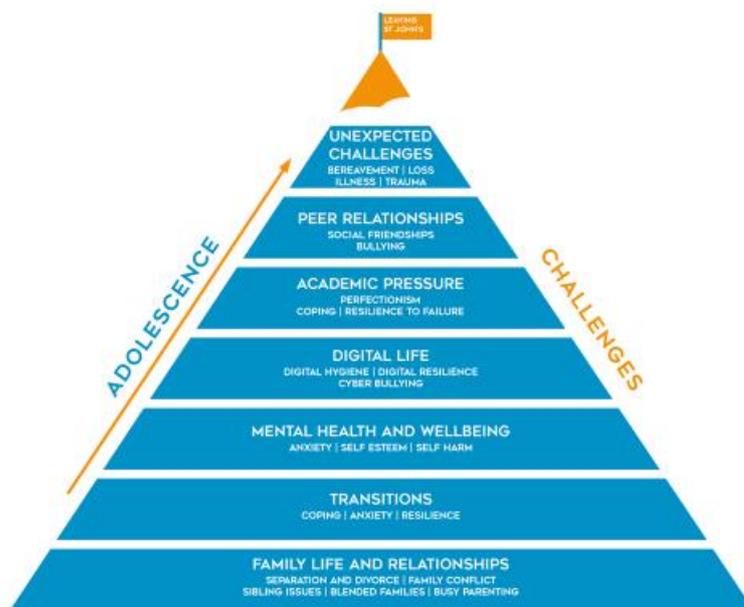


Hello Mums, Dads and carers,

Here are the promised notes relating to my talk on resilience earlier this week. I do hope you found the talk useful. If you did, I would greatly appreciate it, if you let others' know by leaving a review [online](#).

We started the talk by looking at the long view – how will our children feel when they are adults? What is our role in helping them navigate the expected and unexpected challenges that lie ahead on that metaphorical mountain? How can we equip them to be able to cope with those? Resilience is one of the key characteristics that we can cultivate in our children that may help them navigate through the journey ahead successfully. It is also (we noted), a prized characteristic in terms of future employability. The World Education Forum (2016) referred specifically to emotional and digital resilience as key attributes in future employees.



We discussed the various section of that triangle but chatted in depth about the importance of family life and relationships in boosting and sustaining resilience. Alongside the challenges, our teens have to navigate adolescence and the inherent difficulties that this involves. Plus, technically, it spans 9-24 years, so we are in it for the long haul (!).

We talked about the link between **resilience and potential**. The hallmarks of potential being curiosity and seeking out new experiences, insight and being able to make sense of information, engagement (using emotion and logic to communicate a vision to people, **determination and the ability to overcome challenges and bounce** back plus optimism.

The link between resilience and character are interesting too: *interpersonal strengths* like altruism, enabling harmonious relationships with other people; *Intrapersonal strengths* like **grit and self-control that enable achievement**. *Intellectual strengths* like **curiosity, flexible & critical thinking**.

As we discussed, you can 'hear' what resilience is all about in this material – curiosity, creative, critical and flexible thinking, the ability to overcome and bounce back from challenges plus being able to develop good relationships with others.

Can you remember the bigger pictures statistics that we referred to in the talk? That are important to consider when looking holistically in terms of what might threaten girls' resilience. A few of the stats to jog your memory:

- Among 17-19 year olds nationally, **girls are more than twice as likely** to have an MHD than boys;
- **Anxiety** is one of the key mental health disorders;

- Girls **worry** more than boys and have **lower self-esteem**;
- Fifth of 14-year-old girls in UK 'have self-harmed';
- **Teen boys twice as likely to kill themselves as girls.**
- A quarter of girls are **depressed at age 14.** (UCL and the University of Liverpool).
- **Parental mental health** highly correlated to child's.

You will recall I made the point, that if you ever see signs of early “weeds” of poor mental health in your children, go and see the GP. Here is the list that I made (those topics that are asterisked have a podcast to accompany them: www.drkathyweston.com/podcast)

Weeds: *Anxiety that interferes with normal activities, eating issues (refusing to eat/dieting), *perfectionism, persistent behavioural issues, persistent aggressive/violent behaviour, self-harming behaviours.

What do we need to know about resilience? Let's start with the basics. High self-esteem predicts resilience, so by focusing on that within family life, you can't go wrong. Remember what I said about parenting being all about helping that little sense of self (present in your child) develop. To be secure and feel happy in oneself, children and even adults need a sense of their own personal story as a successful one. It is in this sense that resilience is also a proactive process (we choose how the story of our lives plays out to some extent, we choose our responses and actions). We are the authors. Where identity is rocked through grief, trauma, overwhelming challenges and difficulties, remember in supporting your children, that the self will always try and recalibrate. By always attuning to your child, what makes them tick, what makes them happy, who makes them feel good about themselves and increasing opportunities to surround themselves by such people and activities, children are more likely to thrive.

At home, we have the power to shape: the quality of our relationship with our child, our parenting style; their self-esteem and levels of self-confidence; sleep hygiene, relationship to digital technology and ensuring they have access to help and guidance.

High self-esteem predicts resilience



Recipe for a Positive Sense of Self



- ✓ A sense of 'continuity over time;'
- ✓ Experience of oneself as **distinct from others**;
- ✓ Basic human need to 'belong' to a **social group: where do we 'fit in'?**
- ✓ Identity is never unilateral, **we need interaction and feedback from others.**

Family life: we talked about how to cultivate resilience (family life being the soil in which the plant can grow). We know that children who feel secure also demonstrate greater resilience later in life. They also: tend to show more motivation to learn and have better academic outcomes; display less negative emotion as they grow and are more socially competent, popular and resilient. Parents' self-efficacy and warmth in parenting are: the most powerful predictors of children's health, academic, social and emotional outcomes.

Everyday 'Checking in' & 'charging up'



As a family, try and model resilient thinking: What is the worst that can happen? What can I learn from this? How can I use this experience to grow?

If your child experiences "gremlin thoughts" you need to help them see those as external to them. Nudging and coaching them towards seeking evidence for their assertion, rather than simply soothing them.

Gremlin thoughts might be:



Gremlin thoughts – does
your teen have them?



I am going to mess up
I am rubbish at this
I am going to fail
I can't cope
I hate myself
I am stupid
I am so ugly.

Teach your child to be kind to themselves. If they can be compassionate towards others, then they should be able to extend the same kindness to themselves.

We talked about anxiety as a gremlin (when it is overwhelming and inhibits or stops your child from participating in normal life and activities that they enjoy). If this is an issue of concern to you, do listen to my interview on the topic with Dr Cathy Creswell and download the accompanying notes www.drkathyweston.com/podcast

Anxiety the gremlin

- ✓ Don't be afraid to talk about fears and worries.
- ✓ Ask nice, open questions...
- ✓ Check you have understood.
- ✓ Help them understand that *unhelpful thoughts are making them anxious.*
- ✓ **'COACH rather than SOOTHE'**
- ✓ Praise how far they have come!
- ✓ Model how YOU manage it.



Remember we talked about the role of play, courageous games and activities in family life and nudge them into things that may not necessarily be comfortable, but that can help them a chance to experience themselves as competent. If you have a 15 year old now, remember in 3 years' time, they will be off to uni or college! Stop doing things for them! Let them learn the practical skills they need and get equipped mentally for the journey ahead.

Infuse your home with gratitude and watch your language. Be particularly mindful of talking about body image in positive ways. Model being kind to yourself and valuing your physical resilience.

We know that **factors that may threaten children and young people's resilience** are: parents' inability to resolve conflict; lack of stability and consistency in parenting; lack of warmth and understanding from carers; lack of encouragement; poor supervision and monitoring; access to poor role-models and access to age-inappropriate apps.

We talked about **digital hygiene and resilience** and the need for parents to talk to their children about how they engage with the online world. We talked about the worrying trends in girls in particular focusing on their body image and being dependent on "likes" and patterns in teen boys' consumption of pornography.

Digital hygiene



- Teaching them **how to navigate** the digital world safely...
- Develop their **critical thinking skills**
- Teach them to be **mindful of their "digital tattoo"**

All families should have a kind of code of conduct around use of digital devices. Children and teens will enjoy contributing to this conversation:

Your digital values



Which **digital values** underpin your family life?

In terms of **academic resilience**, remember to normalise mistakes as part and parcel of family life, praise them effectively (valuing their effort rather than their performance) and to tell them that you are absolutely in it together! Parents have a powerful role to play in helping and supporting their child with their learning. Caring, taking an interest, reading to them, with them, talking about books, politics, social issues and sharing within family life, within “family talk,” really matters. We know that children who come from these homes, that have a positive learning environment, parents who remain warm and authoritative, do better across the board.

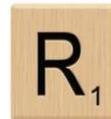
Summary: building resilience

- ✓ Praise them for positive behaviour, attitude and approaches.
- ✓ Create opportunities for them to receive **feedback**
- ✓ Help them **chart own progress**
- ✓ Encourage resilient thinking.
- ✓ Encourage gratitude and pro-social behaviour.



The 10 Rs of Resilience

1. Relationships
2. Respect
3. Recognition
4. Role modelling
5. Retrospection
6. Risk-taking
7. Reflection
8. Reframing
9. Recalibration
10. Remembering to laugh.



I told you that everything related to resilience, worth knowing, begins with R! See the reminder above and good luck implementing some of these evidence-based tips.

If you would like to receive regular, evidence-based parenting tips as you continue on your parenting journey, here are some options for you:

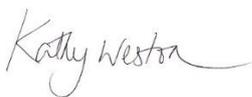
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With my very best wishes,



Dr Kathy Weston