

# Building Confident Kids

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**National Safe Schools Framework**  
All Australian schools are safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

**Guiding Principles: Australian Schools**

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**Smart**

Effective school organisation | Data driven | Sustainability | Evidence-informed practice | School plans, policies and procedures | Respectful and caring school communities | Positive approaches to technologies | Effective teacher practices | An evident curriculum | Partnerships with parents and community | Whole-school approaches | Accessibility | Resources | Research | Self-reflection

**SAFE SCHOOLS HUB**

The Framework is supported by research from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. [www.safeandschools.gov.au](http://www.safeandschools.gov.au)

DEECD (Victoria) commissioned training in the Bounce Back! program for teachers & principals from 46 bushfire-affected schools as part their Bushfire Psycho-social Recovery Project



**Friendly Kids**  
**Friendly Classrooms**

**Robin Winkler Award for Excellence in Applied Community Psychology (1991) Australian Psychological Society**

**eight ways at once**  
Multiple Intelligences + Revised Bloom's Taxonomy = 200 Differentiated Classroom Strategies  
Helen McGrath and Tom Hobbs

**Eight Ways at Once (2 books)**

**Best Australian Teaching Resource (2011) Australian Educational Publishers Association**

**Revised Edition (2011)**

Cheryl Critchley and Dr Helen McGrath

# WHY DID THEY DO IT?

**INSIDE THE MINDS OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST UNLIKELY KILLERS**

Foreword by The Hon Alastair Nicholson, AO, RFD, QC  
Former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia

Parenting is very rewarding & satisfying but it can also be very challenging!

## Confident Children have:

1. Coping skills and resilience
2. A Positivity Mindset
3. Self-respect
4. Social knowledge & social-emotional skills
5. A 'Growth Mindset' and 'Grit'
6. Knowledge of their strengths

## Teaching a Value or Skill to your Children

- State it or teach it repeatedly but in a variety of ways
- Highlight it in other people's behaviour
- Give positive (and specific) feedback to your child when they use it
- Model it
- Nurture your own personal relationships. These become 'models' for your child

## Coping skills and resilience

Life is like a roller coaster. It has its ups and downs. But it's your choice to scream or enjoy the ride.



## LIVING IN THE AGE OF ENTITLEMENT

"Chronicles the obsession that many Americans have with, well, themselves ... thinking themselves entitled to things they haven't earned. It puts them at a terrible disadvantage in a global marketplace that is, all the time, getting more competitive." —San Francisco Chronicle

## The Narcissism Epidemic

JEAN M. TWENGE, PH.D.  
AUTHOR OF GENERATION ME  
and W. KEITH CAMPBELL, PH.D.

WITH A NEW FOREWORD BY THE AUTHORS

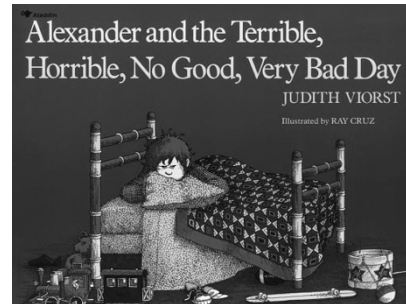
Research studies have identified a trend towards higher levels of narcissism and lower levels of empathy & resilience in young people

## Try to avoid the 'Parenting Happiness Trap'

- The 'happiness trap' is based on the assumption that the most important indicator of parenting success is to have happy children
- It can lead to a sense of entitlement e.g. children *expecting* treats and special items all the time rather than earning them or receiving them as special gifts
- It can lead to over-protection such as delaying age-appropriate developmental 'hurdles'
- It can lead to parents trying to solve their children's problems for them instead of asking questions and offering suggestions

Cultural products are images, cartoons, video-clips etc. that reflect and 'comment on' what is happening in the present culture

- Help your child to accept and understand that life is mostly wonderful but that it can also be worrying, lonely, difficult, disappointing or sad at times and that this is normal.
- Let them know that you feel sad, challenged and worried too sometimes.
- Stress that when this happens you work to solve the problem, get over it and move on, and that they can too.



## The BOUNCE BACK acronym

- B**ad times don't last. Things get better. Stay optimistic
- O**ther people can help if you talk to them. Get a reality check
- U**nhelpful thinking makes you feel more upset. Think again
- N**obody's perfect. Not you and not others.
- C**oncentrate on the positives, no matter how small and use laughter
- E**verybody experiences sadness, hurt, failure, rejection, and setbacks sometimes, not just you. They are a normal part of life. Try not to personalise them

**B**lame fairly. How much of what happened was because of YOU, OTHERS or BAD LUCK

**A**ccept what you can't change and try and change what you can

**C**atastrophising exaggerates your worries. Don't believe the worst possible picture

**K**eep things in perspective. It's one part of your life.

**Independence & Initiative**

- Provide/recognise opportunities to help your child to develop independence and initiative.
- Give positive feedback when they successfully deal with the obstacles that are always part of taking initiative.
- Talk to them about the kinds of initiative you took as a young person
- Consider encouraging them to take part in exchange programs or similar experiences

**Styles of parenting for resilience may differ**

**Help your child to develop an attitude of courage**

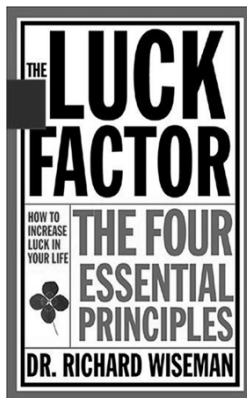
**Courage is about facing fear, not about being 'fearless'. Encourage your child to face their fears. Also stress the importance of having the courage to stand up for others and for what is right. Courage is also an essential component of academic success.**

**Life is mostly froth and bubble, but two things stand like stone: kindness in another's trouble and courage in your own**  
*(Adam Lindsay Gordon)*

## A Positivity Mindset

### A 'Positivity Mindset'

- Optimistic thinking
- Positive tracking
- Expression of gratitude & appreciation towards others
- Awareness of the aspects of their lives for which they are grateful
- Applying the '4 luck principles'



### The 4 principles that 'lucky' people apply

1. They maximise chance opportunities
2. They listen to and act on their hunches
3. They expect that good things can happen to them. ('Why NOT me?')
4. They look for the positives in bad events and situations

### Useful Quotes

- *When opportunity knocks, open the door, even if you are still in your pyjamas.*
- *Opportunity is missed by most people because it often arrives dressed in overalls and looking like work. (Thomas Edison)*

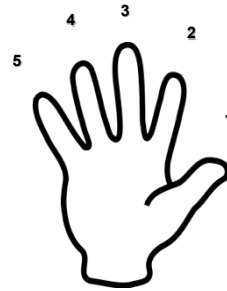
### When things go wrong

**Sit with them for 10 minutes and encourage them to put things into perspective by listing all the things that are still 'going right'.**

## Daily Reflection



## Five Finger Gratitude: What are you grateful for in your life?



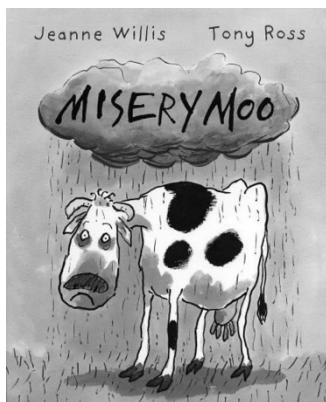
Think of one important thing that you achieved today that you really wanted to achieve  
(Daily reflection)



At the end of each week, count and recall the acts of kindness that you have given and received



Jeanne Willis Tony Ross



Being positive is a factor that affects friendship

## Self-respect



Professor Roy Baumeister

'Exploding the self esteem myth' (2005)

- 'Self-esteem is how favorably a person regards himself or herself. It is perception (and evaluation), not reality'.
- 'The effects of self-esteem are small, limited, and most of the time self-esteem makes surprisingly little difference'

## What is Self-respect?

- Self-respect is an attitude of acceptance of yourself and approval for your own character and conduct. It is based more on who you are as a person rather than how you behave rather than what you can do (or believe you could do), what you have, or the perceptions of other people about you.
- Self-respect can be taught and modelled

## Children with self-respect

- Show respect, support & compassion to others
- Balance pride with humility
- Don't over-focus on comparisons
- Prefer praise but are not dependent on it
- Self-protect (including their reputation)
- Display self-kindness; recognises own imperfections
- Show self-trust & self-kindness
- Have moral values

## Social knowledge and social-emotional skills

## Confident Kids have

- The social knowledge
  - The pro-social values &
  - The social-emotional skills
- that are necessary for making and keeping friends, managing conflict and responding to the annoying behaviour of others

## Pro-social Values Matter

Honesty, Fairness, Kindness, Cooperation, Acceptance of differences and Inclusion, Respect and Friendliness

- Values become a moral map that helps children make good decisions
- Values (especially kindness, respect and inclusion) assist them to be socially confident & likeable

Encourage your child to stand up for anyone who is mistreated by offering them support.

- *No act of kindness however small , is ever wasted (Aesop)*
- *If you light a lamp for somebody, it will also brighten your own path.(Buddhist Philosophy)*
- *Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you. (H. Jackson Brown, Jr.)*

- ### About Friendship
- The ‘friendship learning journey’ that all children take is long and challenging, but also deeply rewarding.
  - This journey prepares them for later adult friendships, work-based relationships and romantic relationships.

- ### The Challenges of Friendship
- Many friendships at school are short-lived. Children grieve when a friendship ‘fades’ or ‘fractures’
  - Children may change their social preferences, or grow apart. New children may enter a social picture and change the dynamics.
  - Managing disagreement is a significant challenge.

- ### Some Gender Differences
- #### Boys
- Relatively large and loose friendship groups that are reasonably ‘inclusive’ (*but also competitive*)
  - Use activity & humour to bond

- #### Girls
- Smaller & more ‘exclusive’ friendship groups
  - Use intimacy to bond (*i.e. ‘feelings-talk’ and self-disclosure*)

- ### What to tell your child about friendship
- Nobody is born knowing how to be a good friend. We all have to learn how to do it.
  - Everyone feels lonely or socially disappointed sometimes.
  - Being socially ‘rebuffed’ occasionally is a common experience. You need to be persistent in reaching out and trying to get to know others and form friendships.
  - Not all friendships are ‘forever’.



- Some of the people you meet won't like you
- Having an occasional disagreement with a friend is normal.
- It isn't helpful to assume that only certain 'cool' or very popular classmates are worth being friends with.
- Show kindness to a classmate even if they are not someone you like a lot. To quote Samuel Johnson: *'Kindness is in our power even if fondness is not'* (Samuel Johnson)

- ### Examples of key social skills
- Approaching & joining (*'hover & ooze'*)
  - Negotiation (*give a little, get a little*)
  - Telling a funny story or joke
  - Respectful disagreeing (*'good news, bad news'*)
  - Being assertive
  - Being a good winner & loser
  - Skills for managing conflict (*e.g. problem-solving, negotiating or apologising*)
  - Having an interesting conversation

- ### The skill of conversation
- Talk about what you have in common.
  - Apply the 30 second rule
  - Use the tennis match metaphor
  - Don't give too much detail when telling anecdotes
  - Don't interrupt unnecessarily
  - Use good segues (*smoothly moving to a related topic*)

- ### Assertive Response Options. You can:
- Walk away and let it go (*'it's no big deal-just annoying'*)
  - Look firmly at them and use an 'I-message' e.g.
    - Please stop, I don't like what you are doing (or saying)
    - When you..... I feel (felt).....
  - Sigh, roll your eyes, say 'whatever' and then walk away
  - Wait until you feel calmer & try to talk it out.

Playing board games (*e.g. Snakes and Ladders, Monopoly, Scrabble*) as a family can be an effective strategy for enhancing thinking skills, literacy and numeracy as well as social skills (*e.g. fair playing, taking turns, managing conflict & being a good winner and a good loser*)

### Skills for Managing Strong Emotions

Effectively managing strong emotions is also part of feeling (and being) confident.

### Use the Emotional Literacy Script

See the situation as an opportunity to teach an important life skill

1. Name their feeling
2. Show that you understand
3. Help with problem solving (within limits)
4. Express optimism

### 2 Simple Mindfulness Strategies

- 7 breaths in and 11 breaths out
- Focus on a pet (*or a plant, rock, leaf etc.*) and pay attention to everything you can see, hear, touch or smell.



A great metaphor for anxiety. Start early to help your child to manage anxiety. Support them to access school support services if they experience difficulties with ongoing anxiety

### A 'Growth Mindset' & 'Grit'

### A Brain 'Grows' When It Is Used Well

Help your child to understand that their performance in any area can be improved through practice & study. These activities produce more brain cells and create stronger neural networks; their brain becomes 'smarter'.

	IF YOU HAVE A FIXED MINDSET	IF YOU HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET
Your basic assumption	<i>You believe that your basic abilities and characteristics are fixed traits that can't be changed. Therefore you assume that you will always achieve at the same level so you think there is no point in your working harder.</i>	<i>You understand that your basic abilities and characteristics can be improved with effort, determination &amp; persistence. You believe that if you work harder you can achieve more</i>

	IF YOU HAVE A FIXED MINDSET	IF YOU HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET
<b>Your motivation</b>	<i>Your main goal is to demonstrate your ability, impress others and avoid failure or criticism</i>	<i>Your main goal is to learn new things, master skills and knowledge and improve your 'personal bests' (i.e. your previous best effort).</i>
<b>Your reaction to other people's successes</b>	<i>You feel threatened by the success of others</i>	<i>You use the success of others as inspiration and try to learn what you can from how that success was achieved</i>

	IF YOU HAVE A FIXED MINDSET	IF YOU HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET
<b>Your response to failure, poor performance or less-than-positive feedback</b>	<i>You are discouraged by it; you often ignore it, seeing it as a threat to your view of yourself</i>	<i>You see it as a sign that that you didn't work hard enough or misunderstood the task. You try to learn from it, seeing mistakes as an opportunity to improve</i>
<b>Your response to new challenges</b>	<i>You are more likely to avoid them so that you can continue to 'look good' and avoid failure</i>	<i>You are more likely to 'have a go' in order to test yourself out and learn more</i>

### Give more Process Praise than Person Praise

#### An Example of Process Praise

*You worked so hard on that model and didn't give up till you got it to work. Well done!*

#### An Example of Person Praise

*You are so clever!*



**Who is most likely to be successful?**

*'Zits' (Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman)*

Teach (and show) your child how to set a goal and then make plans for achieving it. Stress persistence and effort and share your own stories of setting goals



The Stanford University Marshmallow Experiment (Mischel et al., 1978)

- The Stanford University Marshmallow Experiment was conducted in the 1970's
- The experimenters have been following up the four year-old children for over 30 years.
- **Children who waited** were more likely to be develop into academically successful and socially competent adults
- **Children who didn't wait** were more likely over the following 30 years to have behaviour problems, difficulties with obesity, drugs or alcohol and friendship difficulties

## What is 'Grit'

**Motivation + Self-discipline  
+ Effort  
+ Persistence**

- The construct of 'Grit' was developed from the research of Professor Angela Duckworth (*University of Pennsylvania*)
- Her results confirmed that GRIT was more responsible than ability for children's achievement of longer-term goals

### 'Grit'

Give your child positive feedback when you observe behaviour that shows they are demonstrating effort, the use of willpower or persistence e.g.

- *feel like it*
- *doing homework when there is something they would rather watch on TV*
- *not giving up until they have mastered a particular skill*

*'Grit is not just having resilience in the face of failure, but also having deep commitments that you remain loyal to over many years. It's living life like it is a marathon, not a sprint'*  
(Dr. Angela Duckworth)

## Knowledge of their strengths

Help your child to build evidence-based self knowledge about their strongest 'abilities' and their strongest 'character strengths'

*See notes for more information*

## Two useful models

### CHARACTER Strengths

Professor Chris Peterson & Professor Martin Seligman



### ABILITY-Based Strengths

Professor Howard Gardner (Harvard Uni)



## Gardner's Model of Eight Intelligences

1. Word intelligence (*e.g. story writing*)
2. Logic & maths intelligence (*e.g. statistics*)
3. Space & vision intelligence (*e.g. designing*)
4. Body intelligence (*e.g. swimming*)
5. Music intelligence (*e.g. composing music*)
6. Naturalist intelligence (*e.g. working with animals*)
7. People intelligence (*e.g. leadership*)
8. Self intelligence (*self-management*)

## Examples of Character Strengths

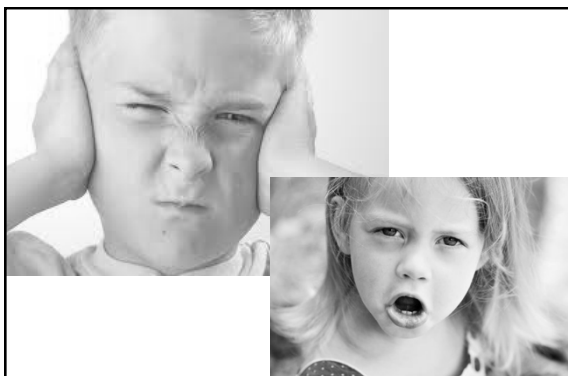
- Energy
- Empathy and kindness
- Organisation
- Sense of adventure
- Sense of humour
- Courage
- Leadership
- Loyalty

## Build a Resilient Family Environment

- Hold family meetings
- Use the 5 to 1 rule
- **Develop 'family rituals'**
- **Show affection for, affirm and support each other**
- **Allow and accept differences**
- **Don't expect perfection**

### *Build a Resilient Family Environment (cont.)*

- Stress family loyalty
- Nourish your couple relationship (*Try the book by John Gottman listed in the notes*)
- Respond to family crises and challenges with resilience.
  - Pull together
  - Stay calm & avoid blaming each other
  - Take a positive approach
  - Use problem solving



And remember the 'Sleeper Effect!'