

THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 4 – Episode 2

Future-Proof Toolbox - Igniting Positive Mindsets in Kids & Teens

How do we ignite a positive mindset in our kids and teens? How

do we future proof our kids? Well, today in the podcast, we're going to look at essential aspects of nurturing, resilient, confident, and compassionate young minds. We're going to delve deep into a topic of promoting positive mindset in our young people, and that doesn't matter whether you're a parent, an educator, a caregiver this episode is going to be packed with actionable, strategies. Think of this as your coping toolbox as we navigate bringing up our children together.

Welcome to the Resilient Kid podcast. I am Ashley Costello, psychotherapist of over 25 years, founder and CEO of the Resilient Kid. Hello.

Welcome. Welcome. So I'm kind of excited about today's topic. And the reason being is because. I get asked a lot, , around this topic, around positive mindset. A lot of parents will come to me and they will say, they're just in a negative frame of mind. How do we turn that around? , or, they always see, the bad in things.

They always catastrophize. How do we do this? How do we make them more positive? Now, if you've listened to the podcast before, you'll know that

I am a big believer in resilience being built. and built ahead of life's challenges. So it's not just around adversity or trauma and then us pulling ourselves up by the bootstraps and getting on with it and that's resilience.

Of course, there's lots of people who have done it that way, but I'm here to say for our kids, for our young people, we absolutely can build it ahead of time. And this is a really good kind of component, a building block, if you will, of how to do that. So positive mindset is a really essential building block to build their resilience.

So let's crack on. Let's get right into it. So what do we mean by positive mindset? What is it that when we say that, what is it? Well, I'll tell you. It's, it's around, ,

how we think about things, , how we really look at, , how they kind of characterize, , themselves sometimes and the challenges they have.

It's, it's a belief in yourself to overcome challenges. It's a belief in being able to attain success. And also, I think another element of it is really focusing on present moment stuff. Okay. So having that optimistic outlook, but also being able to reframe those negative thoughts into positive. Thoughts are positive opportunities as well as I guess it comes down to that being hopeful, really hopeful.

So why is it important for our young people to cultivate this positive mindset? Well, it's important for us all. It doesn't matter our age. It's really, really important. I have a couple of clients who are in their 80s. I mean, I adore these people, I was, I was going to say then oxygenarians, but then I thought, actually, is that true?

Um, but I adore them because they have come to therapy in their eighties. And I, I said to them both, why, why now? Like, surely, you've had all the answers. Surely, you've lived a life. You know, why therapy? Why now? And they both said to me, Ashley, I've been carrying stuff for such a long time and I just want to enjoy what I've got left.

And I know that I need help to do that. And I was like, flabbergasted because I think, you know, obviously life is Yes, we can use the cliches, life is a journey and, and all those kinds of things, but actually, it is a constant journey of learning, isn't it? And to think, even me in my job, you think at 80, you've probably got exhausted and actually they didn't, but to have that is just amazing.

One of the things that I learned from them, because I, you know, as much as I help support, um, um, teach clients. I also learn lots from them. And from these two older clients, I really learned that to have that hope, to have that attitude of optimism, to know that it's never too late. It was just amazing their outlook; their attitude was fabulous.

And so it's important, even though we're talking right now about young people, it's important to realize that a lot of what I am telling you on these podcasts, we can do as adults, as adults. And actually, sometimes it's imperative that we do it as adults in the lives of our young people. So they see us modelling it.

So why is it so important? Well, positive mindset builds our resilience. All right. It really does. It's a cornerstone of resilience. It helps with their emotional wellbeing.

All right. Fostering feelings of happiness. Happiness doesn't just come naturally. You know, come out of the box when you open a cereal in the morning, it is something that has to be worked at.

It is something that is a choice. If it is a choice, we have to choose it. It isn't something that just happens to us.

Um, and I think a lot of teens, when I do work with them, kind of, start to realize that they don't understand why they're not happy. They have everything. And they will openly say this to me, you know, I have everything.

I have, you know, a lovely house. I have a family, you know, we're not, we're not poor. I don't understand why I'm not happy. Okay. Why are you not choosing to be happy? So, you know, having, realizing it's a choice is such a big kind of curve ball for them, but they love it. Once they've got the concept, they love it.

So it really helps with them managing their stress, regulating their emotions, their overall emotional wellbeing, having this positive mindset really has a huge impact on that.

And, and having that. Optimism, you know, the, like I was talking about my 80-year-old clients having that optimism, , really comes from positive mindset and that optimism that they can do this, you know, achieve their goals, achieve their dreams.

That doesn't matter whether it's. Upcoming exams, learning to drive, wanting to travel the world, , getting in their first relationship or better relationships. Optimism is the one that drives us. to pursue those kind of dreams and goals. And just talking about relationships,

it really helps having healthy relationships.

Having that positive mindset fosters that healthy relationship. Not just with new people, but with you guys. Whether you're their family or whether your peers, whether you're their educators, I know I have a lot of listeners to the podcast who are, , coaches or, , afterschool teachers, , whether it's dance or rugby or, , karate, all those kinds of, , coaches, I guess they, they, it helps with the relationship with them., and also it helps with their academic success, whatever that looks like for your child.

And that doesn't matter if they are learning to write their name or taking their A levels. , it helps with them because it keeps them more engaged in learning and they're more likely to seek help. So it's important that we cultivate a positive mindset in our young people and this is how we're going to do it.

Okay, so the first thing I would say is look at language, the kind of language that our kids are talking and we are talking about in front of them. So, I always talk about the power of language and reframing it. And this is kind of reframing negative thoughts into positive thoughts or positive opportunities.

. This can come down to sometimes feedback. When we're giving feedback, our young people can be very sensitive to the feedback that we give them and I think it's really important that we watch our language around them. You know, we've come a long way since our , parents, , there's lots of, lots of things that my mum would say to me as a generation that I wouldn't dream of saying to my kids, , you know, things like pick a window, pick a window, you're going to go through that one if you don't behave.

Now, it was a northern joke. There is nothing, there was never any harm. I was very lucky; I didn't grow up in a house. It was all said with love. It was a Northern sense of humour. Would I say that to my kids now? Absolutely not. Of course I wouldn't. , we would laugh at my mom saying it. , but we wouldn't use that kind of language now. So we really have to think about the kind of language we're using, kind of feedback that we're giving because often, and I think this comes particularly true with mums, we're so cheerleading them, want them to be in their corner that we often worry that they're not going to get it, , that they're going to fail in some way.

So, you know, don't forget your kit. Is your room tidy? Have you done your homework? It often comes sometimes to a list of things. And so we get on that spiral, of commands that we often forget our language, and we often forget how to use it in a positive way. So, feedback is a really easy way in being able to change that mindset.

For instance, I talk about feedback in, ways of, and this comes from, uh, Katherine Sandland. If you know her, she lives locally to me. She is a public speaker. She does a, beautiful workshop called Phenomenal Woman, , which I'm lucky enough, along with another colleague of ours, Sue, and we give feedback to , , the attendees of the course.

And what we talk about is, , I really like that. I'd love to see more off instead of that's good. That's bad. I don't want to see any more of that.

So when we think about feedback with kids, if we think about it in a real positive way, how to spin it positively when we're saying, I'd love to see more off.

They're already on board with that. They're already open to taking feedback and we're doing it in a positive way. And we're changing their mindset while we do it. So instead of being defensive, they're already open to doing whatever it is you need them to do more of. So thanks for washing the dishes today.

I really appreciate that. And that's important for us to show our appreciation and thanks to stuff that they do, by the way. Don't just take it for granted. Because. We often get taken for granted and we don't like it. So let's make it a culture of thanking people. My kids thank me a lot for making dinner.

Every, I'd say every night, it's rare that they don't go. Thank you for dinner as we sit down, you know, and that's before they've tasted it. Might not always thank me afterwards. , so let's get back to the, the example. Thank you for. Washing the pots tonight. I really appreciate it. , So thanking that, but then when you will need them to do more of things like, I'd really appreciate if you tidied your room today, or I'd really like to see you bring your laundry down more often, you know, can you see how that lands in comparison to bring your laundry down?

Yeah, it's so much different, and it really lands with us better. You know, it helps us, , get on board with what we're asking, with that request. So feedback is a really important way of kind of reframing stuff.

, Also on the reframe, and I spoke a little bit about this last week on the podcast, on the, on the previous podcast.

I'll go back for more details about this, but think about reframing language in, opportunities rather than failures. And I spoke in depth about this, so I won't go into it, um, today too much. But what I spoke about last week was when we talk about failures, when we talk about things that we've done wrong, think of it as unfinished business.

That's reframing the word failure. Okay, you didn't do it this time. Let's see that as unfinished business. What can you do to improve? How can you do that better next

time? That doesn't matter if it's homework, coursework, conversation with a friend, , conversation with the teacher. How can you do that better next time?

How can I support you to do that better next time? , my youngest was in a play at weekend, , and it was Wizard of Oz. And he was the wizard. And if you know the story, the wizard is all this powerful, , behind a screen, big voice, , and he did the voice amazing. It was really, really good. I had a friend come up to me in the interval and, , they didn't know what character he was because he was part of the ensemble.

blah, blah, blah. And he danced and he had like a small part. , and they were like, oh, he's doing really well, you know, but not realizing that he had this big part coming up because it's all secret and I hadn't told them. And, , so the big voice came out and it was amazing and the effects were brilliant,

, and then it kind of at the end, what happens is he comes out to speak to Dorothy and her friends and it was a bit of a reveal and he looked amazing and he said, and as he set off, this was in the matinee performance. He realized he hadn't picked up his props that he was then going to give out to the Tin Man and the Lion and the Scarecrow.

And He carried on, he carried on regardless, but there was, Dorothy had to give a line back to him, , when they were having a bit of a dialogue, and she mentioned the bag, and obviously he didn't have the bag because he'd forgot to bring it out. And I didn't see him in between shows, his dad went to the second show, I went to the first, he went to the second.

And he was brilliant in the second. He never forgot it. He absolutely bang on. He did it. It was amazing, blah, blah, blah. But he did come out and say, oh my God, I messed up the matinee performance. And I said, you didn't mess up, you forgot. So, so I was kind of Reframing that and I said to him, you carried on.

So that's amazing. You know, you did really, really well. How could you do it next time? Do you think if you ever forgot something in future, because this is his thing acting, so there's going to be another time, isn't it? So how could you do it next time? And we talked about, and this wasn't me criticizing. I said, I hadn't realized until Dorothy mentioned the bag that you were supposed to have a bag with you.

So I said, how could you do it differently? And we talked about how he could improvise around it, how he could just go, you know, stop this wizard of us, you know, is so amazing. So clever. He's forgot his bag, you know, and make a bit of a joke of it and things like that. So we talked around how he could do it differently, but framing it very positively because he still did it.

He didn't go to pieces. He didn't forget his lines, you know, he still did it. And that was amazing. How could he improve on that? You know, what is that unfinished business? He could see that as a massive failing and that would have hit him for the next performance. But actually, , he did really well.

So it's things around that we need to talk. We really think about our language around our kids because it has an impact. It hits them. Think about. When we can, ahead of time, when we've got to ask them to do something, or we've got to have those big conversations, the language that we're going to use, think about it, and sometimes I will say stuff out loud to see how it lands with me, before I'm going to then say it to a younger person.

So, yeah, just be mindful of that because I think that's a really important part of that positive mindset that we want to cultivate for them. Okay, next bit. So, how do we help them? Be more confident and competent. Confidence and competence are really important building blocks and resilience. And how does that kind of come into positive mindset?

Well, it's around us building and teaching problem solving skills. Again, embracing failure as a learning opportunity, but actually fostering that growth mindset. Now, a lot of educators, , and probably a lot of parents will know that Carol Dweck talked about, ,, growth mindset. So rather than, , I can't, I can again around reframing of our language, but actually, how often do we give our young people opportunities to problem solve?

How often do we give them opportunities to learn and does not step in and do it for them? Now in school, the, the culture is much more around. Allowing a child to learn and giving them opportunities to learn, but quite often that comes around academics and so at home, how do we do it? , I think, because quite often as parents, because we're all really busy, aren't we, what happens often is we will remove the learning opportunity to think, okay, well, that's done for them, or we can get them to do that.

, and we've robbed them of that. We've robbed them of developing their problem-solving skills. So quite often when young people ask me things, I'll say, so, okay, so how, how are we going to do that? Or how are you going to do that? , and I will turn it back to them, , and sometimes we have one of those where you just sit and, , what's the word kind of mind map.

, I think it's another word for it. I can't think of it right now, but kind of come up with loads and loads of ideas. Brainstorming. I don't really like that word brainstorming, but you get the gist. , but that kind of write down loads of ideas of how you can do that one thing, , they want to do this.

How do they do it? And I've even done this with my eldest who is, , at Sixth Farm, , she wants to go to Liverpool on the train with some friends and, okay, so how are you going to do that? You know, like, tell me your plan and she'll be like, what do you mean? Well, okay, how are you going to do that?

So, , she has to look up the train time, how to buy a ticket. , where does she get off? Where do they want to go to? What time are they catching? That's still problem-solving skills as well as logistics. You know, that's really cool, but I don't go, Oh yeah. Well, if you catch the, you know, 1130 train um, and then catch the 230 back, this is where you go.

No, you need to work this out because guess what, if that train doesn't come at the other end that she's expecting to get on, that I've told her she should get on, she needs to be able to work it out and not just ring me. I might be on a call. Her dad might be working away. She needs to be able to work it out herself.

So, you know, giving them those foundational skills of problem solving doesn't matter what the age is. It's given the opportunity. Okay. , the other thing that That really comes into a positive mindset and, and quite often I feel this is somewhat overused. And so we get to a point where we think, oh no, it's no good, but gratitude is really important.

It, well, I guess, why do I feel it's so important? Because it really promotes that positive mindset. that the positive emotions and it's really, really easy to do. And what I find is those children that are regularly, , practicing gratitude they're the ones who mental health improves really quickly.

, they're the ones who have lower anxiety, lower stress. They, , and particularly for this case around positive mindset is that they have a more enhanced emotional wellbeing. They're more likely to go for positive emotions than negative. They are happier, more content, more optimistic. They've got better social relationships, um, better school engagement, and that's not just academics.

For me, it's more, they participate more in class, they seek out opportunities to learn and to grow. , and also, you know, research, and research backs all this up, by the way, that I'm saying about gratitude. But also, they have a better physical health. Because they tend to engage in healthier behaviors like exercise, , , getting more adequate sleep, that kind of thing.

, so it does have massive, quite profound effects on, on young people. But we don't always encourage it at home, you know, past the usual. Thank you. So it's, it is kind of really important that we do that, , you , that we talk about practicing gratitude. And there's plenty of ways to practice gratitude.

, you know, you can do a gratitude jar, , where you are right down and you can do this kind of round the table in the car, you know, things like that. You can do it where you. All name three things that you are grateful for. You can do this if they're younger and you're putting them to bed. What's three things you're grateful for today.

If you do that on a regular basis, the particularly at bedtime that I've had a bad day, the anxiety, the stress that starts to build will, will seep away because they will, by purely practicing those gratitude, it's shifts that mindset, it shifts that. From negative to a positive mindset, you can, so you can do a gratitude jar, you know, quite often we, on New Year's Eve, and I think I've said this to you, we will do a little jar and we will say for the things that we've been grateful for that year, kind of those memories that pop up and that can be, you know, going on holiday with friends or meeting up with somebody or, , uh, getting a new puppy, which we are more about that later.

You know, things like that will go into that jar and then we'll open it, , later on, which is really nice. And so you can do that. You can, , talk about three things that you're grateful for. You can talk about your own gratitude. I'm really grateful that for your help there aren't I lucky? , those kinds of things, those kinds of conversations around being thankful really shifts that positive, that negative to positive mindset. So it's really important that we, , try and do that. And then I think

the other thing that I wanted to kind of say to you that I think is really important, , is the kind of, I suppose it kind of almost goes into two, but it's, it's being more mindful of right now. bringing them back to, you know, we can often spiral with lots of things that's going on, can't we? You know, , things like they might be having issues with friendships. They might be, , struggling with stuff at school, like, you know, homework or a certain subject. excuse me, things like that. And I think it's important that actually we don't encourage them to spiral because, , and I've talked about this before where we have, , especially with younger people, I talk about, um, cloud worries and rabbit worries and cloud worries are something that's fleeting and they go and that's fine.

But rabbit worries are something where we kind of go down that rabbit warren of five or six different things that will have an impact on that worry. , and actually it's important that we stop that and be mindful really helps that. So I might use that terminology with young people, but with my, with very young people, but with my teens, , and young adults, I'll say to them, what's the spiral?

Where's the spiral here? You know, where they might be worried about, , say coursework, but if I don't get that done and then this and this and this and they come up with five, five or six different worries. Trying to be mindful, trying to bring them back to the present moment really stops that. , one of the ways that they can do that is to count backwards 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and then put in a positive sentence there.

So they've got a worry that's spiralling, , 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, I'm okay, or I'm happy, healthy, and safe. , and that just stops that spiralling. , mindset for them, but actually to bring them back to what they're doing right now. So talk to them about, well, I'll tell you what, why don't you just come and chop some vegetables with me while I'm making dinner and we'll talk, you know, be mindful around what you're doing.

, rather than, having this mindset that shooting off in every direction, , getting them to do something where they have to focus just on that one thing, really helps stop that spiral really promotes like a positive mindset. And then I guess. The kind of last thing that I would say to you around, , positive mindset and kind of really trying to cultivate that for our kids is having that open communication, , that nurturing environment where the communication is two ways where we listen more than we talk.

, and it just really helps them feel like they belong, but actually it encourages them to seek help when they need it. And I think the biggest thing for me around this is when we model it as adults in their life, when we talk about our struggles, when we talk about, , , something that's gone wrong, how do we reframe it?

You know, yes, this has happened, but this is how I'm going to deal with it. , so I was modelling positive. , language, us reframing something that's, might have happened that's negative for us, us being grateful, us being mindful and, and trying and not trying to do 15 different things. And that's really hard, I think, as women, I think, as society, we are very much, , to do a million things at once, and it's not good for us.

It's really not good for our brain. So I think for us to be practicing all of the above is really important for them to see us model it for them. That is the biggest impact. That is the biggest influence we're going to have on their positive mindset. And this obviously all really helps building up that toolbox to cope.

For when things go wrong, and that's the whole point for me of doing this series this month of future proofing our kids, building that coping toolbox, really trying to ignite that positive mindset. , you are the biggest influence on your kids. I know as teens, you think you're not, but you really are.

But it starts from very young, . Good luck with that. , Couple of things I want to say before we finish one, , the Facebook group is back open. Yeah. , we had to have a bit of a rest because there's lots and lots of things going on. , and so we just kind of paused it. , that is back open. We are pretty much, , posting daily in there.

If you have a question, you can anonymously post. So if you've got a question that you want the community to answer, or you want me to answer, post anonymously if you don't want, , you know, if you don't want people to know who it is, because there is a wealth of knowledge in there. There's a wealth of resource in there.

, so that's the first thing. Get yourself over to a parent's guide, Raising a Resilient Kid group. Get over there. Pop yourself in. , the other thing is, , we have from last week's, , podcast, we devised a, , quiz, which is to look at the different strengths of our kids, like emotional strength, character strengths, all those kinds of things.

And that quiz will tell you how well your child or your young person does, because it's for any age group. In each of those strengths and then once you filled it out,

PDF will come to you on how to improve if there was any gaps in there. So that's the second thing. Um, third thing, please, please follow us on Instagram at the resilient kid.

, before Christmas, we had quite a following and I got hacked. Somebody started selling cryptocurrency, had a million messages. No, it wasn't me. And, , after trying to recover the account, we couldn't, so we started from scratch. So it's to lower numbers. Please, please come over. , and then lastly, take care.

You know where we are. There is plenty of ways that you, you can DM me, you can email me ashley@theresilientkid.co.uk. If you need help, or if you want to reach out, you've got a question you want me to answer, go to the Facebook group. , there is going to be some exciting news in the next, , couple of months.

We are, , working, quite heavily behind the scenes to, um, get this news up and going. So, , yeah, listen out, listen out, take care of everyone. Lots of love from my family to yours and see you soon. Thanks for listening.