

Developing Capable Young People

Seven Strategies for Developing Capable Young People

From the book *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World* by H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen, www.positivediscipline.com

Recognize that the rate and intensity with which knowledge, technology, and lifestyle are changing have created conditions in which resiliency and personal resources are critical to effective living and learning.

Encourage the development of seven resources of highly resilient and capable people:

1. Strong perceptions of personal capabilities. "I am capable of facing problems and challenges and gaining strength and wisdom through experience."
2. Strong perceptions of significance. "My life has meaning and purpose, and I contribute in unique and meaningful ways."
3. Strong perceptions of personal influence over life. "I can influence what I do in life and am accountable for my actions and choices."
4. Strong intrapersonal skills. The ability to manage personal emotions through self-assessment, self-control, and self-discipline.
5. Strong interpersonal skills. The ability to communicate, cooperate, negotiate, share, empathize, listen, and work effectively with people.
6. Strong systemic skills. The ability to respond to the limits and consequences of everyday life with responsibility, adaptability, flexibility, and integrity.
7. Strong judgmental skills. The ability to make decisions based on moral and ethical principles, wisdom, and understanding.

Provide opportunities in homes and classrooms for children to develop the significant seven. Strategies such as family/class meetings, mentoring, and firmness with dignity and respect can provide opportunities for children to develop all of these resources.

Create and use rituals, traditions, and service projects as opportunities for growth and empowerment for children.

Increase the use of dialogue (a meaningful exchange of ideas and perceptions) as the essential process for encouraging closeness, trust, and learning: "What are your thoughts about that?"

Avoid "Did you? Can you? Will you? Won't you? Is everything okay?" etc. Instead use "What? How? When? In what way ____?" etc.

Build closeness and trust, and convey respect by avoiding the Five Barriers and using the Five Builders instead:

Barrier #1: Assuming: Acting on limiting assumptions about what a person can or can't do, say, think, etc. "I didn't tell you because you always get upset." "You always think ____." "You're too young to try that!" etc.

Builder #1: Checking: Giving people a clean slate: "How do you want to deal with this?" "What are your thoughts about ____?" "What will you need to have ready for ____?" etc.

Barrier #2: Rescuing/Explaining: Problem solving for a person: "____ is what is happening." "____ is why it is happening." "____ is how to deal with it." "Do it this way." etc.

Builder #2: Exploring: Problem solving with a person by letting them try something and then asking: "What did you experience in that situation?" "Why is that significant?" "How might you apply what you have learned in the future?" etc.

Barrier #3: Directing: Telling people what to do: "Pick up your shoes." "Put that away." "Don't forget your lunch." "Be sure and ____." Etc.

Builder #3: Inviting: Asking for participation/assistance: "I would appreciate any help you could give me in straightening up the room." "How do you plan to ____?" "What will you need to do in order to ____?" etc.

Barrier #4: Expecting: (too much too soon) Using potential as a standard and discounting people for not being there already: "I was expecting this room to be spotless." "You should know that already." "I appreciate ____ but you forgot ____." etc.

Builder #4: Celebrating: Focusing on effort progress and/or what was gained by trying: "I appreciate the effort you have made to clean up this room." "What did you learn from trying to do that?" "What progress do you see yourself making?" etc.

Barrier #5: Adultisms: Using stereotypes when dealing with people: "Teenagers are like that." "You know better than that! Surely you realize!" "You are too young to appreciate that." "Grow up!" "Why are you so childish." etc.

Builder #5: Respect: Allowing for people's uniqueness and individuality: "What is your perception of ____?" or "Let me check out what you think." "How do you see this issue?" etc.

Improve your relationships 100% by avoiding the **Five Barriers**. Where can you get that kind of return for doing less? Replace the **Barriers** with the Builders and double the positive impact of your contributions!