

Resilience:
Taking responsibility for our learning at THS.
Issue 2.

Resilience is the ability to steer through serious life challenges and find ways to bounce back and to thrive. We are born with the capacity for resilience, but resilience is not something we have or do not have. We work on it throughout our lives and we need to start as early as possible. Parents are the most important people to help build their children's resilience. Children learn a lot by watching their parents and when parents cope well with everyday stress, they are showing their children how to do the same.

Why is it important to develop resilience?

Resilience makes a big difference in people's lives. People who respond to hardships with resilience are:

- healthier and live longer
- happier in their relationships
- more successful in school and work
- less likely to get depressed or suffer from anxiety

What builds resilience?

Many of the things that support healthy development in young children also help build their resilience. These things include:

- a secure bond with a caring adult
- relationships with positive role models
- opportunities to learn skills
- opportunities to participate in meaningful activities

Review of Ban the Boss Day 2nd October 2015:

The day was a worthwhile experience in developing students' independence and resilience. For this day the teacher took the role as a facilitator to provide students with resource materials and opportunities to test out their learning without solely relying on the teacher to impart knowledge.

The concept was similar to the brain, book, buddy, boss resource featured in the last resilience newsletter. The only real difference to this notion was that the students do not need to ask the 'boss', they will be encouraged to seek answers and overcome problems they encounter by using available resources and peers. During the lessons on this day self and peer editing before work was handed in was encouraged, if a student was stuck they were to look at what resources were available in the classroom to help, ask their peers and link ideas from anything previously learnt.

Below are some teacher accounts from Ban the Boss day:

In a Year 8 German lesson, students were presented with a German Trip Advisor review for a theme park. Without any dictionaries they had to answer 4 comprehension questions using their previous knowledge and looking for other clues such as cognates. They then had to create a document on the computer that would promote their own theme park to German tourists. Many students decided to use the skills learnt in recent IT lessons to produce a web page. (Mrs Freeman)

In my RS Year eight classes students made reflection bracelets that they designed and created themselves from a selection of beads. Each of the beads were symbolic of things that the student liked or wanted to think about. The students had learnt about Christian prayer beads or rosaries and Islamic prayer mats as tools for reflection or concentration.

(Mrs Truman)

A pupil's perspective:

I loved ban the boss day. Not only did it improve my confidence but it has enabled me to become an independent learner. Last year ban the boss day was a complete success and it allowed the students to find things out for themselves and gain a bit of resilience in preparation for sixth form. I am looking forward to ban the boss day this year!

(Eddie Lamb, Year 11)

Ban the Boss Day was a joy to participate in. I enjoyed the task of finding information without the help of my teachers. It gave me the opportunity to think more for myself and seek answers from my classmates and not give up or go to the teacher as the first port of call like usual. The 2015 Ban the Boss Day was an absolute success; pupils all around the school expressed their satisfaction at learning in an independent and rewarding manner.

(Joel Childs, Year 11)



Six things parents, guardians and teachers can do to raise resilient children

Role Modelling:

- In the end what will matter most is not what we have said or taught, but what we have modelled.
- Letting children see us “hanging in there” when confronted by problems and challenges and “bouncing back” from emotional discomfort and failure will help them to do likewise.
- Talk in a way that lets children respond and not resist. Behave in a way that allows children to accept and not defend.

Talk Straight:

- If children deserve anything, they deserve the truth. The truth must be delivered without the intent to harm. Never be brutal or harsh and remember there is a place for tact.
- Tact is honesty that helps more than it hurts, but it is honesty never-the-less.

Informative Praise:

- Let praise be specific and focused. Avoid “one size fits all” praise e.g., good boy, good girl, you’re fantastic. Instead, refer to the skills and/or qualities used to achieve the praise-worthy outcome.
- Think of praise (and attention) as you would food. No child should starve from a lack of it, just as no child should become obese from too much.

High Expectations:

- Expectation is a powerful motivator. Expecting children to face their fears and requiring them to meet challenges with resolve and commitment, is to honour their strength of character.
- We insult our children by believing the only way we can motivate them is to make things fun. Children can labour in the pursuit of noble causes. They can toil to reach a higher goal.

Creating Discomfort:

- To elevate the self-esteem of children let them work on their strengths. To improve their resilience and character, urge them to work on their weaknesses.
- A regular part of growing up is facing challenges that require considerable effort and unavoidable failure as the steps to success.
- Ask for courage and point out that failure is not because of who they are, but because of what they are or are not doing.

No False Rescues

- By falsely rescuing children from the unpleasant feelings created by mistakes and failure we have taught them to be fearful of both.
- Children can learn to see failure and disappointment in a positive light. They both buckle our knees but in so doing, allow us to jump to even greater heights.
- By not accepting less from children we show faith in their ability to over.

Please also visit the website for more school news and ways to support children to become more resilient learners. The next edition of the resilience newsletter will be published at the end of the Summer term.

Dale Timbers & Natalie Freeman.