

Develop a resilience mindset

by Michael Grose



How to approach a resilience mindset to look after your mental health and well-being in order to develop a sense of lasting resilience in your kids.

There are two ways to get fit. You can start a fitness regime which may include joining a gym, hitting the road chalking up heaps of kilometers or take up Pilates, aerobics or one of the many exercise classes available. In other words, you make some big changes designed to bring some immediate results.

The alternative is to develop a fitness mindset and begin to make small adjustments to different areas of your life. Walk to the shops rather than drive. Spend more time in the garden and less in front of the television on weekends. Walk up stairs rather than take lifts. You won't get the instant results that come from adopting a more serious fitness regime but you are more likely to get lasting results over time that the lifestyle adjustments that come through adopting a fitness mindset brings.

The same approach applies to our mental health and well-being. You can make large lifestyle adjustments including taking a less stressful job, making a sea or tree change, giving up alcohol altogether and taking up meditating. These are the types of changes people make as a result of a health scare, or a breakdown of some sort. You can take the gentler approach, adapting a resilience mindset and looking after your mental health and well-being on a regular basis. This is preventative by nature and increases the likelihood that you stick to the changes you make.

Here are some simple things to do to help you develop a mindset for resilience:

1. Watch your self-talk

Become more aware the messages you constantly send yourself. The little voice in your head can have a catastrophic impact on you if you let it. It can talk you into the blues, lower your self-esteem and build mountains out of molehills if you let it. Once you are aware of its impact you can switch it off or change its negative chatter to something a little more positive. Both take practice. It's not as easy as it sounds altering the patter in your head but you can work at it.



2. Watch your language

Build an awareness of your language and its impact on your well-being. You can easily catastrophise about the simplest events and you feel like the sky is about to cave in, or you can moderate your language and things won't seem so bad.

3. Build in regular down-time

As a professional speaker I know how easy it is to take bookings for back-to-back presentations week in, week out as the lure of building a healthy bank balance becomes too hard to resist. Working flat out without a break is a fool's game. I've learned from experience to build regular down-time into my schedule, so I can maintain my passion and enthusiasm for my work. When you have a resilience mindset you see the value of down-time to your well-being and you see the positive impact that it has on your relationships. You recognise that you smile more and you have more energy for the people and activities that you love.

4. Get plenty of sleep

We are only beginning to make the links now between sleep and personal well-being. Mothers of newborns know what sleep deprivation is like. It's debilitating. You can't function properly and you become easily depressed. Many people spend much of their lives experiencing some form of sleep deprivation, and they compensate by taking regular caffeine hits, drinking alcohol and..... . When you develop a resilience mindset you'll value sleep more, and look for opportunities to get a good night's sleep.

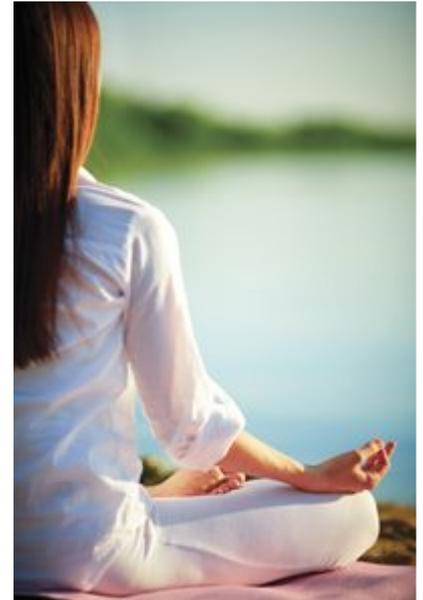
5. Have something that energises and relaxes you

My dad used to say that everyone needs a hobby. He's right. An interest outside of work or family is a boon for your state of mind. Kids generally have few problems in this area, but adults can easily lose sight of the fact that we need to have something in our lives that energises us and also makes us interesting.

6. Stay flexible and realistic in your thinking- don't get locked into 'must do' thinking

Watch your language to see if it's full of absolute, imperative terms such as: "I must always be on time....", "They should always use good manners..." , "they never do anything to help" " If this is you, then you may be stuck with an inflexible, unrealistic thinking style that causes you a great deal of stress. If so, then catch yourself and wind your language back. "I must always be on time....." becomes "I will try to be on time, but sometimes I can't be...." , "They should always use good manners....." becomes "I would like it if they were well-mannered but sometimes they aren't....." , "they never do anything to help....." becomes "they are sometimes helpful but at times they forget....."

If you are not convinced that looking after your well-being is a good idea then I'd like to appeal to an altruistic motive. When you develop a resilience mindset you get a greater understanding of what resilience is about and are in a far better position to develop a sense of lasting resilience in your kids.



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Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's the author of 10 books for parents including Thriving! and the best-selling Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It, and his latest release Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children. A trailblazer in the parenting and educational scenes Michael regularly appears in the media throughout Australia in programs including The Project, The Today Show and ABC radio.