

3 WAYS TO 'BE' TO HELP YOU CULTIVATE EMOTIONALLY RESILIENT YOUNG PEOPLE



Think back to your childhood and the messages and conditioning you received around emotions—and specifically around feeling and expressing them. I'm sure you've had an array of experiences, from parents and caretakers who created safe spaces and encouraged you to talk about and feel your emotions, to parents and caretakers who created no space at all for you to feel scared, sad, angry or even joyful. Now, connect to the present day and your relationship to your own emotions. Are you able to feel and express them fully? And what messaging and conditioning are you passing on to the children in your life? Just sit with that for a second...

3 WAYS TO 'BE'

1. BE THE MODEL

The analogy of putting your own oxygen mask on before you put on anyone else's is getting a little cliché, and yet it's something that we struggle with, both as individuals and as a culture. Letting go of the limiting belief that we are selfish if we put our self-care needs before others is critical for cultivating emotionally resilient kids. As parents and caretakers, we need to model that part of being human is having emotions and that our emotions deserve air-time. It's key for us to show our kids that sometimes we're scared, sad, angry, joyful etc., and that they can witness us experiencing the full range of emotions in a clean and safe way. Being a model for this, we might say something like, "Mommy's feeling some sadness right now. I'm just going to let my tears come out and let the sadness move through me. Don't worry, there is nothing you have to do; you can just sit here and pat mommy's back or go and play and I will come and join you soon." It's important to let them know that the emotion isn't directed at them and that they have options as to how they can be with you as you experience your emotions. Being the model of a person who experiences their full range of emotions will allow your kids to more openly and freely express and experience their own, which in the long run will help them be more emotionally resilient.

2. BE THE COACH

As a parent and caretaker, you are constantly coaching your kids. An important part of conscious child-rearing is developing key communication skills, which will allow you and the children in your life to adopt a growth mindset. If we can frame things so that life is about learning, stressing the point that failing, making mistakes, or being disappointed is simply part of the journey, it will go a long way in cultivating emotionally resilient kids. Two key skills in any coach's toolkit are listening and asking open-ended, curious questions. I think many of us make a mistake by thinking that we're good listeners. The truth of the matter is that we are trained to listen from a very self-focused, problem solving place vs. from an other-focused, open and curious place, where we support others to find their own solutions. When the young people in your world come to you with their emotions, where are you listening from? Are you truly listening, or are you focused on yourself? How curious and open are you being with the questions you are asking? Are the questions growing them and helping them connect to the source of the emotion? Are you creating an opportunity for learning, or are you solving the problem for them, potentially shutting down their opportunity to fully experience their emotions? The next time your kids present their emotions to you, observe where you are listening from and notice what kind of questions you're asking. Activate your inner coach, get curious with your questions and focus on helping them feel their emotions all the way—before you jump to help.

3. BE THE SANCTUARY

Things are busy and moving rapidly. We're a part of a technological age where information moves faster than our thoughts. This can be exhausting and make it hard for any of us to connect and be with our emotions. Being the sanctuary means both consciously understanding this and putting your understanding into action by intentionally carving out time and space to experience silence and stillness—for yourself, and for your kiddo(s). Many schools have Yoga and Meditation as part of the curriculum, and studies are showing how this is improving children's ability to listen, focus and learn. If your schools don't offer this—and even if they do, and you're wanting to cultivate emotionally resilient children—take a stand and be a sanctuary for yourself and for them. Perhaps every day before breakfast or bed, or perhaps at a designated time once a week, you can encourage the children in your life to have some quiet time. You can invite them to play alone quietly in their room; put some relaxing music on, light candles and have them lead you through a meditation; or simply say; “we're all going to practice being a sanctuary for the next 10 minutes, so we won't speak. Just listen to your breath and hear your own thoughts.” After doing something like this, Be a Coach and ask them what they learned by being silent or still. Keep cultivating that growth mindset and instilling a strong connection between their state of being and their emotional state.

HERE'S THE THING...

We know that you're already showing up in amazing and supportive ways for your kids. By continuing to and/or deepening your ability to Be the Model, the Coach and the Sanctuary, you can help your kiddos cultivate greater emotional resilience. Then together, we can create a happier, healthier, more connected place to be.

THANK YOU FOR EXPLORING THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC
WITH YOURSELF AND WITH YOUR KIDS.

As Lil' Sass would say:

CAPE ON!

