

Creating Resilient Families

Parenting Strategies for Raising Real People

Parenting the “ Click and Go” Generation

The current generation of young people are the “click and go” generation- the baby boomlets. The generation who were born with a mouse in their hands.

They are different from past generations in several important ways that impacts on their families. They have shorter attention spans, are more anxious, have a greater reliance on external sources of stimulation and happiness and expect immediate outcomes. They have grown up in a world of stranger danger that has taught them to be wary of strange adults and to critique the world. This leads them to question authority. Where previous generations had role models, the click and go's have only their parents and themselves

Their attitude towards school is that they want good marks but don't want to be seen to be working too hard. They often cultivate an image of the “cool fool.” They will live at home for longer and save money (often yours) in order to finance text messaging and mobile phones.

Their trust in work is less and they don't believe adults who suggest they put in the hard yards now and it will pay off later. The words “ what's in it for me right now” could almost be a motto for the Click and Go's.

Motivating and parenting the Click and Go generation can be tough work. Not only do we need to figure out ways for them to build success and self-esteem away from the eyes of their friends, we need to find some immediate gain for them.

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Why is it all so different?

The world has changed dramatically and so the skills that are needed for success have changed.

Consider these points:
***70% of the jobs that will exist in 2020 do not exist today**
*** knowledge now doubles every 3 years, by 2020 it will double every 76 days!**
***3 trends effecting success are: abundance, automation and the shift of economic power to Asia.**

It is the skills of negotiation, problem solving, lateral thinking and emotional intelligence that predict young people's ability to be successful.

Golden Rules for parenting

1. Don't do anything for them they can do for themselves
2. Never believe anything they say to you in an argument
3. Never forget that any child has more energy to put into any battle than any adult does!

Creating a resilient family

Resilience is the happy knack of being able to bungee jump through the pitfalls of life. When tough things happen, resilience gives us the ability to rise above adversity and carry on. Resilience applies to people, families and organizations.

Importantly it also applies to learning. Resilient learners are those who don't give up when they get stuck, they persist in the face of obstacles.

Characteristics of resilient families

1. Spontaneity and Curiosity

Resilient families have adults who model that life is worth living, that success is worth aiming for. There is one reliable way for young people to develop a positive sense of themselves and that is for them to live around adults who enjoy their own lives.

2. People are loved for their differences

Children take on different roles according to their birth order. Don't expect that what works in parenting the eldest will work for the next.

3. It is clear who is in charge

Families do not work well as democracies- they work best as benevolent dictatorships. You consult a lot and then make a decision. No parent wins all the time but even so, it is important that young people feel their parents are in charge of the family and are able to protect. It is NOT enough to just be a friend to your child.

Young people are protected when they have a diversity of friendship groups. For this reason it is desirable during their childhood to try to have them mix with a few different groups of friends.

5. Involve other adults

Resilient families also seem to be able to share the task of parenting more broadly. Involving trustworthy adults in your child's life will help them and you.

6. Consistency

Resilient families have consistently high expectations for themselves and hold key values about life and the way they live it. Resilient families especially avoid harsh and inconsistent discipline methods that often just teach children to be tough and to rely on and trust no one.

Rules are useful but relationships are essential.

7. Maintain rituals

Resilient families take time out from the rush of life to celebrate life, anniversaries and birthdays.

8. Teach the skills of self-esteem

This goes beyond praise and encouragement to asking young people how they achieve the things that they do. Getting them to explain in their own words how they succeeded helps them to see their own strengths.

9. Know how to argue

Parenting is a 28-year long debating competition! The average parent makes 250 requests of the average child every day and the average child goes along with two thirds of those requests.

10. Be reliably unpredictable

Parents in resilient families are prepared to do the unexpected.

They know that NOTHING WORKS ALL THE TIME! So they try to do things that are fun and help them not to take problems too seriously.

For more information see Andrew's books "Tricky Kids", "Raising Real People" and "Help Your Child Succeed at School"

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