

THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 2 – Episode 7

Teen Friendships

Hello, and welcome back to The Resilient Kid Podcast with me, Ashley Costello, psychotherapist of over 25 years, helping you and your family build resilience. So welcome, welcome. Today, we're talking all about teen friendships. Now, this is an emotional rollercoaster for us as parents, as well as for the actual team themselves.

Bless their little socks. It is such a difficult time. So why is that? Well, one, because everything in their DNA, and if you've listened to this podcast before, you will know I say this all the time, but everything in their DNA pulls away from us as parents and wants to identify with that peer group. Now, sometimes.

That can be amazing. If they find their tribe early on, they find their people who have their back, who don't judge them, then that is absolutely amazing. But sometimes, as they pull away from us and look at their peers, they're left wanting. There is not somebody who, wants to have their back. There's not somebody who they want to identify with even.

And you can see that quite often that starts in high school. Usually year seven is not too bad because they've got that kind of foot in primary friendships, one foot there, one foot in making new friendships, but I find year nine is when it all kicks off. Year 9 is the hardest year because we're slamming into puberty, without a doubt, but also, it just, it's that stage where people are starting to develop their own personality.

People are starting to make their own decisions. It is also prime time that if your teen is doing extracurricular, that's the time they'll move. That's the time they'll drop it. That's the time that they'll go, I can't do this anymore. Now, sometimes it might happen because of exams as they hit year, year 10 and year 11, but quite often it is because they're not quite sure of themselves.

Year nine is a really hard year, really hard year for parents as well, I might add. But, so that's like one of the biggest things I, I find that with friendships, it is a

really, really difficult time for them to navigate without a doubt. There are a few reasons to this. Okay. Not just the pulling away.

There is also that kind of brain development, which I'm going to come on to that really has a massive impact on, on friendships and making friendships and just navigating those friendships. But first of all, what kind of difficulties am I telling you? Teen friends, right, they can be, you know, having a sleepover, they're laughter, fun filled, and then the next minute you've got a teen crying because there's a text that could be misconstrued, you know, and it's just so hard, you know, when I talk about emotional roller coaster.

That is exactly it. All right. So let's have a look at why. Let's have a look at the science behind that teen brain development and how it influences the real complexities of, of friendships and, and the, all the dynamics and the drama that goes with that. So first of all, the brain. Okay, so did you know that the prefrontal cortex, the part at the front, just behind your forehead, or their forehead, is responsible for decision making and emotional regulation?

Well, that doesn't finish actual construction until they're in their 20s. And so that is really difficult. Just let me say that again, so you've got it. The part of the brain that is responsible for decision making and emotional regulation is still under construction. So not only are they going to struggle, but actually, even the connections between different regions of the brain, and that, and the whole like, maturing of the brain and the sending signals of the brain are not fully ready. I often, when I talk about teen brain development, I've, I really do sometimes wonder how teens get out of bed in the morning because they're going through such a massive reconstruction of the biggest part of the brain that controls their body, their mind, their, you know, everything, absolutely everything.

And yet, here they are, we're saying, right, go to school, do this, do that. So yeah, when you want to, you know, there are times when teens come in and they speak to you awfully or they're in a mood and you don't know why, or they first start crying and you don't know why. What I would say to you is, of course, don't let behavior slide.

Of course, if they're being rude, don't let it slide. But also there's times that they don't know what's going on. And this is why, because of this massive brain construction. And as this is going on, there is hormones being flooded. There is,

you know, stuff like cortisol running through their body their impulse control, all of that is, is running around

raging around their body. So think about this as they're developing, you know, our teens can really, there's certain, there is certain behaviors that reflect this brain process, this maturation of the brain, for example. So they might be prone to risk taking, prone to seeking out novelty. And that is because the brain is trying to as it's constructing, it is trying to get heightened activity in that reward system in the brain.

Now, it is why social media is so, so important to teens. Why it's their lifeline and it is why they become addicted. And, and we use that word, like, quite flippantly, but actually it is a, it is a word that is appropriate really because we do, you know, you know yourself, you pick up your phone. If you, have you ever gone into like the settings on your phone and seen how many times you picked up your phone in a day?

It is scary. And we're fully grown adults. Some of us know life before mobile phones, definitely before smartphones. And so we can, you know, we can understand life without it. We can see the rewards of putting the phone down. Most of our teens. Don't know life without a phone. And that's not because they had, you know, we give them a mobile phone when they came out of the womb, but actually they've always known us with mobile phones.

You know, they've probably been sat on your knee and you've been at the doctor's trying to have a conversation and you've given me a phone. Of course we have. Why would we not, you know, it keeps them occupied, but that brain reward center is absolutely been used. And used is the right word there, by the people who make the software for social media.

I have said this before, probably, but I'm not sure on the podcast that, you know, if we have a look at Instagram, for instance, and this is not going to turn into a lecture around social media. This is just telling you why sometimes it's hard for them. It's hard for the teens. But if we have a look at Instagram, for instance say there's a post up, say they've put a post up and a hundred people have liked it.

Really, really quickly. Instagram will hold back some of those likes. They will hold back 80 percent of those likes and let it trickle through. Why do you think that is? So you'll go back and check it. So you'll pick your phone back up. Why did I

only get that likes? And already in your mind, you know what's happening in that team brain.

Why have I only got that? It's this real rejection sensitivity. That they have around the teen years and Instagram and others are very, very good at this. The likes, the stars, the reward, the, the comments, you know, and what it does is it really feeds into that insecurity of a team and gets them coming back and coming back and coming back.

When they do get likes, the reward center of their brain fires and they, they feel better. They feel good. But it's a very fine line between feeling good and feeling rejected. And I kid you not the social media platforms. Speak to neuroscientists, they look at how this can, can get people coming back and coming back and coming back.

So is it any wonder that our kids seek out social media? Of course they do. So I'm going to kind of leave that there. But what I will say to you is, and I have this conversation with parents quite a lot. It is our job to teach them to be responsible with their phones, with their social media. It is, we think this, you know, it's almost like I think when they're 12 and they've got this phone and we've got this in our mind, they're still in primary school, even though they're not, they are, you know, this lovely, innocent young child.

And actually they're not, they're growing into that adolescence and we need to teach them about the responsibility because they can't, they just can't, they haven't got the brain capacity to be able to stop themselves going on this because every time they pick up their phone, they get that hit. Of reward that hit of dopamine, so they are slowly, slowly and you can see in some of them as well because they, they stop going out, you know, they, they don't want to socialize as much and it's because they don't, you know, sometimes they don't want to get involved in the schoolwork and things like that, and this is not everybody, but, but you can see why, you know, it's not their fault.

You can see why, because actually then they're getting more hits for reward in their brain. From that little screen than they do when it's really difficult out there with friendships.

So be, just be aware as adults in their life who love and care about them. We need to teach them to be responsible with it. And if that means setting limits on screen

time, do it. You know, this is your job. And it's really hard sometimes to say that to parents. You know, they go, oh, but it'll cause a fight.

Okay. They're going to end up with no friends. You know I have my oldest is in sixth form. We still have regular conversation. I can't tell you the last time I took a phone off her. I don't need to do that anymore. But what I will say is that we have regular conversations about screen time. Because I know what a screen time is.

I know how much she's using it. In the holidays, it goes up. Of course it does. But what I will say is, How's your screen time? Okay, they'll have a look and then they'll turn and they'll go, Oh, it's this. Okay, how's that going with juggling your homework, your part time job, seeing your friends? How's that going for you?

No, I need to lessen it. And that's what happens. And we have that regular conversation so that she understands it's really important. And the time that she's spending on that phone means she's not spending it in other areas of her life. Okay. Okay, done. Social media, done. But the reason that I bring that up, and I think it's really important, is because the brain at this time is seeking out those, the novelty.

They're seeking out the brain's reward system, that dopamine hit. And so, it's important that we realize that. When it comes to friends, because actually it's easier to be friends with your screen, but you will not get the same reward and it will not help you in school because you cannot be on your phone in school, you have to build those, you know, as teens, they have to build those social communication skills to, to what's the word I'm looking for?

Build and maintain. That's it. Maintain those friendships. Okay. So how else does the brain kind of significantly impact friendship dynamics? Well, for me, it's about the emotional understanding and social interactions. So what we just talked about around skills and communication skills and things like that.

Okay, so during adolescence, the prefrontal cortex, the part that is still going through massive changes and kind of those neural connections and control functions of the brain, it means that Teens often struggle to interpret and respond to emotions in others. So, there is research to say that during the adolescent years, and I actually had a conversation with my eldest about this.

I'll give you an example. So, I would be cooking dinner, I'd be doing an email or whatever, and she would come in, and she'd say, hi, how are you? And I'd be like,

Hi, yeah, you, blah, blah, blah. And we'd have a little conversation, and she'd go, Are you okay? And I'd go, Yeah, I'm fine, thanks, what are you? Yeah. Are you sure you're, okay?

Yeah, fine. Oh, okay. You look a little bit stressed and I'm like, am I? No. And this could be just literally cooking dinner or, you know, or tidying up or whatever. And I'd kind of realized this had happened over a few weeks where randomly they'd be checking in that everything was okay between us. And I couldn't understand why.

Cause I, you know, everything was fine. There was no stress. There was no, you know, we hadn't kind of had an argument or anything, so I couldn't understand. I was just streaming. And actually, what I said to her, I'm just going to tell you something and see if this makes sense. And I told you about this study, and they've studied adolescents' brains, and they've realized that there is a certain period as the brain is maturing, that they can actually accurately identify facial expressions, particularly if it's subtle facial expressions, also verbal cues and body language that conveys different emotions.

And so I told her this, and she was like, Oh my goodness, she said, I've thought you've been like cross with me and you just haven't said, very unlike me, by the way I would be saying, but She said, I thought, like, you've been cross and you haven't, and I was like, I was probably just concentrating, or I probably was absolutely fine, or you've interrupted my thought process, or you, you know, you've, you've kind of coming in and I'm reading a recipe or, you know, whatever.

And she's like, oh, that makes so much sense. I said, listen, we need to be aware of that because maybe there's times when you're not quite sure if, if I am cross. So I will always tell you if there's something wrong, or if you've done something that I need to speak to you about, we'll always have that discussion.

But equally, if you ask me and I say, I'm okay, everything's fine, you need to just realize that it is like it's fine. I will tell you. So we've kind of come to that arrangement that there's something wrong with her or if I'm, you know, there's something wrong with me, then we will have that open dialogue and say it rather than You know, leave her to misconstrue how I feel and then go away thinking, is everything okay?

You know, because you don't want to feed into their insecurity, but how. Like, how mad is that? That actually, they could read you better when they were in primary

school than they can during the teenage years. That blows my mind, really. Because I think, yeah, just, yeah, that just blows my mind. So I think having those conversations with your teen is really important.

The other aspect of brain development and why it might impact on friendships is empathy, perspective, putting themselves in somebody else's shoes. So as we know, empathy is like the ability to understand and share an idea of what they're feeling in other people. And so that's like a key component, isn't it, of friendships, of successful friendships, for sure. And as the brain matures, Teenagers do develop a greater capacity for empathy and, and how to, you know, put themselves in other, other people's shoes. However, it's still developing during this period. So sometimes it can lead to, you know, challenges in understanding others.

And that's, I think, unfairly, we give the teens like, Oh, you're really selfish kind of label. You know, you don't understand. I think. Particularly as, you know, if you're the one who does the bulk of their housework and there's, you know, towels on the floor, or you're constantly tidying up or washing or whatever, you know, you go in the kitchen, you made a sandwich and there's crumbs and, and butter and, you know, the whole works, plates, dirty plates in the kitchen, you know, you think, oh, they're, they're really selfish, but actually it's up to us, we think because as they grow and, and, and sometimes we're looking at people that are bigger than us, You know, we're looking at people who we think are adults and actually they're not and they're certainly not where their brain is concerned.

So what we need to do is kind of walk them through that kind of stuff so that they're not just so they do tidy up after themselves. But actually, so, so their brain has got those pathways ready for when they need it when they're out in the big wide world. You know, so if like one of the things I say.

It's my youngest who's 14 and way taller than me. You know, we have a downstairs bathroom. He goes to that bathroom. He does wash his hands, but he always, he never puts the towel back, right? We have a little hook on the side of the sink for the towel, and I'll go to the bathroom after him. See, they're on the floor or it's in the sink. And you know when you're like, One thing. One job. One job. That's all it takes. But I have to constantly ask him to come back and do it. Now, I could put it back, and sometimes I do. However, if I don't call him back, that pathway for him to do that, to remember to do that next time, is not being made.

It's just literally not being made. So we do have this conversation all the time, but you know, it is getting less and less and it is just about him thinking. And one of the ways that I do this is I say to him, if you don't do it, who has to do it? And he'll say, you. Okay, so he then has an understanding that, okay, it's just a towel on the floor, but he also understands that if he's then making more work for me, it's not a big thing, is it?

However, if we're thinking about building those empathy skills really help that, you know, perspective of other people and how other people feel, this all helps with their friendships. So rather than going, who's made this mess? You know things like that. Just come and go. Can you help tidy this up, please?

Because you pretty much know who it is. We don't need to ask that question. You know, you can pretty much guess. Or, I need help. Tidying this up and you will get it, if just changing your language around that not only stops a fight because quite often, they'll go, Oh, I'm sorry. I did that. Yeah, I'll do it, you know, but also, it's building those empathy skills.

It's, it's changing the way that they see it as well. That it's not just about. Because they, they don't leave a mess on purpose. I know we feel like that sometimes when we clean up after, but they don't. So for me, it's really important that we, you know, look at the language that we talk, rather than blame culture.

Let's go, I need a hand tidying this up, or who can help me do this? You know, or who can tidy the kitchen? You don't have to clean up after them, but you know, just changing that far away from that blame culture really helps develop not only the empathy, not only that perspective, but also how to navigate friendships in a more positive way.

Okay. Regulating emotions. Oh, yes. Well, we know they're not very good at this. Don't we? And effective regulation of emotions is essential for maintaining positive relationships with other people. The prefrontal cortex, the brain, the part of the brain that plays a critical role in regulating this. And it also inhibits impulse responses.

So you can see why A teens get involved in risky behaviors, because the brain is not developed enough, but also how one minute they can be, you know, laughing and joking and dancing around the kitchen and the next minute they're crying their eyes out and they don't know why. So because of this development, this ongoing

development through the teen years of this brain region, they'll struggle with their own emotions

but they also struggle reacting in social interactions, you know, which really can cause a massive issue in friendships. And I think one of the biggest things for me is around because everything, and at the top of the podcast, we started to talk about how everything in, in teens, they want to pull away from us as, as their parents and identify with that peer group.

Their biggest fear, and we know that the brain can be perceived threats, even if they're not there. And I use this example, if you've not heard last week's podcast, where I talk about friendships with primary. Go back and listen to that. But this is an example I gave there. We have a smoke alarm in our house and it goes off when there's a fire and it saves our life.

We can all leave. It also goes off if you're not careful when we burn toast. And that is exactly the fight and flight center in our brain does exactly that. It will go off when we perceive a threat and it's not necessarily a threat. A real threat, a perceived threat. And one of the biggest ones in teen years is that they will be isolated, that they will have no friends.

And what happens is their regulation of their emotions. Sometimes they end up not putting boundaries in because they're scared of that. They also sometimes, because of this part of the brain that is still developing, they really struggle in managing their emotions. And so. In a pack, in a group situation, in a tribal situation, those other teens have to be very empathetic for you to blow your top and them still be friends with you.

So can you see what a fine line they're balancing as teens to keep hold of friendships? It is, honestly, it is so, so difficult for them. Okay, kind of lastly, on, on the brain development and stuff, is the social decision making. So there is, when we talk about that tribe, we talk about like that pack of friends, there is so many social decisions within the interactions, like conflict,

peer pressure, making decisions about social activities. I know sometimes that some of the teens that I see talk about, I love being out with my friends, but the stress of what to wear what they're going to think of it, what they're going to think of me, what am I saying, sometimes stops me actually going out.

Sometimes they'll cancel last minute, rather than see their friends, because they're so worried about what is being said. What the judgments are, and it's, it's heartbreaking, it's really heartbreaking for them.

If we think about them constantly weighing potential consequences of actions, or, you know, just the judgments that, that are around, and it's not always. It is sometimes, but it is not always that their friends are judging them. It is that that's what they're thinking. You know, they, as they grow, as their brain develops, you know, their self-control starts to kick in.

Their boundaries start to kick in and they develop a real they develop a way and, and kind of skills for navigating those social decisions. But certainly in the younger years and certainly at high school, you know, they are constantly on that fine line balancing between, between You know, what people think and, and what, what they think of themselves.

For sure. Okay. So that's kind of the brain element because I don't think we realize what a massive impact they can have on brain dynamics. And my voice is going one second.

Sorry about that. I am really croaky all of a sudden. Okay. So how do we help them? Because they need help. They need, just like I'm saying to you, you know, if there's a mess in the kitchen, get them to come walk him through it. Tell them why, you know, how do we walk them through these challenges? So first of all open conversations, have an open conversation around friendships and, you know, discuss the highs and lows of, of friendships.

And also, you know, talk about yours as well. You know, I have often said that there are certain friends that, as much as I've loved them and as much as I've, you know, either grown up with them or shared really intense experiences with them, there's certain friends that, as I've got older and our relationships changed, I've had to say, I can't be friends with you anymore.

I love you. But that's it. You know, I can't be friends with you anymore. And that might be because they're pushing boundaries, you know, various different things. But actually, giving your teen permission to go, actually, you're not treating me like that. And it's a really important example. And talk about, you know, I've got one friend who I've been friends with since I was about 17.

Um, And she's godmother to one of my children. I adore her. Shout out to Son. She keeps me grounded. It does not matter what I am doing. It doesn't matter if I release a book, a podcast. She doesn't care. Her and I have such a relationship where not that she's not pleased with me. She absolutely always is.

However, that is not, that would not come up in our conversation. You know, it would, it just wouldn't. Like, she, I invited her to the book launch, she came, she bought a book, she gave me a hug, she wanted it signed, she was absolutely proud as punch as me. However, what we achieve doesn't come into the conversation because, you know, she keeps me grounded where it's a case of You know, what's happening with the kids?

What's happening with each other? How are you? Do you want a coffee? Should we go out for a drink? It is just amazing. It's so lovely to have a friend that you don't have to talk about work with apart from, oh, I've had a busy week. You know, it's really lovely to just be yourselves and know each other really, really well.

And, you know, my kids see that. They see that person. You know, I've got another friend who lives not far away from me and She is just amazing We will get a knock or I'll get a text and it can be 11 o'clock at night and there's a parcel at the door because we've had some really hard news, you know, and the kids adore her and and She does a lot in the community.

They see that they see that I, you know, they have started volunteering with her in the community. They see that that's what I do with her, that if she needs something, I'm there and vice versa. And, you know, but we don't see each other that often. And we respect each other's boundaries. We respect each other's busy, but we know if we're needed, we'd be there.

Absolutely. And, you know, different, you have different friends for different things. It's important that the kids see that, you know, it's important that they see that we do need friends for different things. And that, you know, it's okay to have lots of different friends. So I think that's a really good one of sharing our personal experiences.

Excuse me. Also look at talking about their friendships, be really aware of not judging them

because they might fall out today, but tomorrow they might be friends again and you've just gone, well, I never liked them anyway, you know, or, well, you know, that one time they came around, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That is not to say you can't warn them or get them to recognize. So something along the lines of, if you were in their house and you did that, what do you think their parents would think?

So you're not kind of having a conversation of, I don't like that girl, or I don't like that boy, blah, blah, blah. But getting the teens to reflect on their friends and their friend's behaviour is a really good way of them kind of analysing if that friendship is for them. And that's not saying that has to stop, but just so they're aware, that's all.

Getting them to reflect. And even if, you know, you're talking about, if they come home with all the drama and all the gossip and the chat, get them to reflect on what's happening in that drama. So that they're aware you're building, you're building the brain pathways for almost future proofing with them.

Okay, the other thing that I would say to you is I've had I've had a couple of questions So I went out and asked a few different people. So I said to them, okay, tell me what it is. You know, what, what are you struggling with? What is it with your teen that you, you know, thought or you might want answered?

I'll give me comments on what it's like, you know, for sure. So this is, this is what I've got. I've got kind of three whittled it down to like three comments really. They are when I said, this is what I was going to cover. And one of them Zoe said, it's like one minute you're laughing so hard with them.

And the next they're crying and you've just got no clue why, like, absolutely no clue. And, and that's absolutely true. And what I say is just be there for them. Because as much as we're confused because we don't know why, absolutely, so are they. So, you know, just be there for them. Don't try and problem solve it.

That's, you know, as parents, I think sometimes we try and problem solve their issues and dramas. Because we feel like a, we don't want them hurting and be, we feel like we're failing because they're upset. They're not happy 24 seven. And that's, that's not, they need to feel this. They need to go through all these emotions to learn to be happy.

To, you know, grow their empathy, to develop their emotional regulation and management. So just be there for them is enough. Don't try and problem solve. So absolutely. Thank you for that Zoe. One also I got I asked a teen client of mine and I said, what's the, what's kind of the hardest thing for you about navigating?

And friendships and they just said the drama, the drama sometimes. And now this was a girl client. And I think sometimes that can be more difficult because girls develop a little bit faster than boys and their emotions are a little bit, on high, high alert at this point, and this was, this was what I got off, um, Till.

So this was, well, I found just being upfront and honest about how I'm feeling really helps. And I have those friends who will listen and, and if something's bothering me, they'll talk it through. But instead. Just sitting there and letting it run through my mind because then I feel worse. And I also think that they fell out with me.

And that absolutely usually isn't the case. So those friends that I can trust and that I know I will absolutely talk it through with them and I'll say, can I talk to you about something? And that's kind of a little skill that they've developed because. You know, instead of just because they just dropped, sometimes they just drop this bomb, don't they, of right in the middle of something.

And I think it's important that we get our teens to warm up to a conversation, just because I think sometimes as parents, it's quite hard. You know, I've had parents come to me and they go, they've literally just said, I'm bisexual. I'm driving in a car and I'm like, Oh, okay. There was no warning, no nothing.

It's like they dropped this bomb and then go, okay, I'm getting out now. And you're left with it. So I think us helping our teens develop those difficult conversations, but warming up to them, can I talk to you about something, you know, just giving the heads up. So that's one skill there that Till's used, which is really good.

And then the other thing that she said was setting boundaries is super important. As well, knowing when to say no and not feeling guilty about it, and that doesn't matter if it's no, I don't want to go out today, or, you know, that that could be today's example tomorrow. That could be about sex. It could be about you know, drugs, anything.

So having. Having our teens know where they sit with things, and I think that'd be a really good podcast, actually, and I'll, I might do that next week around friendships and stuff. And then the third thing that, the third kind of comment that I got when I, when I was saying this is what I'm doing was, I think it's super important to remember sorry, this, this was off Ryan.

I think it's super important to remember we're still learning and growing and that it's okay to make mistakes along the way. What matters is how we deal with the mistakes and learn from them. And having a support system of friends and family, whoever has got your back makes all the difference. So that was kind of a young person.

That's not his real name but young person when I said, what is the most difficult thing and, and what is important to you? And that's, that's what Ryan came up with, which I just think is, is so mature, you know, and that's what I find in the biggest benefit of teens going to therapy is that they learn to process out, they learn with an independent person who's not going to judge them, they've got that safe space where they learn this kind of stuff that they can, you know, they can say no and why they're saying no, what's happening in the brain. And I, I do a lot of that with, with my teen clients, if this is what's happening in the brain, you know, it's not all your fault because one minute your crying, one minute, you're not You know, and I think that's a real benefit is that they work out this process and walking them through this, but you can do this as parents, you know, but equally what I would say is don't wait for if there is something difficult going on, don't wait for a massive trauma to get help to get assistance.

If your car was broke, you would absolutely take it to the garage. You know, whether you, you, you might take it even if just your windscreen wiper was broken. was misfiring. I don't even know if that's a thing. But, you know, you don't have to wait for the engine to seize is what I'm saying. Because quite often and yeah, quite often, I think it just helps the teens to have somebody else outside that help them walk through this.

And actually what you find is they're better people for it in the fact that they understand themselves better and. Yeah, it's really, you know, it's a really difficult time for that. So, don't wait for it to be a big thing to get them help and that can be from school. You know, you can go, you can go to the doctors if it is like, you know, if it's really having an impact on their health.

But I'll seek out privately if you can. For sure. I have quite a few students who might have done through like a period of therapy with me, but then what they do is they have a monthly check in for, you know, a little while, or they might come back after about a year and say, could I just have a check in with you?

I've just got something I need to work through and they might have three sessions and then that's it, but they know that they can do that with me and they know sometimes I'm just teaching them the skills to go away and do that with their friends or with their family. So, yeah, don't be afraid of going to therapy.

It's definitely not got the stigma amongst young people. It used to have for sure. You know, I've got quite a few people, quite a few of my teens who literally will tell everybody that they're having therapy. And because I have a, I have a policy that if they're local to me and they might see me, you know, shopping or, or whatever, I don't speak to them unless they speak to me.

And because I don't want to ever put them in that position that they might have to explain who I am. And actually what I find is they usually come up to me with their friends go, hi, how are you? And I'll go, Oh, I'm good. How are you? You know, nice to see you. And their friends have got, oh, sorry, this is actually, she's, my therapist.

And it is so refreshing. So refreshing for them to be proud that they're working on themselves. Absolutely. So what's the last kind of bits that I can say to you that will help? So, A, absolutely. Model friendships, foster an open communication style with your teens and talk about their friendships.

Don't weigh in, don't judge, but allow them to talk to you. The other one is really think about, you know, getting them to practice self-compassion. It's a really difficult time for them. And so getting them to, you know, sometimes saying no is an act of self-compassion if, you know, oh, will you come to this concert with me?

And they don't really want to go, then say no, it's okay. You know, so just help them sometimes navigate those conflicts, talk it through with them and get them to problem solve. And then I think the last one is kind of, be there for them, but actually helping them be aware that, and I, I use this example with some parents and a team the other day that sometimes is like the bear hunt story.

We can't go round, we can't go over, we've just got to get through it. If they know you've got their back and they if they've made and built friendships where their friends have their back, then they will get through the hard times with them. You know, they, they really will. If they know they've got that support system in place.

You know, it not only builds their resilience, but they will get through it. And, and I think sometimes we have to remind our teens that, yes, you're having a really crappy time at the moment with that group of friends, but you will get through it and we'll be here for you, you know, and just really encouraging them to, to widen their friendships

groups, I think, is a, is a really important thing. And that's why I'm massive advocate in, in kids having outside activities from school, whether it's, you know, rugby or dance or music or acting or whatever, but so that they can make friends outside, because that is a really good way of comparing and contrasting how your friends in school treat you in comparison to the people on the football team who can't wait to see you on a Saturday morning, and you, you know, you win and lose games together.

So, yeah, I think that would be my kind of closing to the podcast is encourage them, whether it's through family, friends, whether it's through extracurricular activities, encourage them to widen their friendship circle as much as possible. Excellent. Thank you very much for listening. I am off to House of Lords.

How fancy. Tomorrow, I'm recording this on Thursday the 7th. So yeah, tomorrow, International Women's Day. I will tell you a little bit about it next week. I am actually really excited. I have been to a few places that are on this level, but never the House of Lords. And I cannot wait just because I am going to be amongst lots and lots of women, female entrepreneurs who work really hard and You know, trying to raise families, trying to make it themselves in their own business.

And it's just going to be really inspiring day to be with them. So I will tell you all about that next week. And also what I am going to do is kind of tips for teens. Now, I strongly suspect there won't be many teens listening to the podcast. However, I am going to give tips for teens on how to develop those friendships, how to widen that friendship circle and how sometimes to get involved in the friends they've already got because I see quite often friends will be on the outside, they'll be on the periphery of that friendship circle. So little tips and tricks to help

them get involved and be in the middle of it all and deepen those friendships, find their tribe. Take care everyone.

You are more than welcome anytime to drop me a message on ashley@theresilientkid.co.uk or find me on the socials. I'm on Insta. I'm on Facebook. Oh, on Facebook, we've just dropped the new logo. So please tell me what you think of it. And yeah, reach out, you know, I'm more than happy to answer any questions.

And I actually quite liked the little feature of this is what I'm going to do. What do you think? So I may do that more often is kind of reach out to my clients or parents and stuff that I know and say, this is what I'm going to talk about. Whatever you've got to say about it. Cause I think it, I think it just gives a different perspective.

Take care, everyone have a lovely, lovely week. And by the time this is released, it'll have just been Mother's Day. So happy Mother's Day to everybody for last week. It will have been to anyone who is like a mother figure for you. Bye for now.