

insights

Daily lessons in resilience

by Michael Grose



Recently, I saw a mother give a simple, yet profound resilience lesson to her school-aged child, after he missed a much-anticipated excursion due to poor behaviour at school. Replying to the child's protests about teacher unfairness and his over-reaction to missing out on a learning opportunity his mum simply replied, "Oh well!" Then she busied herself with other tasks. The child stunned by her reaction, shrugged and headed off to complete his homework.

Adult reactions matter

It's in our reactions to children's and young people's every day mistakes, mess-ups, muck-ups and hurts where the real lessons in resilience lay.

The lessons for this child were simple but profound. "Oh well" meant:

- *Stuff happens*
- *Don't look for fault or blame*
- *Keep your perspective*
- *Pick yourself off and continue with what you were doing*

How to react

The resilience lesson for this mother were equally as profound. When a minor mishap with a child or teenager occurs:

- *Match your response to the incident*
- *Stay calm and be positive*
- *Don't look for fault or blame*
- *Remember, stuff happens*

Resilience lesson for parents – "Oh well"

Every day there are opportunities for parents to give their children lessons in resilience.

A child misses being picked for a team that he had his heart set on joining. *“Oh well. Let’s see how you go next time”*

When a boy experiences rejection in the playground at school. *“Oh well. You’ll find that some people don’t want to be your friend.”*

When a teenage girl doesn’t get the mark she thinks she deserves in an assignment. *“Oh well. Sometimes we don’t get the marks we think we deserve.”*

Match your response to the challenge to promote resilience

There are times when “Oh well” won’t cut it. When a child is bullied he needs your continued support.

When a student’s continuous efforts at improvement are constantly met with criticism then you may need to act on his behalf and meet with a teacher.

When a child always struggles to make the grade and is never picked for a team then you may need to help him make different choices.

These types of situations also present opportunities for daily lessons in resilience, but they require more parental support and teaching.

The resilience lessons learned are deeper and include concepts such as ‘things will eventually go your way,’ ‘there are times when you need to seek help’ and ‘this too shall pass.’

Promoting personal resilience focuses on helping kids cope with life’s hurts, disappointments and challenges in the present, while building strengths for the future.

Daily lessons in resilience are everywhere. You just need to be ready to make the most of these valuable lessons when they come your way.



Michael Grose

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*.