



Families Connect  
with  
Dr. Robert Brooks

Nurturing Resilience in Ourselves  
and our  
Children and Teens During  
Challenging Times

February 1, 2022

# Nurturing resilience

A preliminary comment: As we all know these have been and continue to be challenging times and if we are to help our children and adolescents to be more hopeful and resilient, it's important that we have realistic expectations for ourselves and **practice self-compassion**



# Nurturing resilience

A very brief definition of resilience: the capacity to **cope effectively** with adversity

A focus on resilience, while always of importance, has taken on even greater significance in light of all that has transpired since March, 2020— anxiety, depression, and mental health issues at all ages are on the rise



# Nurturing resilience

What is a basic foundation for kids to become resilient? The significance of what the late psychologist Julius Segal called a “**charismatic adult,**” an adult from whom children “gather strength”



# Nurturing resilience

I am often asked:

Do we as adults need “charismatic adults” in our lives?

Can we help our children (others) be resilient if we don't feel very resilient ourselves?

What can I say and do to be a charismatic adult in the lives of my children (others)?



# Nurturing resilience

To appreciate the **importance of empathy** in understanding and responding to our children (others):  
Psychologist Daniel Goleman views empathy as a basic component of both emotional and social intelligence

The following questions can serve to help us to become more empathic with our children (others):



# Nurturing resilience

What words do I hope my children (others) use to describe me?

What do I *intentionally* say and do on a regular basis so they are likely to use the words to describe me that I hope they would use?

What words do I think they would use and are they similar to the words I hope they would use?



# Nurturing resilience

Would I want anyone to say or do to me what I have just said or done with my children (others)?

Am I validating and not minimizing or dismissing any of my children's (other's) questions or concerns?





# Nurturing resilience

A word of caution: It is much more challenging to be empathic with our children (others) when we are upset, disappointed, or angry with them



# Nurturing resilience

To reinforce a sense of “**personal control**” that involves strengthening problem-solving and decision-making skills in ourselves and our children, which helps them to feel a sense of ownership when dealing with what is occurring in their lives, including any challenges and setbacks they may experience



# Nurturing resilience

To identify, reinforce, and honor our children's **passions and “islands of competence”**: this does not imply running away from or avoiding any problems they may have but rather not losing sight of the beauty and strengths of our children and loving them unconditionally



# Nurturing resilience

To engage in two forms of **gratitude**:

To consider the things for which we and our family are grateful

To express gratitude towards those who have been a source of strength for us and our families



# Nurturing resilience

To provide opportunities for our children and our families to engage in **“contributory” or “charitable” activities**, which helps to reinforce a basic component of resilience, namely, a sense of purpose or meaning—such activities also promote compassion and caring for others



# Nurturing resilience

To **create indelible memories** that our children will take with them for the rest of their lives: it's important to appreciate that some of these memories may be rooted in seemingly small gestures or micro-moments on our part

