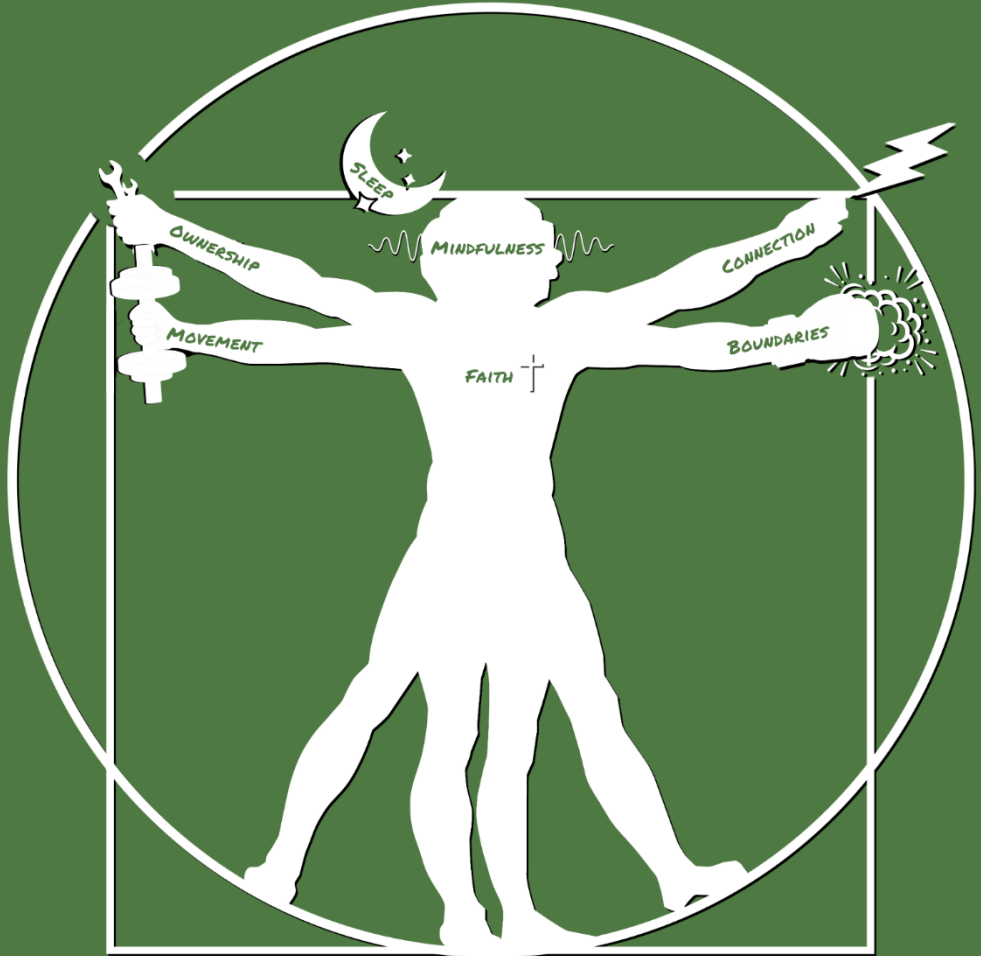


# 7 Pillars Field Guide



Companion to *The Stability Equation*

by Kevin Pannell

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## Introduction

Sometimes we need answers fast. That's why I created this quick reference guide, **7 Pillars Field Guide**. The intent of this book is to give the reader the “*bottom line up front*” when it comes to taking **ownership**, becoming more **mindful**, getting regular **movement**, setting, and pushing your **boundaries**, creating new or re-establishing human **connections**, improving your evening wind down routine and **sleep** hygiene, and developing your own **faith**.

I have listened to, watched, and read every resource I shared in **The Stability Equation** and have used all the tools in this field guide. To dig deeper into the tools and learn more about how I discovered them, read **The Stability Equation** on **Kindle**, **paperback**, or **hardcover**. To dive into these tools and techniques that will help you become a more overall balanced person, read on, and act.

Godspeed y'all,

Kevin



more at <https://peopleprocessprogress.com/>

## Pillar 1: Taking Ownership

Taking ownership means looking inward and into the mirror and not fully depending on outside people to help you live a more fulfilled life. I don't mean discount others. I mean, *Pillar 5: Connection* is all about relationships with other humans. What I mean is you are where you are and if you're reading this, you may not like where you are. So, step one and pillar one is ownership.

To start, create this table on a piece of paper, electronic document, or write in your book. Don't lie to yourself. Don't sugarcoat the message. This is you **truly** owning where you are in life and where you want to get to.

Helping Me	Not Helping Me

**Table 1: Be objective. Don't BS yourself!**

## Pillar 2: Becoming More Mindful

Mindfulness is not meditation. Meditation is a practice that helps you become more mindful. You can also become more mindful by sitting on a park bench, leaving your phone in your pocket, and just watching and listening. I found part of my mindfulness practice also included calming my anxious, nervous, scared, and overwhelmed mind. Below are tools I've used many times to help calm myself during acute bouts of panic and over time to develop a more mindful approach to life.

### **Acute Stress Management**

#### - **54321 Grounding Method**

- Think of and say inwardly 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste

#### - **Tapping technique**

- For 3 rounds, tap 7x each on your forehead, next to your eye, under your eye, above your lips, below your lips, on your collarbone, below your armpit, and on the meaty side of your hand

#### - **DARE Response**

- **Defuse** the thoughts with a "*So what!*"
- **Allow** the thoughts to come without judgement
- **Run** towards by reframing anxiety into excitement
- **Engage** in an activity like walking or chores

### **Longer Term Tools**

#### - **Meditation**

- In a quiet place take 3 breaths in your nose and let the breath go out of your mouth; Close your eyes; Listen; Do a mental scan of your body and notice tension; Count your breaths (1 in, 2 out, through 10); open your eyes

#### - **Journaling**

- Free writing whatever comes to mind; log worries each evening 2-3 hours before bed

## Pillar 3: Getting Regular Movement

Exercise has been shown to be as or more effective than medications to reduce stress and anxiety and to pull people up out of depression. Exercise is an area you must take ownership yourself to see results. It's up to you and you CAN do it.

Not sure where to start with moving and getting exercise? Below are some ideas based on what's worked for me after logging thousands of hours in my garage gym and on the Jiu-Jitsu mats.

### **Walking**

When you're anxious, in the morning, at lunch, in the evening, after dinner

### **Body weight**

Push-ups, pull-ups, crunches, air squats, mountain climbers, burpees, planks, 4-count flutter kicks

### **Weightlifting**

*Barbell:* Squats, bench press, deadlift, overhead press, bent over rows, hang cleans

*Dumbbells:* Curls, bent over rows, goblet squats, chest fly, triceps extensions

*Kettlebells:* Swings, squat swings, gorilla cleans, farmer's carry

### **Functional Fitness**

Wall balls, box jumps, knee ups, weighted lunges

### **Road & Track work**

Jog, run, hill run, hill sprints, track repeats, hiking

### **Yoga**

Morning, recovery focus, strength focus, balance focus, mobility focus

## Pillar 4: Setting and Pushing Boundaries

Sometimes people suck. When they suck it's often helpful to create a boundary between us and them. Sometimes we suck. When we suck, we need to create boundaries between us and a habit that's bad for us. Too much gaming, too much alcohol, on our devices all day, and on, and on. Other times we've set boundaries for ourselves that we don't think we can break. But we set them, right?

Below is a simple *Start, Stop, and Keep Doing* table to help you determine which boundaries you need to set for yourself and which boundaries you have already set that you should push through, e.g. *Pillar 5: Connections*.

Start	Stop	Keep Doing

Breathing and cold have helped me push my own boundaries of comfort and I believe they can for you too.

### **Wim Hof breathing**

1. Breathe in the nose and out of the mouth 30x
1. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  through the 30th out breath stop and hold your breath for one minute
2. At the one-minute mark breathe in and hold for 15 seconds
3. Let your breathing return to normal
4. Repeat 1-4 2x with a 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  minute breath hold
5. When done, move the hands and feet

### **Cold Exposure test**

The next time you take a shower, turn the water to lukewarm for the last ~30 seconds. Then, try a little colder each day.

## Pillar 5: Making Human Connections

Humans are not meant to be alone. Even self-proclaimed “loners” at some point crave and require human connection. When these connections are made, it’s important for us to be in the moment and not try to be physically present while we’re mentally or electronically thousand miles away. Below are mindsets to help you improve the connections you have and to create new ones.

### **In person**

***Be Present:*** Shake hands, phone away, eye contact and look at the person

***Engage Your Senses:*** Take in the moment’s environment with all senses

***Seek Shared Experiences and say “Yes!”:*** Play sports, join clubs, go to church, take the trip, meet for dinner

***Practice Empathy:*** Listen to understand, verify the message, and then ask questions

### **Virtual connections**

***Set limits:*** on your phone, the TV, your laptop, etc., set a X# hours per day limit

***Prune your “friends” list:*** if you’re never hung out in person OR you wouldn’t, are they your friend?

***Limit exposure to comments:*** You can’t make everyone happy and that’s Ok.

***Clean your feed:*** Pro-actively control the algorithm by removing negative content and spam. Don’t let the algorithm control you.

## Pillar 6: Improving Your Sleep Hygiene

Eating, drinking, noise, and light within 1-2 hours before bed will have a negative effect on how most people can or will fall asleep. Practicing what's call "sleep hygiene" combined with *Pillar 2: Mindfulness* will drastically improve how you fall asleep, stay asleep, or help get yourself back to sleep if you wake up. Below is an optimal routine. The reality is this can't happen every day, so shoot for doing this often and give yourself some grace.

### ***Beginning of the day***

- Wake up at the same time most days
- Give thanks to your higher power
- Make your bed
- Get some sunshine if possible or turn on the bright lights
- Get your movement in

### ***6-7 hours before bed***

- Try not to drink caffeinated drinks

### ***1-2 hours before bed***

- Stop eating and drinking
- Stop watching TV or playing games
- Minimize phone use
- Turn down the bright lights
- Turn down the thermostat
- Complete your Worry Journal

### ***15-30 minutes before bed***

- Do some stretching on your own or a short PM Yoga routine

### ***At bedtime***

- Consider a wind down routine
- Visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing

## Pillar 7: Building Your Faith

Your faith is yours alone. You may have learned a particular way to practice based on a religion, but how often you pray, what you believe, and whom you choose to follow is all on you. Like many, my journey of faith has been a roller coaster. At times I'm all in. Other times I've raged at the sky. In recent years I've come full circle back to my chosen religion, Catholicism in Christianity. I like the traditional way of the mass and the traditional music. I'm a bit old school this way. I also realize and appreciate that not everyone agrees on religion. That's ok. To help you determine or re-affirm what you do and don't believe, consider the self-reflections below.

### ***Inward Focus***

- Ask yourself what you're looking for in a belief system
- Think about what you've liked about faith you've seen in other people
- Think about what you haven't appreciated from a religious belief system
- Read sacred texts like the Bible, Quran, Torah, Bhagavad Gita, etc. to learn more

### ***Outward Focus***

- Research and visit houses of worship in your area to get a feel for the services and environment
- Attend services of all kinds so you can better compare the messages and those who delivered them
- Call someone you know that has strong faith and that you feel comfortable asking what they believe, why, and how they came to their conclusions



Kevin Pannell is the author of ***The Stability Equation: 7 Pillars for a More Balanced Life***. This ***7 Pillars Field Guide*** distills the key, actionable tools, and techniques from The Stability Equation into one-page summaries of each of the seven pillars: ownership, mindfulness, movement, boundaries, connection, sleep, and faith. If you need quick answers and tools to help you calm an anxious mind, start a regular exercise program, develop your faith, and more, read this book and act today!

In addition to being a published author, Kevin Pannell is an award-winning Program and Project Management leader with over 25 years of professional experience in military medicine, public safety response, and healthcare information technology strategic planning.

Kevin lives in Blacksburg, Virginia, with his wife, three sons, and two dogs. Kevin trains in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and enjoys regular workouts in his garage gym and the mountains of Southwest Virginia.