

THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 2 – Episode 14

Archetypes Part 2 - How To Support Your Kids

Hello and welcome back to The Resilient Kid Podcast with myself, Ashley Costello psychotherapist of over 25 years. So, you need to kind of buckle yourself in for this one. If you listen to the podcast where I talked about low resilience in our kids and how to spot it and what kind of types of behaviors our kids display.

I called them archetypes, we talked about the perfectionist, the critic, the comfort zoner. All stuff that I've mentioned in the book, and I wanted to kind of highlight that here so that we as parents can identify how our kids behave and do something about it. So, if you've not listened to part one, go back, listen to that you can spot which one your child is, because this one, this podcast is all about top tips for each of those archetypes.

Okay. Archetypes is just a word that we use in psychology to kind of group behaviors together. Really, that's all. Jung came up with it. Very clever way of doing it. And my editor was really, really lovely, Erin. Erin the editor, we call her in our house, not Erin the daughter. And she said, actually, these are architects.

Why are you not just bunching them? Why are you not bunching them, giving them actual title? So, between us, we came up with the, with the titles. today without further ado, let's get into it. What I suggest is that if you recognize like, listen to part one, recognize which one you or your child will be because I certainly recognize myself in some of this and then you can do something about it.

But actually, you know, I'm going to look at how we support our kids with this. Identify each of your kids and or kids in your class and actually write down the title of the archetype. So, perfectionism and then listen to this one to how you can help. Does that make sense? So, what I'm saying is grab a piece of paper and a pen because it will help or bookmark where you hear it.

That's what I usually do. So yes, let's crack on, shall we? So, the perfectionist archetype that I mentioned. These are kids who fear failure and struggle with high expectations. Now those high expectations, they often put them on themselves. They're the ones who will start homework and restart it and restart it because it's not perfect. Okay, this is what we can do to support them.

I've got three tips here. Encourage effort - not just the outcome: so, shift that focus from, from perfectionism to effort. Praise the work, praise the hard work, the determination rather than the achievements. This, I always recommend this around exam times. Now the older kids have definitely got mocks coming up you know, assessments, year nines, tens assessments, mocks for year 11's, six formers, they have got Mocks just around the corner.

And I know in January, my uni students have got mocks as well. So, during exams, I always talk about the effort. Praise the effort. You've worked really hard today. I can see you've put a lot of work into that revision. You know, 20 minutes of revision is still good. You're still putting it in. Every day, you're doing something to move you towards those.

So, absolutely, talk about the effort. Not you'll get an A or you'll get a nine or whatever. Just talk about the effort because their self-esteem often hangs on that result and we don't want that. We want self-esteem to hang on them and their work. Yeah. top tip number one, encourage effort, not outcome.

Number two, teach self-compassion. So, help them understand that it's okay to make a mistake. You know we talk about mistakes. I know in school they say a fail is first attempt in learning. I talk about it as in an unfinished business. Yeah. Talk that nobody's perfect, including us as, you know, as parents or educators.

I often tell that my students took me three times to pass my maths. Now I passed it, but I didn't get the result that I needed to get. to do A levels. And actually, you know, through a combination of things, sometimes it's teachers, sometimes you just don't get it, sometimes your brains not wired for maths, you know, lo and behold, I got it on the third time, went on to do a psychology science degree.

You know do stats quite a lot. Perfectly okay with my accounts, you know, it is around, keep going, keep trying. Nobody's perfect and talk about those imperfections with your kids. Third one, promote balance. Encourage them to have Real diverse range of interests to reduce that pressure to excel in one area.

So, for instance, I was talking to a mom the other day and her daughter, really fits into this perfectionist archetype completely. And actually. She's because she's putting so much pressure because she's going for it. She's in year 11 now, and she's putting so much pressure for a GCSEs that actually rugby is her outlet and she plays rugby like two, three times a week because it really helps just balance out, you know, that pressure that she puts on herself and actually you're part of a team in rugby.

So, she can't just, you know, it's not just down to her. So, yeah, encourage effort, self-compassion, promote balance. Okay, the next one, the comfort zoner. So, this one fear success, worries about other people's perceptions of them. So, how do we help them? Okay, one, boost self-esteem. Work on building their confidence self-worth, particularly to ease that fear of success.

And they often don't put themselves out there because they're, they're worried. Okay, well, what's the expectations after that? Yeah, I know I have definitely held myself back because I think, oh, but what if, what if it gets too big? What if this? So absolutely look at how to build their confidence. In small chunks.

Small, little uncomfortable steps. Don't expect them to do something big. I mean, not skydiving, you know, little steps because the more we practice a little bit of uncomfortableness, that becomes easy. Then we can stretch it a little further and a little further. Two open conversations, create a safe space to discuss their fears and anxieties around success and also around what we as parents or educators expect of them and also in the bigger world, quite often I hear kids talk about grandparents. So, I was the first in my family to go to university. I'm not the last, you know but there was a lot of pressure from my grandparents, not because they thought, oh, she's going to do.

But it was that unwritten, that untalked about pressure because they were really proud. They talked about being really proud and absolutely they should. But for me, it was, what if I didn't go? What if I don't go? What, what, what will they think then? They'd still love me. They wouldn't care, but they were just uber proud that I was the first one.

So have those open conversations around expectations around the child. Okay, no matter their age and celebrate small wins. So, encourage them to take those small steps out of the comfort zone that we were talking about. But celebrate those as

well. You know, whether it is, it can be anything around, you know, sitting assessments or exams that they've not done before.

And maybe asking a new friend to go out, you know, do you fancy going out or hang around town? to the cinema, bowling, whatever, that is still a really big achievement for some of these kids because they don't, they're worried about other people's perceptions. Really celebrate them, yeah, and the effort that they're putting in.

Okay, three, critic. So, the critic archetype involves those kids who constantly speak negatively about themselves. So, let's think about how we can really support them. And these are three strategies to do that. Positive reinforcement. So, compliment and acknowledge their strengths and achievements regularly.

And this is exhausting sometimes when you've got more than one kid, I absolutely get that, but it is about noticing, seeing them, you know, because that's what kids want. They want to be seen and they want to be heard. So, when they tell you, reflect back what they're saying they know you've heard them.

Put the spotlight on them, you know, whether it's around the dinner table or in the car. You know, and especially if you've got more than one child, really, you know, look at how you can put the spotlight on them in turn. Yeah. Self-awareness, help them recognize when their self-talk turns negative.

Guide them to reframe those thoughts. So, for instance, if you've got, oh, I'm no good at that. sometimes we have stuff like I hear from my students, I'm no good at sport. Oh, why you? Why do you think you're no good at sport? Oh, well, I lost that football match, or I lost that tennis match. So, you're no good at sport, even though it was only one match and in one in one area.

really reframe them. Maybe that was just a bad day and actually we've got to practice, you know, really guide them in re framing those thoughts. You're not, you're not bad at sport, are you? You're actually quite good at sports. That was just a particularly hard day or a hard match. And what I will say with this is out of Out of them all, all the archetypes that I'm going to kind of talk to you about today is that this is the one that can really seep, can really get into their self-esteem.

So, if you think that it is Becoming destructive. Consider seeking therapy or counselling. Now, that doesn't have to be me, obv's. But, go to, if you're in a

primary school, go to the pastoral, ask them for ELSA, which helps them regulate their emotion. Most primary schools have an ELSA worker in now. So, look at that.

The other thing as well is, if they're in high school or sixth form, go to their pastoral, ask for them to have a learning mentor just to help, and that can be, you know, kind of done in secret. They don't need to be going to class and pulling them out. You know, they can, they have drop ins sometimes, they can just nip in at lunch or break, things like that.

But just give them somebody else, another adult, that is trained in this kind of thing that can really help boost and support and help them understand where it comes from and to reframe it.

All right, because again, it's exhausting for parents. Uni, exactly the same thing. Have counsellors at uni. Encourage your students to go to the counselling or at least contact the pastoral to see what kind of support is there. If not, then seek professional help. If you are going to go down the professional route and you're going to go.

You can go straight to your doctor. We know that the waiting list is quite high at the minute. If you're going to go privately, go through one of the counselling professional bodies. So, like the BACP, which is the British Counselling, no, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapist, which is what I'm in, which is why I should know it.

But there are lots out there. There's like the counselling directory and have a look. If it is that you need a counsellor in your area and you're not sure, drop me a message and I will tell you what to look for. Okay.

Okay. So, the next one, the projector. And this is not that little computer that we're talking about that project is nice, big picture on the wall when we're watching movies, but projectors tend to blame others for their problem. Okay. How can we help them take responsibility? Well, foster accountability, teach them the importance of taking responsibility for their actions and their choices. All right. Another, just like a little add on to this point for me would be as well. Look at a no blame environment, okay?

Not, so I always go, if there's, you know, a pile of clothes on the floor, or somebody spilled something or whatever, instead of going, who did this? Go, who can help me clean this up? You know, because the minute that you go, who did this? Everybody wants to shake away from, from that. Alright? But if, if actually we go, who can help me?

Then you're more likely to get that and, and you know what? It's not most of the time. It's not a big deal, is it? We don't need to know who's done it. We just need it sorted. So that's the first thing. Foster accountability, conflict resolution skills. So, help them learn to resolve issues with friends, peers, teachers, family member in a constructive manner, you know, help them, walk them through that process. And again, schools are really good at helping do this. If they're struggling at school, you know, don't be jumping in as a parent and trying to solve it for them. We need to walk them through. So, they've got that skill for future.

Yeah. Future proofing as I like to call it. And then lastly, on the projector, encourage empathy, empathizing with others can really reduce the inclination to blame. All right, because it helps us understand different people and different perspectives, you know, walk a mile in somebody else's shoe's kind of thoughts.

Excellent. So, the next one is the conservative. Okay, the conservative archetype resists change. Now we've all seen this haven't we? How do we support them embracing new experience? Well, not all at once, you know, gradual exposure is the first I would say. Introduce change in a small manageable step because that way you're going to reduce anxiety.

Do little things rather than a big thing. Be, be that adaptable person. Model adaptability. Demonstrate with a positive attitude towards trying new things. Encourage them to join in. So, for instance, food is a big one. I won't necessarily, I, I think I've got quite an eclectic taste in food and, but I'll always try something and it's really funny because, you know, sometimes I'll try it and the kids, you know, especially when they were younger, the kids would be laughing because they would like it and I wouldn't and vice versa.

And so, to kind of make it a little bit easier, but actually I'm going to give it a go. We don't, we don't have to like everything to be, you know, and that's the same with activities. You know, making new friends, things like that. And then lastly, on the conservative, find a common ground. So, discover interests that they like and encourage new experiences that may be aligned with them might not be

something that you're necessarily interested in, but if you want them, say, for instance, to try rugby, because I've already spoke about rugby.

So, say you wanted to try a new sport. Right. Why not go and watch a game rather than sign them up for it? Yeah. Find a friend that is doing something similar that they've got that little ally with them. You know, you don't need to be going full force, just one step at a time to see how it goes. There is nothing worse, especially with sports, that we sign them up to submit by the uniform if they don't like it.

Yeah, that's usually the thing. Mine always as well, whatever they've... Always tried. It's always been shoes, lots of shoes. So, they're more expensive, aren't they? really do it small, little things.

Next the worrier. So, worriers often struggle with excessive anxiety. And again, this is that element where I would say you might want to seek extra support here.

Okay, but I'll come on to that in a second. Often worries think and have anxiety on stuff they can't even control. Okay, how do we help them worry? there's lots of things you can do. There's mindfulness techniques, relaxation meditation. I have for younger ones I have like a little kind of relaxation album that helps them really takes them through little exercise that helps them stay in the moment.

Check out the website. You'll see that if that's something that you're interested in.

Also breathing techniques as well. kind of the quickest way to calm down any anxiety, no matter the age. this can be for us as adults as well as to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. And it really calms down that fight and flight center that we have. All right. Get them to write down concerns, worries.

I know the book, The Worry Monster, that's on about, you know, writing it down, putting it under your pillow and then it being taken away by parents and stuff. But really getting it out of the head it's not running round on that loop. Talk about their worries with them, help walk through play. I often with some of my clients play kind of what I call Enola Holmes, a little detective.

Okay. What is that worry? Let's have a look at the facts around that worry. You know, particularly if they're talking about peers or friendships or you know, mom

and dad's, well, what's the evidence for that? You know, because often worriers, they, it will be generalized and it will go big very quickly.

And actually, when we look back at the facts, oh, okay, maybe it's not as bad as we think. So absolutely not minimizing their worries, but getting them to explore and walk them through that process. And again, what I would say again, seek professional support, whether it's at school, at high school. Sixth form, uni because if anxiety gets too big, it can be debilitating and stops them kind of A, enjoying life and B, going to school quite often.

consider consulting somebody professionally if you think this is too big, you know, and there's, I think the biggest thing for me and the parents that I work with is I often say, you know, the bravest step is getting help for your kids because we're kind of, you know, that expectation that parents know what to do.

And actually, if we were given a book when that baby was born, if you have any more, they'd have to give you a completely different book. if your car was broken, you'd go to a mechanic. If your kid is struggling, go and get professional support.

And lastly, there is sensitive. So Sensitive archetypes get easily overwhelmed, how can we provide them with tools to manage their emotions?

So, validate those emotions first. Acknowledge their feelings. Provide a safe space for them to be able to express themselves. And walk them through that process. And what I mean by that is teach them emotional regulation, you know, help them with this stuff like deep breathing and getting outside, get them to do a list of how they can manage these overwhelming emotions.

You know, I often, doesn't matter their age, I will say, okay, when you feel like this, what do you do? And they go, what do you mean? You know, okay. What do you like to do that helps you calm? Is that, you know, and that can be anything from getting a hug off mum and dad to making a, you know, I nearly said a mixtape that just shows my age, a playlist of songs that really help calm.

Go get outside. Mother Nature is an amazing way to calm down our nervous system really quickly. To get them to make their own little list and put that up somewhere. Yeah, especially if they're younger. But actually, what is their go to? It doesn't matter if they've got a list on the phone or they've got a list on the wall.

It's what is their go to that will help them make themselves feel better because actually in that moment, it's very difficult. Whereas if they've got something that they can look at, that will really help. And then again, therapeutic support if you need. Now, sometimes it's not about doing a whole process or going for therapy.

Sometimes it can be as little as like, for instance, I've got some workbooks on the website and this is not, this is not a sales pitch. Like if they're angry, why are they angry? Okay. So, journal that with them, but like on the website, I've got different ones for different Emotional issues that I've seen come up the most regularly with kids, you know, but there's lots of things out there that you can, you can do that are really cheap and inexpensive that to just help walk them through it, you know, sometimes one of the big things that I do, and this is really funny, because If I get Lego out in my office or I get colouring out, I often will leave it out.

If I've had a young, young, young one, kind of a five, six-year-old in the office, what I do is more often than not is leave it out. For when the older ones come in and it's the 17, 18-year-olds that sit down on the floor and start colouring or playing with the Lego. And actually, what I find and the reason I do this is because it helps them talk and it's keeping their conscious mind happy while they talk around the deepest stuff that's going on for them.

Car journey is exactly the same. They don't have to do face to face your side by side or they're in the back and you're in the front and it just really helps them. Keep them kind of that conscious mind of should I tell them they should or not, blah, blah, blah, busy while they can then really tell you how they feel.

it doesn't have to be as big as therapy, but obviously. If it's, if it's too big for you to manage get some support with it. Absolutely. there you have it listeners, a real kind of run by comprehensive look at all the archetypes, but also what we can do to really support. our kids because all these archetypes are those children who have low resilience.

if you recognize your child in any of these, remember that with patience and the right support, you can help them build resilience and thrive. And that's what we want in it. You know, we talk about kids being happy, but actually Yes, of course we want them to be happy, but we need them to be resilient.

We want happiness, but we need them to be resilient. So, if you'd like to explore these in more depth, check out Parents Guide to Raising a Resilient Kid in the

Transcript

show notes. Thank you for listening, and see you next time. Lots of love from my family to yours. Bye for now.