behavior, one filled with hope and possibility. Studying the many ways that human development is adversely affected by challenging or traumatic circumstances provides an incomplete understanding of human behavior, as researchers Norman Garmezy and others discovered. What of the many that not only survive but seem to thrive in what we have traditionally considered impossible conditions—children who manage to negotiate developmental tasks amidst environments of parental abuse or neglect, parental mental illness, or extreme poverty? These same children often grow to become well-adjusted, loving, and contributing members of society.

For the human behavior, instruction in resiliency theory provides a practical lens through which to view human development with optimism and hope. Research into developmental psychopathology has overwhelmingly demonstrated that negative outcomes cannot necessarily be predicted based on the number or severity of risk factors present in the lives of individuals. Students need to be taught to recognize and understand the factors associated with positive

outcomes in order to be fully prepared to effectively meet 10 of the needs of our clients, the majority of which may be considered at risk. He concluded that resilience (or competence) was linked to a low number of risks and a higher number of protective factors. Similarly, less resilient children had cumulative risks and a lower number of protective factors. Garmezy states, “Government, by providing protective factors, enables some who would otherwise be lost to a fruitful life to move above the threshold of competence needed to survive in an increasingly complex, technological society” (p.159).

This statement suggests that Garmezy believed the environment around the child contributed significantly to the outcomes of children experiencing stress. He held an ecological view of resilience; based on this view, he contended that protective factors at the individual and familial levels, and those external to the family, all influence resilience. Some of these influences include: Individual factors: dispositional attributes of the child such as temperament (activity level), how one meets new situations (positive responsiveness to others), and cognitive skills. Family cohesion and warmth (despite poverty or marital discord), the presence of a caring adult in the absence of responsive parents (such as a grandparent), or a concern by parents for the wellbeing of their children. Support factors were external to family and included the availability and use of external support systems by parents and children, a strong maternal substitute, a supportive and concerned teacher, or an institutional structure that fosters ties to the larger community (church, social worker). Resilience remains a worthwhile concept at both the population level and the clinical level. Some adolescents are successful despite risk.

They beat the odds. If only a small portion of understanding can be garnered from these young people, it potentially could be harnessed to make a difference for those who have experienced adversity and not had positive outcomes. That advantage is a significant reason to persevere with the field, identify solutions, and implement these solutions in public and clinical interventions.

2. Material

Biography of David Goggins

Goggins' biography is the foundation of *Can't Hurt Me*. It illustrates his incredible journey from a difficult childhood, facing poverty and abuse, to becoming one of the most important endurance athletes. His life story shows the practical application of his mental toughness and resilience principles. Without understanding his background, it's hard to grasp the depth and authenticity of his message. It's not just theory; it's lived experience. Getting to know his life gives you context and makes his lessons in the book more impactful.

David Goggins is a retired Navy Seal and an ultra-marathon runner. He was born in Buffalo, New York, on February 17, 1975. He is a son of Trunnis and Jackie Goggins. He has been a competitor in more than sixty ultra-marathons and ultra-triathlons. He is also a public speaker. He is an author of three memoirs, which are *Built Not Born*, *Never Finished*, and *Can't Hurt Me*, which is the Best Seller book; it was released on December 4, 2018. Goggins was also awarded the VFW Americanism Award in 2018 for his service in the United States Armed Forces. He suffered from lack of concentration, toxic stress, and learning disabilities because of childhood abuse by his violent and abusive father. Then they moved with his mother, Jackie, to Indiana. Goggins was also subjected to racism because of his black skin. He was struggling with eating disorders, where he gained 255 pounds. However, through self-discipline, mental toughness, and hard work, he transformed himself from overweight young man depressed with no future to a US Armed Forces veteran, and one of the top endurance athletes in the world. David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me* is set against the backdrop of his life experiences, which span several decades.

Goggins grew up in a tumultuous environment marked by poverty, abuse, and racial prejudice. His journey from these challenging beginnings to becoming a Navy SEAL, ultramarat

hon runner, and motivational speaker is a testament to his resilience and mental toughness. The book also reflects broader societal issues, such as the struggles faced by many individuals in overcoming systemic barriers and personal trauma. Goggins' story is a powerful example of how one can push past perceived limits and redefine their potential, regardless of their background.

Synopsis of the David Goggins *Can't Hurt Me*

Can't Hurt Me is a story about self-development, which is based on Goggins' childhood that was not funny as he could not play with kids outside. He spent his childhood with successive traumas due to an abusive and violent father. His violence and life of poverty oppressed him deeply. He never knew the simple pleasures of childhood. Instead, at the age of six, David was a slave to his tyrannical father, along with his mother and older brother. His father was a self-made businessman who owned an ice rink. His employees were only his little family. Goggins' father would take his wife and children to his rink almost every night of the week, where he would make them work tirelessly until midnight. David's work was looking after the skates at age six and eight. David's mother would cook dinner in the office for the rink. After the kids finally finished work around midnight, they would sleep in the office too, and the old, noisy music from the rink unfortunately made sleeping almost impossible.

This caused David to sleep constantly at school and not be able to concentrate on his lessons at school. David Goggins often watches his father hit his mother with a belt. Whenever he intervenes to protect his mother, he is subjected to hitting too. He often tries to hide the red spots and bruises to not be seen by his friends. When David got sepsis in his ear, once his mother moved him to the hospital, but his father hated spending his money on his family, even when the health of his children was in danger. Then the mother of David Goggins, Jackie, and David decided to escape to Indiana where they lived in a small community house, and they got social

welfare at a value of 123 dollars. The only thing he could think of to survive was to cheat at school during his examination, but his academic results were getting worse.

David worked in an unproductive job as an exterminator at night, using food as a means of numbing his disillusionment. He gained 255 pounds and wanted to join the Navy, but his weight made it not possible for him to join the institution. The weight allowed was 191 pounds. However, Goggins' gets up early in the morning without getting enough sleep. He goes to the gym, swimming and running for longer durations, and then within one month he loses 25 pounds. within three months he builds a strong physical body, and he was accepted by the navy. Finally, he fulfilled his dream of joining it. To sum up, poverty, racism, and physical abuse affected his days and haunted his nights, but through resilience, mental toughness, and hard work. He transformed himself from a depressed, overweight young man with no future into a U.S. Armed Forces veteran and one of the top endurance athletes in the world.

III Results

The results of this dissertation are closely linked to the two concepts of trauma and are deeply rooted in the principles of resilience and mental toughness, as vividly exemplified by David Goggins in his memoir, *Can't Hurt Me*. Goggins' extraordinary journey, from a traumatic and abusive childhood to emerging as one of the world's toughest endurance athletes, underscores the transformative power of resilience. This research indicates that Goggins' early life, characterized by severe physical and emotional abuse from his father, left indelible marks on his psychological development. His experiences of emotional assault, behavioral problems, and cognitive delays are emblematic of the long-term impacts of child maltreatment, aligning with Judith Lewis Herman's trauma theory, which posits that early trauma significantly disrupts cognitive and emotional growth. Thus, Goggins' emotional scars, anxiety, and learning difficulties serve as poignant illustrations of these theories. Moreover, Goggins' remarkable transformation, achieved through resilience. Dr. Norman Garmezy's resilience theory, which suggests that resilience is not an inherent trait but one developed through hard work and mental fortitude, is aptly demonstrated by Goggins' journey from a victim of trauma to a Navy Seal and elite athlete. His story exemplifies how individuals can harness their adversities to fuel personal growth and success. It emphasizes that people who experience trauma can indeed rise above their circumstances if they persistently work hard and utilize the support available to them. This narrative of resilience serves as a powerful testament to the human spirit's capacity to overcome and thrive despite profound challenges.

IV. Discussion

This part of our work considers the notion of trauma in *Can't Hurt Me* in relation to the Judith Lewis Herman's theory of trauma and the idea of resilience as it is elaborated by Norman Garmezy. The story of David Goggins in *Can't Hurt Me*, as mentioned earlier, is a striking example of how trauma, which was experienced during childhood, greatly affects the child's emotional and psychological development. The father of Goggins was responsible for his mental and physical torments. Such traumatic experiences resulted in serious problems, which appear through his behavior and emotions. Judith Herman's theory, receiving support from Goggins' experience, postulates that trauma has long-lasting effects on the emotional and psychological health of an individual. His reaction to early abuse reflects deep-rooted scars in the mind that often lead to certain maladaptive behaviors, including fearfulness, performance deficits in school, and withdrawal from society.

Despite these challenges, Garmezy articulated her argument that resilience is not a static but rather an on-going dynamic process characterized by events occurring in both the environment and among individuals concerning him. Goggins's managed to turn around his life through determination, resulting in mental strength, hence proving that resilience can be fostered through hard work, discipline, or even close associates' backup. The discussion lays emphasis on the fact that trauma can be overcome by factors related to psychological operations, though they are painful, thus suggesting ways of restoring one's life after a traumatic experience as well as motivating progress as far as personal development goes.

Chapter one: The Concept of Trauma in David Goggins *Can't Hurt Me*

This chapter explores the effects of trauma on behavior and emotion, shedding light on Goggins' struggle to reclaim his life amidst chaos. In *Can't Hurt Me*, David Goggins shares his harrowing journey through childhood trauma, detailing the profound impact of abuse and adversity on his life. His experiences, were marked by physical and emotional violence, illustrating the psychological scars that linger long after the trauma has passed. The author emphasizes the resilience of the human spirit, showing how mental toughness can help overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. His story serves as a powerful testament to the strength of perseverance and self-discovery.

1-Experiencing Trauma Through Childhood Abuse

In *Can't Hurt Me*, David Goggins' describes his personal experiences with trauma, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse during his childhood, as well as the racial discrimination he faced while growing up. Studies on trauma show that individuals often develop certain response patterns when dealing with such experiences. Goggins uses his life story to illustrate how the mind can overcome physical and emotional pain, demonstrating remarkable resilience as a former Navy SEAL and endurance athlete. His memoir serves as a testament to the power of mental toughness in overcoming life's difficulties. During his childhood, David Goggins endured familial abuse and grew up amidst a whirlwind of pressure and domestic violence. His primary source of suffering came from his father, who forced him to work late nights at their family-owned store, regardless of his young age.

Despite his father's wealth, he only focused on the material side of life, disregarding the emotional well-being of his wife and children. David's father served as a genuine source of terror, to the extent that David never felt he possessed a loving and caring father. Their relationship was characterized by exploitation, beginning at David's tender age of six. He writes: "Because my dad, who worked the DJ booth, was always watching, and if any of those

skates went missing, it meant my ass. Before the doors opened, I'd polish the skate rink floor with a dust mop that was twice my size." (p.11). The above quote clearly expresses the violent environment in which he grew up that profoundly affected his mental and emotional well-being. David feels under constant pressure and fear due to the potential consequences of his family members' actions. Therefore, he was always eager to excel in his work for fear of his father's punishment feel, and he was excessive arousal and extremely worried and not able to relax, usually because of stress or bad experiences, and it's the primary symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as Judith Lewis Herman (1992) claims that: "After a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation seems to go into permanent alert, as if the danger might return" (p. 34). She explains that in this state of hyper-arousal, which is the first symptom of PTSD. Despite David Goggins' successful escape with his family from his father's hellish environment and his relocation to his grandfather's home in Indianapolis in pursuit of a fresh start, he continues to grapple with the lingering effects of trauma, significantly impacting his daily behaviors.

Moreover, he experienced a series of rapid events that have exacerbated emotional turmoil, such as the murder of his mother's spouse, David Goggins writes:

It was like a horror scene. I sat there all alone, watching the same footage over and over. My mind was a broken record that kept skipping into darkness. The past had been bleak, and now our sky-blue future had been blown (p. 37).

This passage shows how David Goggins struggled with despair and the sense of loss he experienced in facing his challenges. It reflects his ability to articulate intense emotional experience that evokes the feeling of reliving a traumatic event; the repetition in individual thoughts of David Goggins indicates the past being bleak and the future being shattered, suggesting a profound sense of loss and disillusionment. In regards to intrusion, the second symptom of PTSD Herman (1992) states, "Trauma interrupts the course of normal development by its repetitive intrusion into the survivor's life" (p. 37). It can be experienced long after the

actual trauma or the initial danger has past; in other words, trauma survivors relive the trauma as if it were repeatedly happening in the present, which prevents survivors from being able to resume any normal course of their lives. This is what David Goggins felt in his final phase following a string of traumatic events that took him back as he affirms in the following excerpt that:

I tried to curl up in bed at night but would always wake up in the fatal position on the floor. Eventually I gave in and bedded down low to the ground. Maybe because I knew if I could find comfort at the bottom, there would be no more falling. We were two people in dire need of the fresh start we thought we had coming. (p.29)

This quote reflects a deep sense of struggle and the search for comfort in the face of adversity. The imagery of trying to "curl up in bed" but ending up on the floor suggests a feeling of instability or failure, as if the speaker is unable to find solace or safety in his usual refuge. The "fatal position" implies vulnerability and perhaps a sense of defeat. When the speaker mentions giving in and bedding down low to the ground, it signifies a shift in perspective. Instead of striving for an idealized comfort that remains out of reach, he chooses to embrace a more grounded reality. This decision symbolizes acceptance of the circumstances, suggesting that by finding comfort at the bottom, he can eliminate the fear of falling further. The reference to "two people in dire need of the fresh start we thought we had coming" indicates a shared struggle with another individual, highlighting themes of hope and renewal. Despite the current hardships, there is an underlying desire for change and a better future. The quote encapsulates themes of vulnerability, acceptance, and the quest for stability amidst chaos.

Furthermore, Goggins illustrates that trauma survivors frequently have flashbacks to their painful pasts as though they are happening in the present. Even if the event happened in the past, its psychological and emotional ramifications still exist and interfere with daily living. When the trauma is causing him anxiety and chaos, he turns to a behavior that can provide him a feeling of security or control. Because regular routines and habits are disturbed, this behavior

change illustrates the attempt to regain stability and security in the wake of trauma. Herman's research about repeated trauma experienced in childhood not only warps personality but forms it; she explains that (1992): "The child trapped in an abusive environment is faced with formidable tasks of adaptation" (p. 96). Unlike the adult victim, who has no other frame of reference to life and people other than that to which they were born. She states that double thinking is also found to be used by children as a survival technique. In this environment of overwhelmingly disturbed relationships, the child has to find a way to attach to his caretakers for survival despite the caretakers being dangerous or neglectful. This is done through learning signals and rules of reward and punishment.

2-Behavioral and Emotional Impacts of Trauma

The severe emotional and behavioral effects of childhood trauma were experienced by David Goggins. He suffered horrible physical violence and emotional abuse for many years as a young child, especially as it pertained to his father, who was a violent man and would beat both Goggins' and his mother. These abuses during childhood left Goggins' wounded, and most of the wounds determined the kind of person he became and how he perceived the world around him. The first to be abused was the psyche, which caused long-term self-hatred and worthlessness, especially until the time when he and his mother left his father's house along with abusive practices. There were also emotional wounds that were left on Goggins, but unfortunately, there was a speech defect that surrounded him and which distanced him further from his mates, making him feel very useless. To be able to deal with such a problem, he wanted treatment from a psychiatrist, whom he went to on several occasions in order to avoid being kicked out of school. He said that (2018):

That experience kicked my social anxiety up several notches. My stutter was out of control. My hair started falling out, and white splotches bloomed on my dark skin. The doctor diagnosed me as an ADHD case and prescribed Ritalin, but my problems were more complex (p. 29).

The quotation highlights the enduring side effects experienced by David Goggins, which continued to affect his adult life. From a young age, he faced significant pressures that led to hair loss and endured both physical and emotional harm, contributing to the destruction of his personality. He pointed out certain facts that he faced, corroborated by pediatricians, indicating that learning difficulties and social anxiety hindered language and memory development. This makes it difficult for him to retain what he has learned. More importantly, he faces an increasing risk of developmental delays, heart disease, and obesity. Judith Herman (1992) describes the aspect of constriction as the third symptom of PTSD as that of involving a person becoming completely powerless and going into a "state of surrender" (p. 42) and explains that the individual's self-defense system shuts down. For instance, a person who cannot physically escape instead by shifting her state of consciousness. David Goggins experienced just this during his academic career when he points out that: "My life had already become a full-fledged fortune cookie. Whenever I cracked it open, I got the same message. You were born to fail!" (p. 23). This excerpt can be linked to what Herman describes as constriction. He conveys a learned response akin to depression and surrender, where one goes so far as to concede after several endless negative experiences.

The repeated failure messages that he is a victim to suggest to him the area of self-worth has been completely turned off he believes that it is futile and unreasonable for him to attempt anything that will make him succeed. Goggins's state of mind as viewed by Herman's concept of trauma, is engaging in hysterical confinements. This situation illustrates how Goggins' is sick with himself. It further highlights this formative outcome as the cause. Failure seems easier than fighting. In an attempt to explain why this is the case, ego expanding, which is one's outer self feels overwhelmed by the scope of the situation and causes. Elucidating the above pattern highlights what Judith Herman has theorized: when people feel cornered, helpless, and fatigued.

In an external situation, people may choose to just simply dissociate and displace themselves mentally in a way that achieves emotional catatonia.

3-The Cognitive Development in David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me*

Cognitive development can be defined as “the act or process of knowing in the broadest sense; specifically, an intellectual process by which knowledge is gained from perception, or ideas”. It is a field of study in neuroscience and in psychology focusing on a child's development in terms of information processing. This area is responsible for many complex functions like language learning, perception, attention, memory, thinking, problem solving, and other aspects of the development of the brain. Cognition means simply to perceive, comprehend, and conceive, or simply to know. Therefore, cognitive development means the growth and the capability to know, comprehend, or understand over time, facilitating both maturity and interaction with the environment. However, childhood trauma has a negative influence, and consequences on the normal cognitive development of children. It leads to different dysfunctions and learning difficulties. This can be understood while reading the memoir of David Goggins, *Can't Hurt Me* as the following passage makes it clear:

Within the first month of class, she told my mother that I belonged in a different school. One for special students. Every kid knows what special means. It means you are about to be stigmatized for the rest of your damn life. It means you are not normal. (p. 20)

This quote shows how childhood trauma had a great impact negatively on David Goggins' cognitive development. His psychological being was noticeable by all his teachers at school. Because Goggins' suffers from lack of concentration at his lessons at school. This lack of concentration is considered as one of the symptoms of traumatization that belong to the category of hyper arousal, which includes sleep problems, panic attacks, and difficulty of concentration. The only way he found to not be dropped out of school is to cheat during his examination. Nevertheless, even if he cheated during his examination, he always got very bad marks. So, it is important to understand how trauma impacts on the cognitive development of Goggins'.

Since trauma is considered a distressing, painful emotional experience that leads to a change in the individual's brain structure and functions.

In addition, He suffers from chronic stress and anxiety, which destroyed his early childhood and educational career. This is demonstrated when David Goggins asserts that: "I was suffering from toxic stress" (p.21). So, stress is considered as one major factor that can influence the cognitive development of a child, and that can influence awfully on the brain as it is evidenced when David Goggins' claims that:

The type of physical and emotional trauma to which I was exposed has been proven to have a range of side effects on young children because in our early years the brain grows and develops so rapidly. If during those years your father is an evil. (p.21)

Accordingly, the child's brain is very sensitive during the early years of childhood. Goggins', in his declaration, reveals the deep impact that physical and emotional trauma can have on children, particularly during their formative years. During early childhood, the brain undergoes crucial growth and development. The experiences that children have during these years can form and change their future behavior, emotional regulation, and overall mental well-being. Although he was exposed to several physical and emotional abuses, his father, Trunnis, is considered as an intimidating figure. The quote shows that children who have experienced childhood trauma often recall the incident even after the threat has passed. This was known as flashbacks. Children are supposed to live a safe and happy childhood.

When a child is under stress, the body releases adrenalin into the bloodstream, giving the brain bursts of energy. When under longer periods of it, the body goes all out and releases a class of stronger steroidal hormones, called glucocorticoids, which can remain in the brain far longer than adrenalin. However, when the victim is under constant, chronic stress, these hormones can begin to have lasting effects. None of which are positive. When these hormones are released, they head directly for the hippocampus, the part of the brain that is involved in memory forming,

organizing, and storing. When chronic stress occurs, these hormones become unbalanced, which can kill cells in the hippocampus and, over time, can lead to confusion, memory, and learning difficulties. An illustration of this is when Goggins' asserts that: "our high school made us take a foreign language that year, which was funny to me. Not because I couldn't see the value, but because I could barely read English, let alone understand Spanish" (p.33). This passage reveals that he could "barely read English", which is his mother tongue. This quote demonstrates that he faced a crucial challenge with literacy in his native language before even attempting to learn a new language, which is Spanish. This is due to his learning disabilities and lack of support at home. Because children in high school generally have the compulsory need to learn a new language as part of their curriculum, in order to increase cognitive abilities, cultural awareness, and communication skills.

Moreover, the cognitive symptoms of traumatization often affect a regression of the normal cognitive development, which may affect the learning of young children because fears are considered to be a normal part of cognitive development for children, and they will change as the child gets older and gains new cognitive skills. However, traumatized children will often develop specific fears related to the trauma that are somehow very negative and poorly developed. It was noticeable when Goggins maintains that : "All my fears and insecurities I'd bottled up for my entire life started raining down on my head" (p. 61).

This quote refers to that when a person internalizes numerous fears, insecurities, and anxiety inside for a long period of time. One day all these repressed emotions will come out uncontrollably. The quotation also highlights the importance of confronting all the repressed emotions of fears, anxiety, and insecurities all at once. The impact of these distressing events often presents as a cluster of symptoms, some of which are cognitive in nature. One reason that leads David Goggins do not concentrate in his lessons at school is his state of being afraid of his father as he writes that: "Still, on that playground and in the classroom, I knew I was safe,

for a little while at least” (p.2). So, the author considered school a place of protection from his abusive and violent father. Who destroyed his educational career and his cognitive development.

More importantly, trauma is considered as one major factor that can disrupt one’s sense of safety, trust, and control, often causing symptoms like flashbacks, anxiety, or hyper vigilance. Its impact can endure, influencing relationships, behavior, and mental health as Goggins’ asserts: “My early years in Brazil were a perfect incubator for post-traumatic stress, and before I left I was delivered a double dose of death trauma” (p.31). This excerpt demonstrates his early years in Brazil, which were marked by serious trauma. His early experiences in Brazil were not just challenging but were formative in a way that made him susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The sentence Double Dose of Death Trauma suggests that he passed through two significant traumatic events related to death before leaving Brazil. The experiences have a negative impact on his mental and psychological state as it diminishes the academic abilities. What follows illustrates the point:

Studying was hard, especially with my fucked-up brain, but I was a damn good cheat. I copied friends’ homework and scanned my neighbors’ work during tests. I even copied the answers on the standardized tests that didn’t have any impact on my grades (pp.22-23).

The quote demonstrates the negative effects of childhood trauma on the educational career of Goggins’. His academic level gets worse and worse due to the impact of trauma on his brain. Because measures of cognitive ability are often used in tracking students’ abilities, therefore, separating students into different classes or academic paths. It is important to better understand if the early environments truly contribute to intelligence and not simply to academic skills. Trauma, whether a single dynamic stressor such as a car accident, or pervasive developmental trauma such as maltreatment and deprivation, can impact a child’s education in several ways. This could be in any setting, be it a mainstream classroom, through exclusion, or temporary

placements, in a special educational need. This is clearly shown in Chapter one: “I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A STATIC”, and second chapter “TRUTH HURTS”.

According to Goggins’, people who have experienced trauma will have an impact on the language development of a child, and it will limit their language vocabulary and minimize their memory as he explains:

I know firsthand that it leads to learning disabilities and social anxiety because, according to doctors, it limits language development and memory, which makes it difficult for even the most gifted student to recall what they have already learned (p. 22).

In David Goggins’ view, people who have experienced a devastating event such as a car accident, natural disaster, or shock often cannot remember the incident. It is also common not to remember what took place right before, or right after the incident.

In a similar way, many adults who suffered child abuse have difficulty recalling large chunks of time from childhood. In these cases, problems with memory can continue into adulthood as well, particularly when faced with emotional distress. Due to childhood trauma, he suffers from difficulties in education and he was not able to learn a new language, which is Spanish. Difficulty of learning is considered as one of the symptoms of traumatization. Childhood trauma can diminish concentration, memory, and the organizational and language abilities children need to succeed in school. Nevertheless, it differs from one person to another even within the same family. It affects the capacity of individuals of all ages to learn and retain information. It is because PTSD can also contribute to problems with attention, making it difficult to concentrate on information. They may also have difficulty of concentrating and be easily distracted, which makes it hard to pay attention when doing tasks. Difficulty concentrating is one of a number of common symptoms of PTSD, which leads Goggins’ to have many difficulties while learning at school.

Therefore, childhood trauma and maltreatments have negative consequences on the normal cognitive development. Because fears, anxiety, difficulty of learning, and memorization are considered as barriers against the normal cognitive development of children who have experienced childhood trauma. How a child is supposed to grow up, and develop if he suffers from all this obstacle during his childhood. Early life traumatic events may also negatively affect the cognitive functioning, particularly slower information processing speed, and worse attention, memory, and executive functioning in children and younger adults. Judith Herman's analysis of trauma explains how childhood trauma affects adult life emotionally, which can cause behavioral consequences like chronic anxiety and distress.

Furthermore, Herman notes that individuals who experience childhood trauma often live on a "baseline of unease," which can manifest as anxiety, panic, or despair. This emotional turmoil stems from unstable attachments formed during childhood, often due to abuse or neglect within family environments. Consequently, many survivors resort to self-injury as a means to cope with unbearable emotional pain, viewing it as a form of self-preservation. This behavior is often accompanied by feelings of shame and disgust, complicating their recovery. Adults who suffered childhood abuse frequently struggle with relationships, seeking connections to feel protected while simultaneously fearing abandonment. Their experiences lead them to believe they deserve mistreatment, making them more vulnerable to further victimization. The altered states of consciousness and disturbances in emotional regulation caused by early trauma hinder the ability to transition into healthy adult relationships and responsibilities.

Chapter Two: The Concept of Resilience in David Goggins' Book

The concept of resilience has emerged as a beacon of hope and empowerment. Resilience theory rooted in psychology and human development provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors contributing to resilience and strategies individuals can employ to navigate adversity and thrive in this in-depth exploration. The subsequent chapter examines the nuances of resilience theory, its core principles, exploring real-life examples, and discussing practical applications for personal growth and well-being are the foundations of resilience theory.

1. Building Resilience and Mental toughness

A comprehensive understanding of resilience, particularly in children facing adversity, highlights the interplay of protective factors and risk factors that shape positive adaptation in challenging circumstances, as emphasized by researchers. According to Norman Garmezy (1990), "Resilience refers to the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (p.426). The term resilience has been used to label different types of phenomena such as individuals who have experienced traumatic events but have been able to recover well. The concept of resilience brings a current perspective to the study of human behavior, one filled with hope and possibility. Studying the many ways that human development is adversely affected by challenging or traumatic circumstances provides an incomplete understanding of human behavior, as researchers Michael Rutter, Norman Garmezy's, and others discovered.

The most productive examination of resilience is to be found in the work of Garmezy's and his co-workers, who have conducted research for over two decades at the University of Minnesota on the positive adaptation of children under conditions of high risk or facing an accumulation of life stressors. Building on earlier studies of children at risk for developmental psychopathology, Project Competence studied both normative community samples and

children under high risk and examined the relationship between life stress exposure and demonstrated competence. Project Competence researchers found evidence that certain correlates of competence served as moderating protective factors for these children. They also observed that resilience, like adaptation in general, is contextual and is affected by the constellation of protective factors and risk factors that are present in the families and wider society, including culture, which make up the environments of individuals finding themselves in challenging situations. Garmezy's research highlighted the critical role of protective factors in promoting resilience in individuals, particularly in children facing adversity and trauma. He held an ecological view of resilience; based on this view, he contended that protective factors at the individual and familial levels, and external to the family, all influence resilience.

To build resilience and mental toughness according to Norman Garmezy's resilience theory, can be applied to David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me*. Resilience is displayed through the ways in which Goggins' transformed his traumatic experiences into a source of strength. He discusses how he shifted his perspective on past abuse and bullying, viewing them not as sources of perpetual victimhood but as training grounds that calloused his mind. He realized that hardships had been preparing him for future challenges, turning disadvantages into mental fortitude. In this context, Goggins states: "But in that moment I stopped seeing myself as the victim of bad circumstances and saw my life as the ultimate training ground instead" (p.96).

This statement portrays a fundamental change in mindset, one that is essential in understanding several aspects of resilience, especially personal characteristics and ways of coping with challenges. Thus, Goggins' changes the way he perceives hardships by redefining the challenges he faces. Instead of being defeated by his past, as most people go through, he considers his past an opportunity to grow. This process of changing one's perspective is an important aspect of resilience because it enables people to learn from the experience that was previously negative and gain some benefits. In such a context, Garmezy highlighted the

importance of the ability to recover and maintain adaptive functioning despite negative life events, stressing that this resilience is crucial for children's development and well-being; he writes that: "The construct is designed to represent a reality that many children exposed to dangerous environments and to threatening life events continue to strive to make positive adaptations to such stressors. All children are tested by negative events"(p.459). For him, the essence of recovery is to adapt to the current situation, accept it, and search for the main reason that made you reach this stage. We must show our capacity to recover from these stress events, or PTSD.

As Goggins continually found new ways to push himself and become stronger both mentally and physically, his story reflects Garmezy's focus on adaptation and coping strategies. Norman Garmezy identified several protective factors that contribute to resilience in people who face adversity, especially children. In light of these safeguards, Garmezy's resilience theory provides a thorough framework for comprehending how people like Goggins can flourish in the face of severe adversity and tragedy. These safeguards are evident throughout David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me* in a number of different facets of his existence. Garmezy' held an ecological view of resilience; based on this view, he concluded that protective factors at the individual and familial levels, and external to the family, all influence resilience. Some of these resiliencies include Individual factors This is an aspect of individual differences, which in this case is compounded by children's difficult temperaments. A positive response to the contact also promotes resilience. There are dispositions that have been proved to be protective, including self-efficacy, self-esteem, and sense of agency, in the words of David Goggins:

If you are one of the few who does acknowledge that, want to seal those wounds, and want to beef up your personality, it is just up to you to go back into your past and learn to come to terms with yourself and face all those occurrences plus everything that is negative influence in you and accept those as flaws in your character (p.105).

This quote reveals that Goggins hints at the fact that hardly anyone is ready to look at the dark side of his personality and accept failures and past violence. The first and probably the most important of these pillars is recognition. The reader is thus put to stand and evaluate himself or herself and to have the strength to deal with areas of weakness. It underlines the importance of personality development and an individual's readiness to grow every day. In this context, it is necessary to note that Goggins focuses on the subject's responsibility in his healing process. Amendment of the past and putting into consideration matters with no solution helps him to have closure with the self. Thus, healing concerns activities and is not a passive form. It follows too that it is never adequate for any individual to be committed only to the alteration of such factors, but the aspect of growth is essential too. It seeks to question the reconciliation and negative trauma that serve as impetus to work. It is likely that this will cause the company to consider the events in a way that shows how they happened and how such events may impact the company and the company's business practices and culture going forward.

Goggins went through very tough times in the early years of his life, which included racial prejudice and an abusive father. Nonetheless, his mother was a major part of his life who offered him psychological assistance, and he took her as a role model for determination and industry. Goggins's mom had a great impact on his perseverance. Her actions showed him how to be a courageous person amidst violent surroundings that required much selflessness or readiness to stay firm even when others are not ready for it. They were traumatizing, however, they made Goggins' possess strong personalities that allowed him to overcome huge obstacles in the future as Goggins puts it:

My mother's every day was a lesson in survival. She was told she was worthless, so often she started to believe it. Everything she did was an effort to appease him so he wouldn't beat her sons or whip her ass, but there were invisible trip wires in her world, and sometimes she never knew when or how she set them off until after he slapped the shit out of her (P.12).

The excerpt reveals that Goggins' mother was a solid rock in the lives of her children despite being severely abused. Her kids, and especially the sons, were able to draw strength from their mothers unwavering determination to shield them from their father's wrath. It is possible that Goggin's ability to endure hardship and remain optimistic and motivated might have been enhanced by seeing this resilience on display. David Goggins' ability to withstand stressors is greatly improved by his network of friends and mentors, which offers him encouragement from others.

2- A Study on The Pursuit of Help and Support Systems

In life, everyone encounters hardships, which can be caused by the loss of a loved one, heartbreak, divorce, or physical abuse. When these times arrive, we can either choose to let them defeat us, or to keep going forward. Resilience is the ability to take ourselves back up, and move forward after certain tragedies or challenges. It is deciding to not to quit and that even if the worst happens. Nevertheless, this important skill is not an innate ability. Children are not born resilient. Resilience has to be built and developed over time, which means that adults have to figure out how to get resilient on their own. Resilience can be developed through mindset shifts, practice, and healthy habits and everyone has the ability to implement.

There are some ways to start building resilience. Firstly, it is significant to be proactive, resilient people are proactive. It means they face their problems head-on. Resilient people don't let problems fester in the corner, growing larger, and larger by the day until it becomes an uncontrollable infestation. Instead, resilient people take immediate action. Rather than spiraling into a storm of negative thoughts about the situation, they focus on acting as David Goggins asserts that: "Physical training is the perfect crucible to learn how to manage your thought process because when you're working out, your focus is more likely to be single-pointed, and your response to stress and pain is immediate and measurable. (p.99). We understand that when individuals engage in physical training, they often experience an enhanced state of

concentration. Therefore, it can lead to improved mental clarity and immediate decision-making. Secondly, Goggins shows the importance of changing the mindset about adversity. In order to build mental resilience, one must stop thinking about hardship and difficulties as problems. Instead they think about them as a chance for growth. Instead of asking, “Why is this happening to us?” We should rather ask ourselves, “What we can learn from this?”. This question is powerful because it keeps the individual away from the pain, or frustration of the situation. Focusing on how we can grow stronger from a situation is much more productive use of the brain cells. In such context, David Goggins explains that: “To develop an armored mind, a mindset so calloused and hard that it becomes bulletproof, you need to go to the source of all your fears and insecurities” (p.104).

Furthermore, David Goggins emphasizes the importance of confronting these feelings rather than avoiding them, and one should not only recognize their fears, but also explore their origins. Goggins assumes that facing fears directly fosters resilience and helps to build an armored mind. Thirdly, learn to know that life isn't fair; the idea that life isn't fair can actually be comforting. Life isn't fair for everyone! Every human on this planet experiences hardship. Some more than others, but there are still problems in everyone's life. Resilient people realize this about life, and they don't wrap their heads around something bad that has happened. Instead, they start focusing on things they have control over, not on what they do not have control over, and they start accepting what happened to them. David Goggins says that (2018)

I had to find higher ground and turn the negative I'd created into another positive. I didn't just accept land warfare duty; I was the best instructor I could possibly be, and on my own time, I created new opportunities for myself by launching my ultra-quest, which revived my stalled career (p.221).

This quote emphasizes that he faced challenges, however, instead of allowing these negatives to define him, he finds a way to transform them into opportunities for growth. Regardless of his

circumstances. The fourth one is flexibility; resilient people involve a lot of flexibility and creativity.

Challenges in life may cause to change the individual direction. This doesn't mean to give up on the objectives, or dreams; it just means to reach the goals in a way that the individual had not anticipated before as David Goggins' asserts that: "essentially, I had two full-time jobs. My schedule was jammed full, and while I know that having the flexibility to manage my own time contributed to my ability to train for and compete on the ultra-circuit, I still put in fifty hours a week at work, clocking in every day from about 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p. m. My training hours came in addition to, not instead of, my work commitments. (p.182). This quote demonstrates that flexibility in this context refers to the ability to adapt one's schedule to accommodate both professional obligations and personal goals (in this case, training for competitions). It suggests that this flexibility is not merely beneficial but essential for maintaining performance across both domains. The fifth one is to focus on what the individual can change. Some people constantly blame their parents, or their environment for their circumstances, whether or not they are right or wrong. They never see their circumstances change.

However, resilient people who blame themselves for their circumstances, and decide that they are the force that can change their own life. They will see changes in their circumstances as Goggins' asserts that: "He was also a heavy drinker, a little overweight, and looking to change his life" (p.214). According to the author becomes a heavy drinker, overweight, and looking to change encapsulates the essence of personal transformation. It focuses on the importance of self-observation in recognizing detrimental behaviors while also underscoring the necessity for actionable steps toward improvement. His journey serves as an example that profound change is possible through determination and hard work.

Sixth, it is crucial to be grateful, practice gratitude in life as much as possible. However, the easiest thing is to focus on negative things in life because our brains are hardwired to do so and keep us out of danger, so try writing down three things you are grateful for every day. According to David Goggins: “For hours, I floated in that tranquil space, surrounded by light, feeling as much gratitude as pain, as much appreciation as there was discomfort” (pp.257, 258).

The quote refers to Goggins’ belief in emotional resilience and the capacity to resist in difficult situations while maintaining a sense of gratitude for life’s lessons. The first step to overcome trauma is to replace all our bad habits with good ones. David Goggins suffers from eating disorders where he gained 255 pounds. However, he starts going to the gym where he builds a strong physical body. In addition, choosing a skilled therapist that can help the individual to learn all the necessary tools to break from bad habits, and replace them with good ones he claims that: “I buried my shame in the gym and at the kitchen table” (p.55).

Goggins quote focus on two critical aspects of personal development which are physical fitness and nutritional awareness. It means to overcome shame. By burying his shame in these activities, he demonstrates how individuals can transform negative emotions into constructive behaviors that foster resilience and self-improvement. Secondly, to learn to accept the trauma and let it go, but that does not mean to agree with it, or embrace the trauma. Acceptance means the individual has decided what he is going to do with it. It is up to the individual. To decide whether to let it go, or let this trauma controls his life. It is better not to allow the bad memories, and bad childhood destroys your future. David Goggins emphasizes that (2018)

We know life can be hard, and yet we feel sorry for ourselves when it isn’t fair. From this point forward, accept the following as Goggins laws of nature: You will be made fun of. You will feel insecure. You may not be the best all the time. Get over it (p.160)

Goggins concludes how it is important to overcome everything what is wrong in life of the individual. He emphasizes the importance of embracing discomfort as a way to build mental resilience. Goggins’ places emphasis on the need to confront and eliminate all that

malfunctions in the life of the individual. This quote from David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me* emphasizes a philosophy of resilience in the mind no matter whatever be the troubles in life. These encounters do not bring us down or embrace self-pitying emotions but we accept them and carry on. He stresses the necessity of all embracing of discomfort in a bid to build toughness. Thirdly, it is important to take care of the mental health: eat healthy food, stay away from eating drugs and drinking alcohol, and exercise regularly. Go to do any kind of sport that helps to bring happiness to the individual. One illustration of this was when Goggins transformed his physical weakness into strength where he discovers passion for sports and fitness. In addition, Goggins struggled with obesity during his childhood. However, he dedicated himself to physical fitness. He transformed himself from an overweight young man to one of the top endurance athletes in the world.

The fourth one is that the individual must not isolate himself from people, and the environment. The victim should seek help from a psychologist and therapist, or a close person to him who is a trustworthy person. If the individual isolates himself, this will only make things worse. The most important part of the healing process is the interaction with other people, so make the effort to maintain the relationships and seek support. Talk to a trusted family member or friend. Consider joining a support group for survivors of childhood trauma. Isolation can worsen the trauma symptoms. David Goggins asserts that "Ever since I'd started up in BUD/S, I'd been in search of people like that. Men and women with an uncommon way of thinking" (p.173). David Goggins' statement reveals the importance of cognitive diversity within the Navy SEAL training program (BUD/S). By seeking out men and women with unconventional ways of thinking, he underscores the value of resilience, adaptability, innovative problem-solving abilities, and enhanced team dynamics, all critical components for success in demanding scenarios.

The fifth one is that we should control our present; otherwise, if we cannot do that, the past will control our life, and we will spend the rest of our life as victims. If we control our present, we will be able to reclaim control of your life now and heal our pain. David Goggins claims that (2018) “I had learned to stay present and open minded enough to recalibrate my goals even at my lowest” (p.155). According to Goggins the idea of staying present refers to hyperconsciousness, the practice of being fully focused in the current moment without distraction or judgment. According to our research has shown that mindfulness can lead to improved emotional regulation, reduced stress, and enhanced focus.

Sixth one is to learn and research about what trauma is, where it comes from, the causes, and effects. The only way we can start healing is to know that a specific traumatic event did occur in our life and that we were not responsible for it. David Goggins asserts that (2018) “What if is the power and permission to face down your darkest demons, your very worst memories, and accept them as part of your history” (p.264). David Goggins’ assertion about the power of “What if” highlights the importance of confronting and accepting one’s darkest memories as part of personal history. This approach not only fosters self-awareness but also promotes resilience and emotional healing.

Trauma covers a huge spectrum. It covers abandonment, death of the parents, alcoholic parents, childhood sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse. It covers, of course, natural disasters. What happens when a trauma occurs? A trauma is more emotion than the brain can deal with. Trauma: at the time it is happening, the person, in an age-appropriate way, thinks that his life is threatened. The brain reacts to this trauma and develops differently, which is why childhood trauma has a much bigger impact on behavior later and the whole way the brain operates later in life. Trauma cannot be remembered. Goggins’ is one of such people. However, He takes this opportunity to grow and develop, and he builds strong mental resilience to overcome any kind of obstacle in his life.

V. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis of David Goggins' book reveals that themes of trauma and resilience are displayed in his *Can't Hurt Me*. Two distinct angles were used to conduct the investigation. We have relied on the Judith Lewis Herman theory of trauma to explore the durability of trauma on the psychological consciousness of characters. In addition, the concept of resilience from Norman Garmezy's theory of resilience was then discussed; via it, we were able to shed light on the long-lasting effects of childhood abuse as well as the transformational potential of resilience. David's story offers plenty of examples of how to overcome problems in life by being resilient and strong-willed. The study emphasized the critical importance of prompt and effective therapy in order to reduce the long-term effects of trauma.

A key aspect of Goggins' narrative is that it highlights resilience as a dynamic, evolving process. Goggins' transformation is not instantaneous nor free from setbacks. He acknowledges the continuous effort required to build mental toughness, often describing resilience as a 'calloused mind' that he developed over years of facing physical and mental challenges. This iterative process of building resilience directly counters the misconception that resilience is an innate quality possessed by some and not others. Goggins exemplifies the notion that resilience is a skill that can be cultivated through intentional action and a steadfast refusal to succumb to defeat. Moreover, his story serves as an important case study in the conversation surrounding trauma-informed therapy and the recovery process. As the research suggests, prompt and effective therapeutic interventions can mitigate the long-term psychological damage caused by trauma. Goggins, although he does not often discuss formal therapeutic interventions, represents a form of self-therapy through extreme endurance and mental conditioning. His journey underscores the importance of confronting trauma, whether through therapy or other structured processes, to prevent it from dictating one's future. His story speaks to the broader societal need for accessible mental health resources and support systems that prioritize healing

from trauma. While Goggins' experience is extreme, his story offers universal lessons on the human capacity for resilience. His life serves as a vivid illustration of how individuals can rise above their circumstances, no matter how dire, and carve out a new narrative for themselves. His refusal to be defined by his past has inspired many others to realize their potential for greatness, even when they feel trapped by their own experiences of trauma or adversity. Goggins' message is clear: resilience is not a static trait, but an ongoing process that requires continual effort, self-reflection, and the willingness to push beyond comfort zones.

This dissertation raises important questions about the role of support, both personal and institutional in facilitating the resilience process. Goggins' story reminds us that while trauma may be a common thread in the human experience, resilience while accessible to all must be actively pursued and nurtured. His life demonstrates that even in the face of extreme hardship, there is always the possibility of transformation, growth, and personal excellence. Through this lens, Goggins' narrative is not only a testament to the power of resilience but also an inspiration for individuals seeking to redefine their relationship with trauma and hardship. Goggins' philosophy encourages relentless pursuit of goals, which resonates with motivational theories such as self-determination theory. His emphasis on pushing beyond perceived limits aligns with concepts of intrinsic motivation, where individuals engage in activities for personal satisfaction rather than external rewards. Research suggests that fostering intrinsic motivation can lead to greater persistence and achievement in challenging endeavors. David Goggins' *Can't Hurt Me* serves as a rich text for exploring themes of resilience, trauma recovery, personal accountability, and motivation. While it offers valuable insights into individual empowerment, it also invites critical examination of the broader societal contexts that shape personal experiences.

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