

# THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

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## Season 2 – Episode 8

### Practical Tips To Make New Friends - Whatever Your Age!

Hello, and welcome back to the resilient kid podcast with me, Ashley Costello, psychotherapist for over 25 years, helping kids, teens and families. Yes, you lot there, the listeners. So we've changed to a Monday. Just because I have just been to the big festoon. Now, anybody in business will probably have heard of it.

If you haven't, it is organized by a beautiful human called Dani Wallace. And Dani talks a lot about well, she, she teaches people to get up on stage and speak. And I kind of hadn't really been involved with Dani before because, well, a I'm really good friends with Catherine Sandland and we know that she does TEDx Northwich around here and she's an amazing, amazing speaker local to me that trains people too.

So I hadn't kind of come across Dani's world before. Because I didn't have the need for it. However, she was running a business strategy course last year. And with me wanting to franchise The Resilient Kid, I thought, oh yeah, that would be really good. Did that. Amazing. Loved it. Really, really well. And then she was looking for volunteers for the big project. Big festoon. And I thought, how cool would it be to kind of give back? Dani is massively into inclusivity so much so that all the flight squad to the volunteers had training on just language, like, you know, around disability. Like if you are, able to use the stairs, please do, you know, rather than go you know, pointing out wheelchairs and things like that.

So that was really cool. We introduced ourselves by saying our name and our pronouns to make other people comfortable. There's lots of people that Go on their own. So the flight squad really helped make them feel more comfortable in, you know, what is quite a big event, really. There's like, you know, 400 and odd people at the event.

So it was really, really lovely. Hence, why am I telling you all this? Well, A, because my voice is scratchy and B, I couldn't get the podcast out in time for Thursday because. It was just manic. As you can imagine, from Wednesday

afternoon till 1am, Saturday morning, we didn't stop. And it was fabulous. So much so that within 48 hours, Dani has sold out 600 tickets for next year.

And so, absolute big up to the flight squad and Dani and her team there. Not only for making everyone feel part of the event, but actually welcoming me on my first big Dani event. So yes, very, very excited. Had a great time, took loads and loads of learnings away, and that was really lovely. So on to today, which I feel like I have walked the talk these last few days, which anybody who knows me knows that I like to do that.

I like to make sure that I You know, giving out stuff, giving out advice because I have either been there, or I've had experience of it, or I have really researched it. And today is all about friendships, and I was going to put practical friendships for teens. And then I realized, actually, these can be used no matter the age, whether, you know, you've got a primary child and you want to encourage them to make more friends.

You know. Whether it's teens or whether it's adults, you know, because I think the older you get, sometimes the more difficult it is. If you, you know, I think it's easy when you rock up to school gates to make new friends. If you get involved with, you know, with the school and things like that. But actually, we don't have a big situation where we can, we don't have those situations where we can just make new friends quite easily as we hit adults.

So that's why I've done practical tips to make new friends, whatever the age. So let's get started.

Why is this so important? And why now? So, friendships were number two. When I asked, what do you want me to do on the podcast this year? Friendships came up right after anxiety. And it wasn't a surprise because I think a lot of my clients do struggle. But what I have noticed this time more than any other is that clients of kind of uni and sixth form age are really struggling with it.

And I think that is being left over from COVID. I always think year nine is a particularly difficult year and on the whole some, you know, some kids have a great year nine and, and, you know, Brilliant if they do, but what I find is year nine is particularly difficult because we have, it is when we are pulling away from our diary, sorry, that is my diary reminder because I've got.

22 events today. Literally reminders for today. Yeah, we pull away from our primary friends and we're kind of integrating more with our high school friends. But year nine is when we start to identify with that peer group. It's not the group that we've just been thrown together, you know, whatever the circumstances, it's when we start to look at our friends and identify Are they my tribe or are they, my tribe?

And so it can be very difficult. If you are looking at your year group and going, actually, I don't think I'm like anybody here. And that, that is where we get the difficulties. And so it's very easy for us to sit on the periphery. I say we, obviously it's a long time since I've been in year nine. I'm just talking generally, but often

Kids will sit on the periphery of a group and then feel quite lonely and feel like they are not involved as much.

And then what we find is they start to isolate themselves a little bit because nobody's saying "Do you want to come here?" It's very easy to sit on that edge because we don't risk anything. Because being in friendships, risk is a risk. It is a risk. It is a threat to our fight flight center because we are risking rejection and actually sometimes, we have to do that for the rewards and the payoff of having really good friends.

So let's get into those very practical and I want these to be very, very practical, right? So I'm going to start off with conversational skills. I have just taught this to a year three uni student a year 12 sixth former and a year five. primary in the last six weeks for various reasons. So, so, pin your ears back there is no reason why these conversational skills can't work for you or your kids.

So I'm going to use the example of Wimbledon. Okay. Just cause that was the one that came to my head. I've never been to Wimbledon, but hey, ho let's give it a go. Okay. So we think about a topic like that. So it can be anything. You can be talking about Roblox. You can be talking about Fortnite. You can be talking about the latest gig that you've been to, whatever it is, it doesn't matter.

Swap it out for Wimbledon. I'm just going to use that. Okay, so the first thing I want you to do is reflect back what somebody's saying. Oh, so you're going to Wimbledon, you know, you're going to that gig, you're going to reflect back what you're hearing. Because this is, this works two ways. One, you're getting involved in a conversation, actually three ways.

Two, you, they know you're listening to them, so they, you know, they feel affirmed. Right. And also three, because when we reflect back like that, we don't have to think of something ourselves. So we're getting involved in that conversation, but we're not having to really think about what to say. So reflecting back what's been said is really good.

Second one, I call this the five W's. What, why, when, who and where.

What, why, when, who and where. Something like, I didn't know you liked tennis. Who are you going with? When did you book that? Yeah, so any of those little words that you can attach to a question really helps garner interest in what somebody is saying.

So you look like you are interested. You are joining in on the conversation. You are not sitting on the periphery waiting for someone to invite you in because it won't happen.

People don't do that. You know, they, they like, we all like to listen to our own voice. We like people asking us questions about our own interests.

They are not going to turn around and say it to you. Have you ever been to Wimbledon? It's just not going to happen. Not, not, definitely not. Kind of 23 under rarely happens rarely happens because we haven't got that self-awareness at that age as adults, we might do that because we're trying to be more inclusive because we can see somebody on the periphery but it's not going to happen when you go.

So you've got to risk it. You've got to put yourself in that conversation and just on that as well, make sure that you are facing them, you know, really turn your chair because it's very easy to sit on the periphery and your kind of away a little bit and that's, that's because we don't want to risk it.

But make sure you're facing them. Make sure you're facing the middle of the group. Don't be sitting on the edge of it. Actually, make sure you're sat in the middle and if you have to move, move. You know, move, there's no big deal. But yeah, make sure you're, you're facing whoever's talking. Turn your chair, turn your body to face them.

Next one, own experience. So your own experience of it. Now, I just said to you, I've never been to Wimbledon, so how do I do that? You know what? I've never been to Wimbledon or I'm not that keen on tennis. Why is it so interesting? Like, tell me about it or who's the, you know, you can, you, you can make conversation about the stuff you don't know, ask them you know, you can say stuff like, I did go there two years ago.

If you did, don't lie, do not lie. Don't make it up, you know, but I'm saying, if you. If we're talking about, you know, Fortnite, or if we're talking about a gig, say, oh, I tried to get tickets there, or I really wanted to go, I've just never been, you know, my mum went there or my mate went there. It doesn't, doesn't matter what it is, but have a comment, you know, have a comment about it.

Even if you have no experience, even if you go, do you know what? I'm really not keen on that. I much prefer, you know, I'm not keen on tennis. I much prefer rugby, things like that. So you can still comment. I am not talking about commenting on every single thing. Just don't let conversation go by where you've not, you've not included yourself or contributed.

Because you will get passed over. Okay. So on that, I kind of want you to, and if you're, most of you listening will be parents. Okay. So have this conversation, get them to listen to the podcast. Right. But this is a thing I want you to do, whether it's you as a parent wanting to make a new friend. And we all have somebody we think I'd like to be better friends with them.

You know, whether you've, you've met them somewhere and you think. I really like them. I'd like to be better friends or whether it's you know, a teen or a primary and you could talk through these conversational skills. I want you to say, I want you to set yourself a little task. Listen to these people.

Listen to your friends. Listen to these people you want to be better friends with. What are they interested in? What are they talking about? What are they watching, listening to? Yeah? Take an interest. Make a mental note of what they're interested in. Do a little bit of homework around it. Yeah, I've got no clue who, who they're talking about, right?

Let me have a little look. Let me do, go on the Google machine and have a little look about, you know, about Wimbledon, about the latest gig they're going to. Have, do your homework. And I'm not on about stalking them. Do not stalk them.

But, if they're talking about a latest you know, the latest series they're watching on Netflix, okay?

You don't have to watch the whole series. But watch the trailer and go, because that in itself is something to talk about. Oh, watch the trailer of that. Is it any good? That's it. You're already in. You've got that conversational opener. Absolutely brilliant. Now the other thing that I kind of wanted to say That leads on to this, that actually I've had a lot of clients say to me that they might have those conversations in the canteen, you know, generally, they might have little snippets of conversations, but actually what they've realized they're missing out on is calls.

Now, for anybody who's a similar age to me, that seems really alien, doesn't it? That what do you mean you can't make a phone call? You know, why is that? Well, tell me why that is. Because It's all Snapchat stories. It's all snaps and streaks and, and if you don't know what a streak is, it's where they take like a little picture, it can be anything, and they keep up a volley, which is very much like conversation, isn't it?

They keep up that volley between the two of them for however many days and they try and keep the streak up. So, if I snap you, you then snap me, and that goes on for 152 days. And if you drop that streak, everybody's upset anyway. So that is why we often, because we've in a time where messages and Snapchat and streaks and all that are here, there is not a lot of conversation going over the phone, whether that is video or just audio calls. And so it's like, okay, how do we get to that point where, because a lot of clients who are talking about, they say, I know I'm missing out. Like I can hear my friends say, or on that call last night, or when I phoned you last night, but how do you go from your friends to just snapping them or messaging them to actually making that call?

So what I would say is. First of all, do a snap, just snap with them if you've got snap, you know, if this will probably be the old ones. But if you've, you know, if you've got Snapchat, then snap with them. All right, then message after the response. Okay. And make sure you've got your subject matter ready. So it can be something like you know, some drama that's happened at school.

It can be weekend plans, homework, so about yourself. Doesn't matter what it is, but just have something ready that you wanna talk about. 'cause there's no point in messaging them if. You've got nothing to talk about because then that call is just going to fall flat. So have that ready and then message and say, fancy a chat?

Fancy a call? And have that chat using your conversational skills, using your subject matter that you've got. Right? And that's, that's how it starts. That's how easy it is. But it's important that you give it a go because it is a risk. It is a risk. We all risk rejection when we say, when we ask a question like that, fancy a call.

But the more we practice, the better we are. And it becomes, the more we risk stuff like that, the more we practice it, the better we are. It doesn't become a threat anymore. It doesn't become a threat anymore. So that's why it's really important to give it a go. Give it a practice. And just because it didn't happen with one person, try somebody else.

It's no big deal. And, you know, I think sometimes as well, I find with students that are neurodiverse, they find this harder. And that's why I'm giving you a little structure around it. So, but everybody finds this difficult if you're not used to it. And this leads me to the kind of the last bit, have a way out of the call.

I better go and get some work done. My dinner's ready. Mom's calling me, whatever. Okay. Have that way out of the call. So that when you're having a good call and if you're, and you're having that two-way volley between the two of you about conversations and chit chats and things like that, then amazing.

All right, but have your way out. Don't let it just go to dead air. Okay. And then think I have to go, you know, say, listen, I'm going to have to go. Great chatting to you. See you whenever. Okay. So have your way out before you go. And the other thing that I would say to you is,

If you get invited out, and you can go.

Go. Even if it's a risk. Even if it's a risk. Even if you don't know many people, it's important that you go. Because staying at home in your bedroom is not going to make you friends.

Be inclusive. Don't just presume you know people's pronouns. Don't just presume that they've been invited. Yeah? You be inclusive.

If you want to be included, be inclusive yourself and be patient with yourself. Okay. I think the biggest thing at the moment is there's lots of texting. And if you don't respond straight away, people get really upset. But actually what you might forget is that a mobile phone can be put down in the kitchen.

You can go upstairs to your bedroom and you're doing something else. You've got music on, you've got Alexa, you've got your computer. You're not thinking about your phone. And so you're not thinking that you've had 55 messages off a friend. So be patient, be understanding. With responses, don't keep messaging and messaging and messaging and messaging because they're not responding.

And then I guess the last thing I'd say to you is,

and maybe something that I should have started the podcast with. Friendships, building our friendships, building our social connections is what helps us build our resilience. Having, I always talk about resilience as in having six components and that is a massive part of it.

It's really important for us to build our social network as human beings.

Researchers showed that we can die of loneliness, but actually to help build our confidence, to help build our skills and knowledge, we have to build those social networks and making friends. And remember, friends don't have to be forever. Friends might just be for a little time. They might just be for a few weeks, a few months, term, couple of years.

They might be for a lifetime. It doesn't matter, but you will learn and you will grow with each new friend that you have.

So it is absolutely worth the risk. Yeah, and be yourself, be yourself, because if you're not yourself, they are trying to make friends with somebody that

they are building up in their head and that's not who you really are. So please, please be yourself. And those people who are meant to be in your life, who are meant to be really good friends will accept you no matter what. So take care. Hope that's been helpful for everybody. I I've got a few guests coming on, but I'm, I'm trying to pepper them out a little bit.

So if there is anything that you want me to talk about on the podcast, please do shout out to, I think it's Gemma. I hope it's Gemma who messaged back and said, really enjoying this. Can I have practical tips? Here you go, Gemma. Hope that was good for you. Hope that works for you and yours. And yeah, drop me an email, drop me an email and tell me if you, if there's anything particular you want me to cover in the podcast and I absolutely will.



## Transcript

All right. Lots of love. Hopefully my voice will be better next week. Lots of love from my family to yours. Take care for now.