



Becoming **AntiFragile**

LEARNING TO THRIVE IN THE DECADE OF DISRUPTION

Contents

1. LEARNING TO THRIVE
2. THE DECADE OF DISRUPTION
3. WHAT'S MAKING US FRAGILE
4. BEYOND RESILIENCE
5. ASSESSING ANTIFRAGILITY
6. BECOMING ANTIFRAGILE

Can We Learn To Thrive Through Disruption and Uncertainty?

The start of this decade has seen unprecedented levels of disruption across the globe.

Leading scientists are suggesting that we face the most significant geopolitical, environmental, social, and economic challenges in human history, the future is looking more uncertain than ever, and this is impacting leaders, teams and workplaces everywhere.

We are in urgent need of more adaptive, creative, and resilient ways to thrive.

Through my 30+ years of experience as a business leader, my doctoral research, and my professional work with hundreds of leaders across business, government, NGOs, and education, I see that leaders need help to:

- move beyond just 'getting through'
- understand how they are making themselves fragile
- improve rather than lose through disruption, challenge, and change

And research tells us this too.

With disruption stretching into the foreseeable future, studies* have found that only 51% of leaders feel confident in their leadership abilities right now. And only 42% of their people would agree with this assessment.

Becoming AntiFragile will help you understand how you can navigate uncertainty and learn to thrive through disruption, challenge and change.

Read more to find out how.



*Leaders Lab, Australian Workplace Report 2020

Welcome to the Decade of Disruption

As we begin a new decade, our environment is becoming more complex, more uncertain, and more affected by 'wicked problems' than ever before.

Climate change, scarcity of resources, and the rise of nationalism in global political and economic dynamics are having widespread impacts on the way we live and relate to each other.

At the same time, the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought a new complexity to the workplace, with the opportunities of artificial intelligence and an increasingly diverse workforce who often work remotely.

And in our personal lives, we are experiencing and responding to changing family structures, more working parents, an ageing population, and technology that allows us to be constantly connected – often in all the wrong ways.

Add to this the impact of COVID-19 and now more than ever, we need to understand how to thrive through this disruption, challenge, and change. We need to let go of old ways of being, doing, and leading based on the belief that we can control and predict what's coming.

We need to accept the inevitability of change, stop fighting it, and use it to leverage opportunity, growth, and development by asking, *How can we be better coming out of this than we were coming in?*

The thinking that got us here isn't going to see us through what lies ahead. We need to embrace the unknown, the uncertain, the unexpected, the unplanned, and the unwanted that life throws at us.

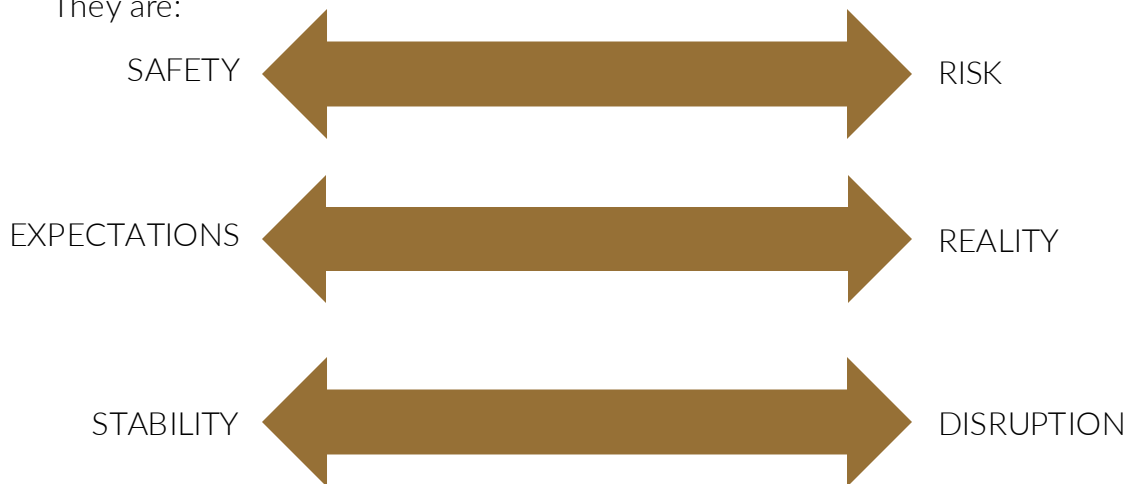
As leaders we need to be able to navigate the unclear and the unknown, to do things without necessarily understanding them, and to do them well. We need to face what we can't predict, and to lean into disruption, challenge, and change.

We need to become **AntiFragile**

Mind the Fragility Gaps

Three gaps expose our fragility and, unless we take action, will only get bigger in the future.

They are:



Safety vs risk: from a survival perspective, playing it safe works. But in a context that requires us to take intelligent risk to meet the challenges and leverage the opportunities we are facing, it no longer serves us.

Can you stretch your 'zone of safety'?

Expectation vs reality: much of the fragility we create and the pain we suffer comes from the gap between our expectations – what we believe the world 'should' look like – and the reality we experience day to day.

Can you accept the reality you are facing?

Stability vs disruption: in a VUCA world, traditional approaches to leadership, strategy, and change just don't work as they assume a level of stability that requires data, analysis, and plans to solve problems and realize opportunities; a level of stability that simply doesn't exist.

Can you embrace instability and disruption to generate new possibilities?

More than Resilience

Whether we feel fragile or AntiFragile is the result of the interaction between the level of disruption we perceive in our world and our capacity to thrive through it.

Disruption is a disturbance that creates uncertainty, pressure, and challenge because of its impact on our context, situation or environment.

The disruption may be positive (a promotion, a new relationship, a new baby) or negative (job loss, ill-health, loss of relationship or loved-one) .

Thriving reflects the levels of confidence, motivation, and support we perceive we have available to deal with disruption in our life.

Thriving is not a static state but rather something that emerges in response to our situation and context; it is natural therefore that it will ebb and flow.

When we are fragile, we *cannot cope* with the level of disruption in our environment. When we are robust, we are resilient and *can withstand* the level of disruption in our environment. As we become AntiFragile, we *learn to 'be better'* and improve through our experiences of disruption in our environment.

And so AntiFragile exists on a continuum from fragile through robustness to AntiFragile. The larger the gap between what is being asked of us from the disruption and what we perceive we have to give, the more fragile we are likely to feel.



FRAGILE

ROBUST

ANTIFRAGILE

By first reducing and removing fragility and then learning to embrace challenging experiences as learning opportunities, we can become more AntiFragile. This result is less stress and anxiety, more energy and clarity, and higher 'performance' across all areas of life.

So how are you doing?

How are you coping with the levels of disruption, challenge and change in your life?

Let's check in.

Thinking back on your experiences at work over the last week, how often has each of the following occurred?

0 = never, 5 = half the time, 10 = all the time

YOUR EXPERIENCE	SCORE
1. I experienced high levels of uncertainty	
2. I experienced high levels of change	
3. I experienced high levels of challenge	
4. I felt able to manage the level of uncertainty in my life	
5. I was motivated to manage the amount of change in my life	
6. I had the support I need to manage the level of challenge in my life	

Your answers to questions 1,2 and 3 are a rough indicator of the level of disruption you are currently experiencing. This is your **DISRUPTION** score.

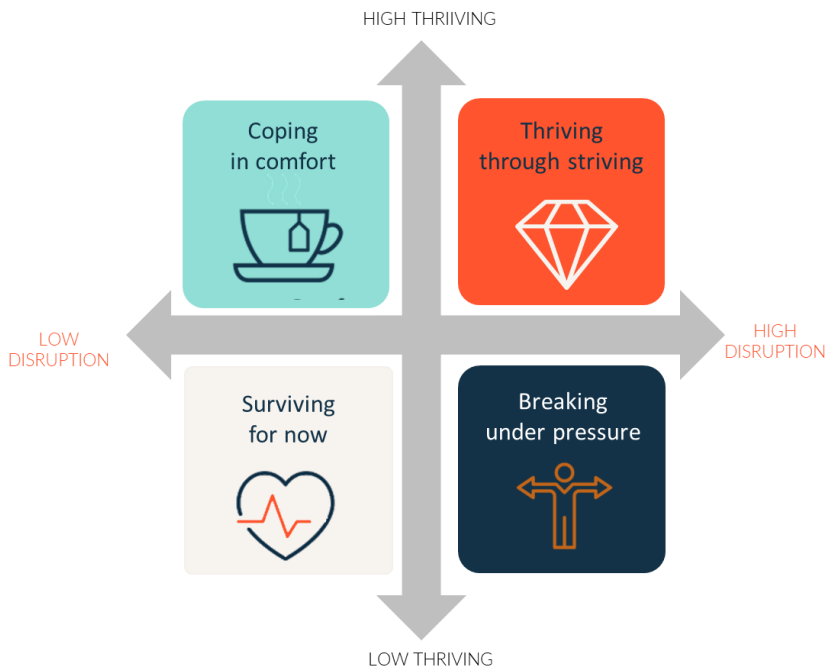
Your answers to questions 4,5 and 6 provide some insight into your current levels of confidence, motivation and support to deal with the level of disruption. This is your **THRIVING** score.

The Disruption and Thriving scores are out of a maximum of 30, with scores above 21 considered High, from 11-20 Medium and 10 or under, Low.

What are your levels of THRIVING and DISRUPTION?

Assessing your AntiFragility

Becoming AntiFragile doesn't happen in isolation. It is a dynamic process that results from the relationship between disruption in our context and our confidence, motivation and support to thrive through it. Mapping our levels of disruption and thriving can help us assess the fragility risks and AntiFragile opportunities we face.



If disruption is low and we have low levels of thriving, our fragility may not be tested or exposed. We are **Surviving for now** but will struggle when disruption increases.



If disruption is high and our confidence, motivation and perceived levels of support are low, our fragility is exposed; we are at risk of **Breaking under pressure**.

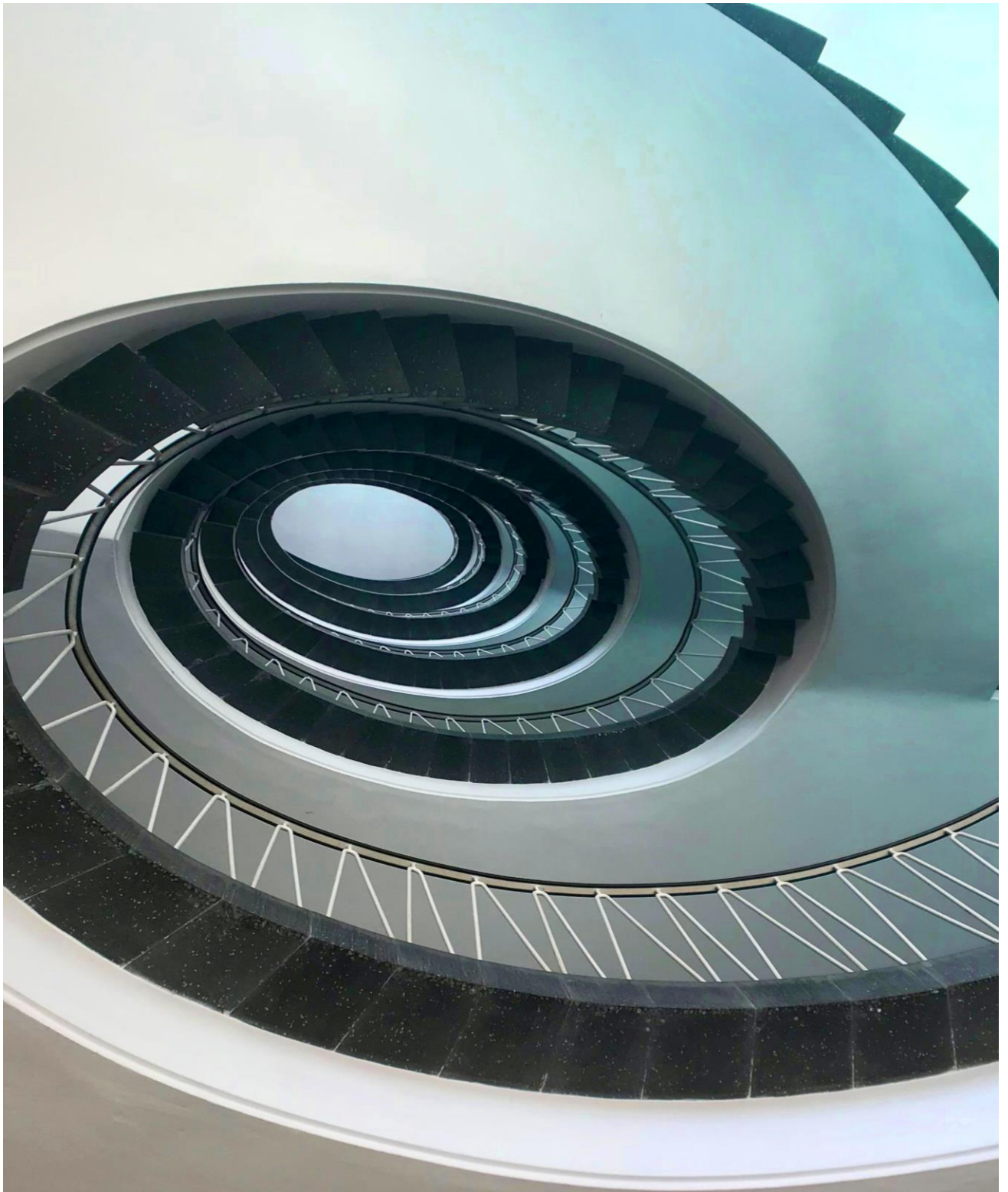


If we have higher levels of thriving and are in a relatively stable environment where disruption is low, we are **Coping in Comfort**. The risk here is that we become stagnant through a lack of stimulation and challenge.



As we accept that disruption, challenge and change are inevitable, we learn and gain from our experiences of uncertainty. We are **Becoming AntiFragile** as we **Thrive through striving**.

What insight does the AntiFragile Map provide for you?



Old ways of leading, thinking, and strategizing,
simply cannot work in this intense uncertainty.”

Margaret Wheatly

Becoming AntiFragile

So how can we Become AntiFragile?

The challenge is that in a volatile, complex environment, rules are too narrow and prescriptive to work effectively.. Instead, we need heuristics – practical guiding principles that help us solve problems and learn more about ourselves and others.

I have designed the ROBUST Principles as guiding heuristics to support leaders in Becoming AntiFragile. Not rigid or prescriptive, they are flexible and expansive, meet the demands of a complex and changing environment and reveal a clear pathway forward in your Becoming AntiFragile journey.



R

Recruit the Brain

Use the latest evidence from neuroscience to harness the capacity and hack the short-circuits of your brain.

O

Operate in Reality

Stop emotional leakage and self-sabotage through mindfulness and self-coaching.

B

Break the Negative

Remove what doesn't work and leverage what does to be effective and productive through disruption and change.

U

Use Intelligent Risk

Experiment with experience, discover optionality and champion innovation to meet challenge and maximise opportunities.

S

Seek Collective Wisdom

Share the load, follow the energy and seek out healthy conflict to make purposeful progress.

T

Tackle the Infinite Game

Identify 'Why', hunt for what you treasure and play for long term outcomes rather than rewarding ego.



The essence of Becoming AntiFragile
is being prepared for what we cannot predict.

Dr Paige Williams

Are you ready to begin Becoming AntiFragile?

We live in a world where disruption and uncertainty are part of our daily experience. Becoming AntiFragile means that we accept this and use it to support learning, spark creativity and foster growth and development.

Rather than wasting time, effort and energy trying to resist reality, leaders who are Becoming AntiFragile use the ROBUST principles to generate AntiFragile Energy, foster AntiFragile Attitudes and adopt an AntiFragile Mindset that benefit themselves, their team and their workplace.

These leaders accept that this is not a tick-box option, but an ongoing journey as their context changes and the challenges and opportunities they face shift and move. They understand that there is always the opportunity to become more AntiFragile – or more fragile.

These leaders learn to love adventure, risk, and the unknown. To leverage randomness and chaos rather than hide from them. To live, love, and grow through the unseen, the opaque, and the inexplicable. To lean into uncertainty, grow through challenge and change, and learn to thrive in this Decade of Disruption.

The good news is that Becoming AntiFragile doesn't have to be difficult, expensive or time-consuming. By using the ROBUST Principles, small shifts in mindsets, attitudes and daily practices can have a big impact on your levels of AntiFragility.

This is why my evidence-based **Becoming AntiFragile Toolkit** focuses on actions that you can easily integrate into your everyday life to foster AntiFragility and build your confidence and motivation to navigate disruption and uncertainty.

If you'd like to talk about how I can help you, your leaders or your organization with Becoming AntiFragile [simply click here to arrange a time for us to talk.](#)

dr. paige



DR. PAIGE WILLIAMS is a speaker, author, and PhD in Organizational Behaviour.

Paige believes that leadership is the most potent leverage point in any system – team, family or workplace – to create positive change. And that we each have a capacity to lead, exceptionally, that we are yet to realise.

Her ambition is bold: to teach, inspire and encourage you to have the confidence, clarity and commitment to be the exceptional leader the world needs you to be.

Using a potent blend of neuroscience, psychology and her own extensive international business leadership experience, Paige helps leaders across business, government, NGOs, and education to lead themselves, their people and the systems they work in, exceptionally.

The results are dramatic and measurable.

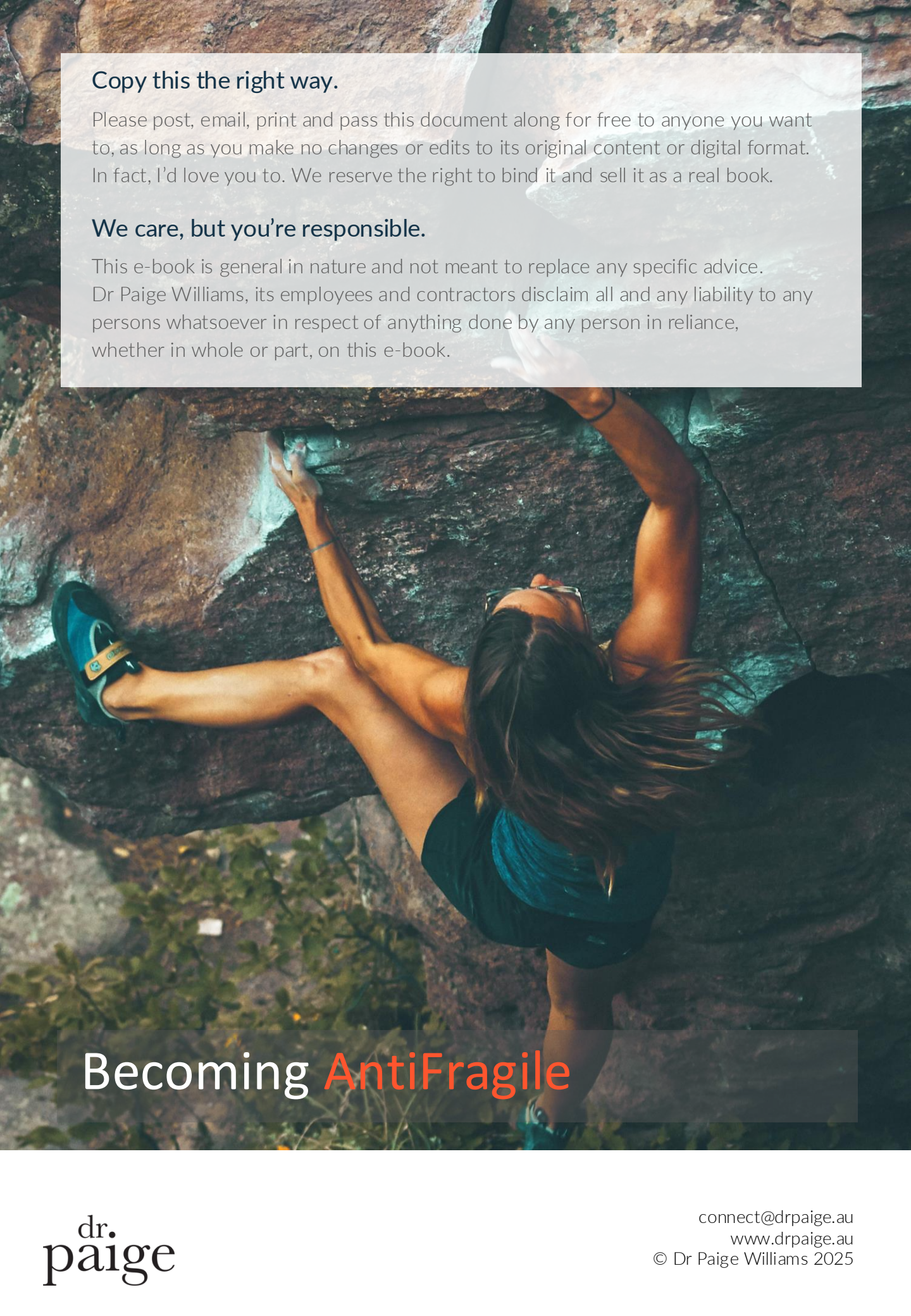
An Honorary Fellow of the Centre for Wellbeing Science and an Associate of Melbourne Business School, Paige is known as a leadership and culture expert. The potent combination of real-life leadership experience and deep academic knowledge fuels her superpower of translating complex ideas and academic research to make them real, relevant, and relatable to the work that people do every day.

Paige is the author of five books on leading well in modern times. She is obsessed with one question above all others: 'What does good look like?' and suggests that answering this question requires a multifaceted, systems view of leadership in the 21st century.

In her latest book, ***The Leaders Ecosystem***, she provides nine critical essays and insights that enable a contemporary leader to meet the challenges and leverage the opportunities of our time.

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