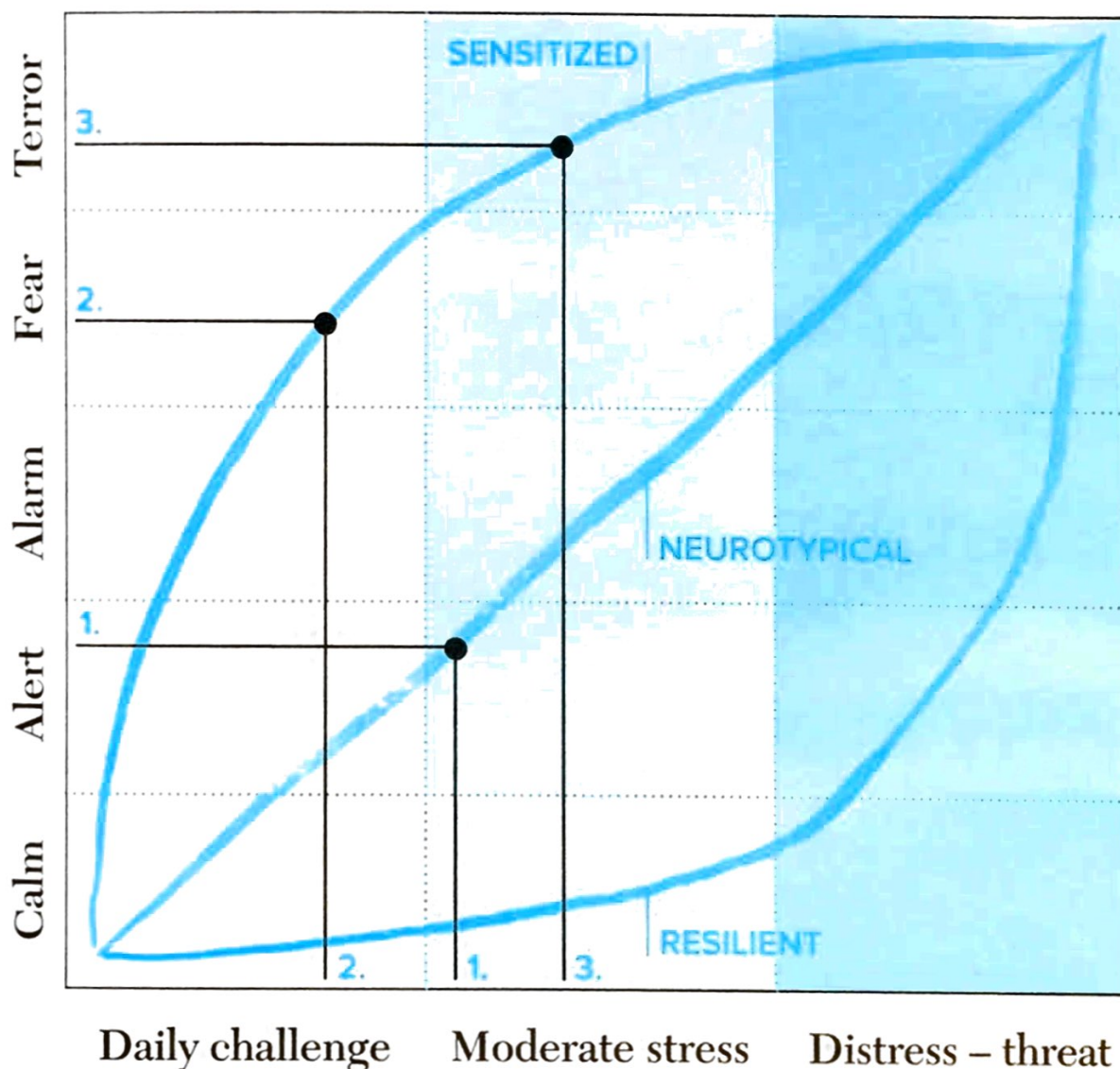


Figure 5

## STATE-REACTIVITY CURVE



When a challenge or stressor occurs, it will push us out of balance, and an internal stress response will be activated to get us back in balance. With no significant stressors—no internal needs (hunger, thirst, etc.) unmet and no external complexity or threat—we will be in a state of calm. As challenges and stress increase, our internal state will shift, from alert to terror (see Figure 6).

In someone with *neurotypical* stress-response systems, there is a linear relationship between the degree of stress and the shift in internal state (straight diagonal line). For example, in the face of a moderate stressor (1), a proportional activation will put the individual in an active alert state. If an individual has a *sensitized* stress response (top curve) caused by their history of trauma, even the most basic daily challenges (2) will induce a state of fear. Someone with a sensitized stress response (3) will respond to even moderate stress with a terror response. This overreactivity contributes to their emotional, behavioral, and physical health problems.