



POWERFUL WORDS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

DEAR DR. ROBYN

Young students: "I have a no-quit, go-for-it attitude!"

Older students/teens/adults: "Persisting in the face of challenge & surging forward after failure."

Dear Dr. Robyn,

After listening to two of your (How to Talk to Kids about Anything) podcast episodes on kids, failure and resilience, I realized that I might not be setting the right environment for my child to feel like he can fail. I live in an area that is very high stress. I find that [my son] stops working at something before he fails...when I ask him about it he tells me it doesn't matter. What can I do to make sure he knows he can try, fail and then try again- and knows it does matter?

Lisa; New Jersey

Dear Lisa,

Creating an environment where your child can take healthy risks and fail is a great gift from any parent. A child can then learn that he is able to learn from his mistakes, shift direction, try again and eventually succeed if he just enlists the power of perseverance.

How do we convey to our children that failure is simply a stop along the way to success?

(1) See his indomitable spirit:

When you see your child enduring even as he copes with challenges, make sure you recognize it. "One thing I know about you is that whenever you come upon bumps in the road, you keep going. You learn from your mistakes and persist."

(2) Declare your home a safe-haven for blunders: When Sara Blakely, the founder of the mega-

successful apparel company, Spanx, was growing up, her father used to ask her "what did you fail at this week?" He didn't inquire about grades, scored goals or contests she won. He set the tone that it's not only okay to fail, it's expected and rewarded. In fact, she would receive a high-five from him when she would give her report! Today, almost 50 years old, she's worth \$1.1 billion.

(3) Step back so he can step up: Children enlist their own indomitable spirit when they want to achieve a goal and nobody else jumps in to achieve it for them. Put away your helicopters, snowplows and bubble wrap-- and allow your children to fall down, pick themselves up, pivot, and try again. The satisfaction gained when success is achieved through one's own trial and error is astronomical. That doesn't mean they shouldn't enlist help when needed, it simply means we need

to allow our children to lead the way towards their own success.

(4) Give him responsibilities:

When children contribute to the family and complete various tasks that help others, they learn agency. They realize that their gifts, their assistance and their completion of tasks matter. Praise his progress and thank him for his contributions.

Here's to your success!

