



July 3, 2013

Dear Friends,

Firelight recently hosted visitors from Acknowledge Alliance, a local non-profit organization focused on creating classrooms where children want to learn and teachers want to teach. They do this through fostering resilience among teachers and students, promoting overall wellbeing and empowering students to realize their full potential. Acknowledge Alliance "acknowledges that nurturing the whole child results in life-changing effects that go far beyond classroom walls." We were inspired by their work and would like to share some of their informational resources on building resilience in the classroom with you. To learn more about Acknowledge Alliance, please visit:

<http://www.acknowledgealliance.org/>

Sincerely,
The Firelight Team

(Call for Proposals) Open Society Foundations
(Open for Applications) Southern African Trust Leadership for Change Program
(Opportunity) Open Position for TVET Technical Advisor
(Resource) 10 Principles of Teachers
(Resource) Resiliency Quiz

(Call for Proposals) Open Society Foundations

The Open Society Foundations fund a range of programs around the world, from public health to education to business development. They currently have 10 open call for proposals on their website in Africa. Funding opportunities range from women's rights, disability rights, to access to legal services. They are accepting letters of inquiry on an ongoing basis.

To view the open calls and to apply, please visit:
<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants>

(Open for Applications) Southern African Trust Leadership for Change Program

The Southern Africa Trust invites applications for the second cycle of its Leadership for Change programme. The programme will run over a two-year period starting in September 2013, and will include four focus sessions each lasting one week. A maximum of fifteen (15) successful applicants will be selected from all southern African countries.

Leadership for Change was designed by the Trust to enhance leadership capability within civil society in Southern Africa to engage policy makers and leaders in other sectors of society. The programme strives to improve the collective strategic leadership of the civil society sector, providing selected emerging civil society leaders with a platform to reflect on different experiences and models of leadership, especially in pro-poor policy development and implementation. It enables civil society leaders to engage with each other on a range of leadership practices in a changing social, economic, and political context.

“Given their proximity to communities, civil society groups hold a strategically important position for poverty eradication efforts,” said Themba Mhlongo, head of programmes at the Southern Africa Trust. “However, civil society leaders are very often ineffective at exerting their influence on pro-poor policy formulation and decision making processes,” he said.

“The Leadership for Change initiative offers a space for next generation civil society leaders to activate their capabilities to influence the vision, values, and direction of civil society in southern Africa as a whole – and to develop their abilities to engage decision-makers in government and business with strategic ease and influence, for more effective poverty eradication efforts,” said Mhlongo.

Applications close on **15 July 2013**. More information and application forms are available at: www.lead4change.org or through www.southernafricatrust.org.

(Opportunity) TVET Planning

The Minister of State for TVET in Rwanda is searching for a long term Technical Advisor (up to 2 years) to place in the Planning Department of the Workforce Development Agency (WDA- www.wda.gov.rw). Funding is already secured and they are currently looking for candidates. Please contact l-boden@dfid.gov.uk with any questions or recommendations.

(Resource) 10 Principles of Teachers

The 10 Principles of Teachers Who Foster Resilience in Children, by Lisa Medoff, Ph.D., Acknowledge Alliance Resilience Consultant (Based on: Brooks, R. & Goldstein, S. (2001). Raising resilient children: Fostering strength, hope, and optimism in your child. New

York: Contemporary Books)

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To learn more about Acknowledge Alliance and Lisa Medoff's work, please visit:

<http://www.acknowledgealliance.org/>

(Resource) Resiliency Quiz, by Nan Henderson, M.S.W.

PART ONE:

Do you have the conditions in your life that research shows help people to be resilient?

People bounce back from tragedy, trauma, risks, and stress by having the following “protective” conditions in their lives. The more times you answer yes (below), the greater the chances you can bounce back from your life’s problems “with more power and more smarts.” And doing that is a sure way to increase self-esteem.

Answer yes or no to the following. Celebrate your “yes” answers and decide how you can change your “no” answers to “yes.” (You can also answer “sometimes” if that is more accurate than just “yes” or “no”.)

1. Caring and Support

- _____ I have several people in my life who give me unconditional love, nonjudgmental listening, and who I know are “there for me.”
- _____ I am involved in a school, work, faith, or other group where I feel cared for and valued.
- _____ I treat myself with kindness and compassion, and take time to nurture myself (including eating right and getting enough sleep and exercise).

2. High Expectations for Success

- _____ I have several people in my life who let me know they believe in my ability to succeed.
- _____ I get the message “You can succeed,” at my work or school.
- _____ I believe in myself most of the time, and generally give myself positive messages about my ability to accomplish my goals—even when I encounter difficulties.

3. Opportunities for Meaningful Participation

- _____ My voice (opinion) and choice (what I want) is heard and valued in my close personal relationships.
- _____ My opinions and ideas are listened to and respected at my work or school.
- _____ I volunteer to help others or a cause in my community, faith organization, or school.

4. Positive Bonds

- _____ I am involved in one or more positive after-work or after-school hobbies or activities.
- _____ I participate in one or more groups (such as a club, faith community, or sports team) outside of work or school.
- _____ I feel “close to” most people at my work or school.

5. Clear and Consistent Boundaries

- _____ Most of my relationships with friends and family members have clear, healthy boundaries (which include mutual respect, personal autonomy, and each person in the relationship both giving and receiving).
- _____ I experience clear, consistent expectations and rules at my work or in my school.
- _____ I set and maintain healthy boundaries for myself by standing up for myself, not letting others take advantage of me, and saying “no” when I need to.

6. Life Skills

- _____ I have (and use) good listening, honest communication, and healthy conflict resolution skills.
- _____ I have the training and skills I need to do my job well, or all the skills I need to do well in school.
- _____ I know how to set a goal and take the steps to achieve it.

PART TWO:

People also successfully overcome life difficulties by drawing upon internal qualities that research has shown are particularly helpful when encountering a crisis, major stressor, or trauma.

The following list can be thought of as a “personal resiliency builder” menu. No one has everything on this list. When “the going gets tough” you probably have three or four of these qualities that you use most naturally and most often.

It is helpful to know which are your primary resiliency builders; how have you used them in the past; and how can you use them to overcome the present challenges in your life.

You can also decide to add one or two of these to your “resiliency-builder” menu, if you think they would be useful for you.

PERSONAL RESILIENCY BUILDERS

(Individual Qualities that Facilitate Resiliency)

Put a + by the top three or four resiliency builders you use most often. Ask yourself how you have used these in the past or currently use them. Think of how you can best apply these resiliency builders to current life problems, crises, or stressors.

(Optional) You can then put a T by one or two resiliency builders you think you should add to your personal repertoire.

- Relationships** — Sociability/ability to be a friend/ability to form positive relationships
- Service** – Giving of yourself to help other people; animals; organizations; and/or social causes
- Humor** — Having and using a good sense of humor
- Inner Direction** — Basing choices/decisions on internal evaluation (internal locus of control)
- Perceptiveness** — Insightful understanding of people and situations
- Independence** — “Adaptive” distancing from unhealthy people and situations/autonomy
- Positive View of Personal Future** – Optimism; expecting a positive future
- Flexibility** — Can adjust to change; can bend as necessary to positively cope with situations
- Love of Learning** — Capacity for and connection to learning
- Self-motivation** — Internal initiative and positive motivation from within
- Competence** — Being “good at something”/personal competence
- Self-Worth** — Feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
- Spirituality** — Personal faith in something greater
- Perseverance** — Keeping on despite difficulty; doesn’t give up
- Creativity** — Expressing yourself through artistic endeavor, or through other means of creativity

You Can Best Help Yourself or Someone Else Be More Resilient by...

1. Communicating the Resiliency Attitude: “What is right with you is more powerful than anything wrong with you.”
2. Focusing on the person’s strengths more than problems and weaknesses, and asking “How can these strengths be used to overcome problems?” One way to do this is to help yourself or another identify and best utilize top personal resiliency builders listed in The Resiliency Quiz Part Two.
3. Providing for yourself or another the conditions listed in The Resiliency Quiz Part One.
4. Having patience...successfully bouncing back from a significant trauma or crisis takes time.

To learn more and to access additional resources, please visit:

<http://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/the-resiliency-quiz/>

As part of the Firelight Foundation’s Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides “Newsflashes” to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash/>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.

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Ten Principles of Teachers Who Foster Resilience in Children

By Lisa Medoff, Ph.D., Acknowledge Alliance Resilience Consultant

Based on: Brooks, R. & Goldstein, S. (2001). *Raising resilient children: Fostering strength, hope, and optimism in your child*. New York: Contemporary Books

I. Empathy

- Put yourself in the student's place and see the world as s/he sees it
- Try to appreciate and validate his/her point of view
- Think: "Would I want someone speaking to me the way that I am speaking to this child?" and "Is what I am saying helpful and supportive or judgmental and accusatory?"
- Think about how different students would describe you. If any of these descriptions are negative, how can you change your behavior towards this child to make the description more positive?
- Understand that frustration and anger can blind us to empathy. Be extra careful about choosing your words and actions when you are frustrated with a child.

2. Active listening and effective communication

- Let children talk without interruption or telling them what to do or how to feel
- Do not use absolutes such as "always" or "never"
- Make sure to convey respect for what the student is thinking and feeling through your words and tone
- If you are busy when a student wants to speak with you, be honest. Say, "I really want to give you my full attention, but I can't right now. Can we talk after school?"
- Summarize what the student has said to you without judgment or advice. Many times, children just need to feel that they are being heard.
- Answer all questions honestly and respectfully, even if they are questions that you have answered before. Children often need repetition to really learn a concept. Say, "That's a very insightful question," or "I'm glad you asked me again to make sure that you understood."

3. Changing negative scripts

- If something you have said or done for a few weeks does not change students' behavior, try another approach. Remember that the dynamic of the classroom changes from year to year – what worked beautifully last year may fail spectacularly this year. Be willing to experiment.
- Think about alternative explanations for a child's poor behavior, other than that the child is lazy, stupid, or purposefully oppositional.
- If you find yourself having the same argument or power struggle with students week after week, think of alternative ways that you can respond so as to change the interaction.
- What phrases are you in the habit of using in your classroom? Examine these sayings. Do they help you get the behavior you want? How do you think children feel about themselves when they hear these phrases?

4. Helping children feel special and appreciated

- Find time, even just a few minutes per week, to give each student your undivided attention.
- Try to remember details about children (write them down if you have to!) and ask the children follow-up questions
- Convey the idea that even if you are disciplining a child for unacceptable classroom behavior, you still like that child as a person
- Smile at children as much as possible. It's a small gesture that goes a long way.
- Think about people in your life who make you feel good about yourself. Which of those behaviors can you replicate for the kids in your class?

5. Accepting children for who they are and helping them set realistic goals

- Understand that all children are born with different temperaments. Instead of yelling or punishing children for certain repeated behaviors, it is often better to accept their personality style and work with them to find their own path to success in school.
- Poor behavior is often a result of a mismatch of the environment and the needs of the child, so remember that fairness does not mean treating every child exactly the

same. Fairness is shown by responding to each child based on his/her particular needs and temperament.

- Help children set small, short-term goals that you know they can reach. Slightly increase the challenge with each new goal.

6. Helping children experience success by identifying and reinforcing competencies

- Continually offer positive, specific feedback about students' strengths
- Use the highlighting of strengths to build self-confidence. When children are confident, they are more likely to confront areas that are problematic.
- Help children learn to identify their own successes and to praise themselves for a job well done.
- Involve students in defining what will constitute success on a particular task or assignment (e.g. design the grading rubric as a class) and evaluating finished work.
- Help children attribute success to hard work, rather than being "smart." Along the same lines, help them attribute failure to the need to do something differently, instead of being "dumb." For example, say, "You must have really studied a lot to get an A on the math test," instead of, "Wow, you're really good at math."
- Acknowledge that strengths take time to develop. Be patient with students that struggle and teach them that improvement only comes with a lot of practice..

7. Helping children recognize that mistakes are opportunities to learn

- Consistently give the message that mistakes are merely a sign that the problem must be approached in a different way, not a sign of low intelligence or skills.
- Make your classroom a safe place to try new things. Be vigilant about students' reactions to others' mistakes. Do not allow name-calling or teasing. Give positive reinforcement to students who take a risk, even if their answer is incorrect. Never use sarcasm or a harsh tone in response to a wrong answer, even if you think the students will know you are just joking with them.
- Monitor your own reaction to making mistakes so that you are a good role model. Make sure to accept correction gracefully and emphasize that now you have learned something new.

- Help children understand the process that led to the mistake, rather than just marking answers right or wrong.
- Reduce defensiveness by acknowledging that certain tasks are difficult, but that you know the students can succeed if they keep trying and ask for help when needed.

8. Developing responsibility, compassion, and a social conscience by providing children with opportunities to contribute

- Give children as much responsibility as possible, especially in terms of helping others
- Group work that cannot be completed without the full participation of all members of the group can be particularly beneficial to fostering a positive, cooperative (rather than competitive) classroom climate.
- Look for instances when children are helpful or kind to others and give positive, specific feedback. Ask the student how it felt to help others.
- Work together to do something nice for the school or community. Decide as a class or in small groups what the project(s) will be.

9. Teaching children to solve problems and make decisions

- Help children define the problem, consider different solutions, judge what the most appropriate solution is, and evaluate the outcome.
- Consider holding a weekly meeting to define and solve problems in the classroom.
- Have rules in the classroom, such as, “You must ask at least two friends for help before you come to the teacher,” or “You must show the teacher at least two different ways you tried to solve the problem before you ask for help.”
- Give students hints to figuring out answers to their questions rather than automatically answering them. For example, instead of spelling a word for a child, help her sound it out or direct her to the dictionary.
- Be a role model for problem-solving by talking out your thought processes for students when you are confronted with a problem.

10. Disciplining in a way that promotes self-discipline and self-worth

- Think about how to set up your classroom and your lessons to prevent problems from emerging in the first place.
- Try to anticipate possible problems for every lesson and think about how you will respond. You will be more effective and less emotional if you are prepared for problems ahead of time.
- Think about whether children are learning from the disciplinary practices or if the practices are eliciting anger and resentment.
- Decide as a class what the rules should be and why. Also decide together what the consequences for breaking class rules should be.
- Consequences should be immediate and logical; they should help make reparations for harm caused as much as possible. Discipline should help students reflect on their actions and foresee likely consequences for their behavior.
- Discipline should also have the goal of promoting self-monitoring and self-discipline. Help students monitor their own behavior as much as possible.
- When disciplining children, make it a point to be as calm and rational as possible. If you do lose your temper, use the incident as a learning experience for the class. Explain what happened and why, and then talk about what you could have done instead.
- Emphasize your optimism about the student's ability to start over **RIGHT NOW** and make a better decision next time. Ask if the student needs help coming up with ideas to assist him/her in making better choices.