

School Counsellor Newsletter



Positive Conversations - Part Two: Learning from Experiences

Edition Five

In the previous newsletter Active Constructive Responding (ACR) was discussed. This style of responding to good news involves you, as the parent, showing genuine interest and support of your son so he can relive and amplify his positive experience. So what happens when your son shares news with you that is not so good? You can still respond in a way that is active and constructive, rather than passive and destructive, by being supportive, present and authentic. Yet rather than amplifying the experience, as it was not so positive, you can redirect his experience so that it is something he can learn from. This will certainly help to build his resilience.

At Breakfast with the Boys a few weeks ago, John Quinn shared many helpful messages about building resilience in young people. The approach to positive conversations below will help you to act on three of John's key messages from his presentation: support your son; help your son to set goals; and replace the word failure with learning so that your son always sees opportunities from his experiences.

A basic approach you can take when responding to news that is challenging, is to:

- **Acknowledge** your son's feelings
- **Praise him**: what was he able to do well, how was he able to cope etc

- **Reflect** on what happened and set goals for future experiences
- **Choice**: Remind him that he now has a choice as to how he moves forward

Here are some examples for you to consider so that you can build on the conversations you are already having with your son or try a different approach:

Example One: Your son has come home from school and told you about an argument he got into and that he ended up insulting his friend. He has not spoken to his friend since. Here are some approaches you could take as the parent:

That sounds really upsetting for you and I can see from the look on your face that you are feeling quite sad about this.

Well done on telling me this as I imagine it wasn't easy for you to share that this has happened.

Looking back at what happened, what do you think you could do differently if this were to happen again? Are there any things you said or did that you are proud of?

As I see it you have two options moving forward. You can either leave it as it is and feel frustrated or you can apologise to your friend and acknowledge where you could be better in the future.

Example Two: Your son has come home from school and told you that he did not make it into the sports team he was aiming for. Here are some approaches you

could take as the parent:

I can hear how disappointed you are and I know it is hard that you were not able to achieve your goal.

Well done on all the training and hard work you put into your trial. I can see that you made it through the rest of the school day okay after you heard this news - great work! It's great to hear that you are excited about leadership opportunities in the team you are in.

Did you talk to the coach about what you could work on for next year's trial? What do you feel are your strengths in this sport, and where are your areas to develop?

Where to from here? Shall we sit down and make a plan of attack for this season so that you can improve as much as possible? What do you think?



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Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim
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