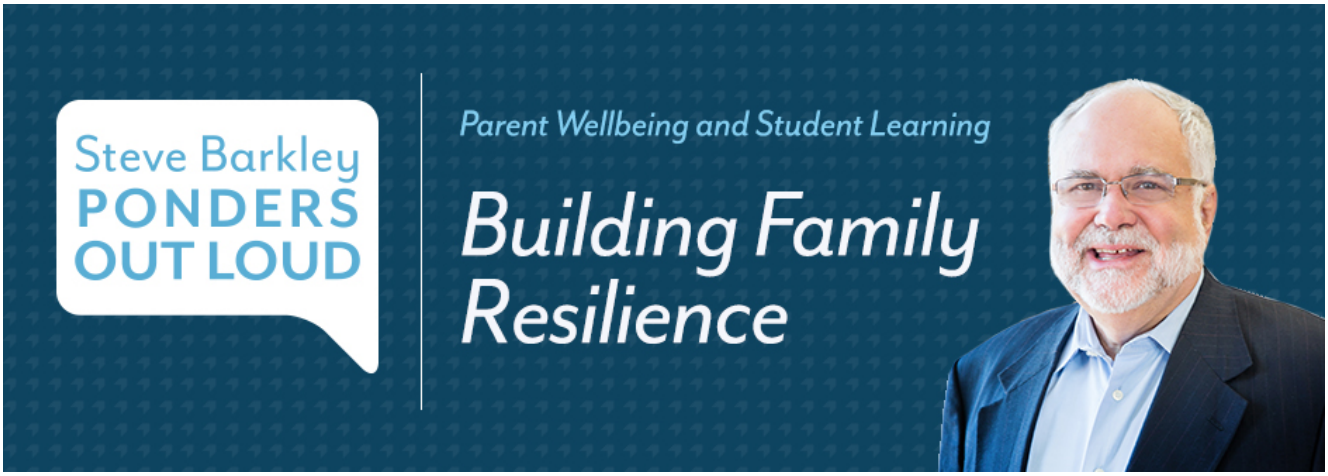
Podcast for Parents: Building Family Resilience



Resilience is the capacity that allows a person, group, community or family to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity. Children who lack resiliency need teachers, parents and other care givers to help them become resilient. This podcast explores some strategies for building your family's hero journey through this challenging time.

[How to Build a Resilient School Community: Three ways to Preserve Relationships So We Emerge Stronger Together (Phyllis Fagell)]

[The Importance of Setting Family Goals – and How to Do It]

[Subscribe to the Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud podcast on iTunes] or visit [BarkleyPD.com] to find new episodes!

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Steve [Intro]: 00:01 Hello and welcome to the Parent Wellbeing and Student Learning During School Closures Edition of the Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud podcast. With the extended closing of schools, we as parents have entered into a new territory regarding what we have known as "school learning."

With this and future podcasts, I'll look to share my experiences as a teacher, educator, parent, grandparent, and continuous learner.

Steve: 00:35 Building family resilience. The International Resilience Project, in A Guide to Promoting Resilience in Children: Strengthening The Human Spirit, written by Edith Grotberg, defines resilience as a universal capacity, which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity. I'd like to add to that list person, group, or community, the concept of family. The same author suggests that many children lack resiliency and they need parents and other caregivers to help them become resilient. I was sparked to record this podcast when I read a blog post titled, "How to Build a Resilient School Community: Three Ways to Preserve Relationships so we emerge stronger together. This post is written by Phyllis Fagel and I put the link in the lead into this podcast, reminds us that it's often true in life that we can not control some experiences. This certainly is not the year that educators or students or parents and caregivers had imagined, but it is the experience that we've got.

Steve: 02:25 And we can either use this time to grieve what we've lost, or we can learn to sit with the discomfort and adapt. Importantly, students, children will do as well with this issue as the adults who raise them and educate them, model for them. Fagel shares three ways that we can work together to create a more resilient community. I really believe that all three of them apply to families. First, she suggests that we reframe the pandemic as a hero's journey. Bruce Feiler, the author of, "Life is in The Transitions," states that most of us will experience three to five "lifequakes" or massive transitions with aftershocks that lasts for a few years. He suggests that in order to manage those traumas, it helps to understand that no one's story is a straight linear line and that the main character in a story

isn’t the hero. You see, he suggests it’s the wolf, the tornado or the pandemic that’s the main character. The hero emerges because of the villain. Let me repeat that. The hero emerged from the story because of the villain. To what can we describe that the pandemic is the main character of our current hero journey? It’s sending us on an adventure to face conflict and adversity and to emerge changed, stronger, improved. What’s so unusual about this current trauma is that we’re all having to face it at the same time. Family members, extended families, friends, teachers, colleagues, and our children.

Steve: 04:46 What are the stories from history and especially the stories of your family’s history that underscore that people can be strengthened by adversity? Who were those close to you whose stories illustrate a hero’s journey? In my own family, my sister’s family lost all of their possessions in a house fire while my niece and nephew were in middle school and high school. The issues that they tackled and overcame and the learning about how to reach deep for strength when needed is an example for my grandkids to explore. What are the stories our children will be telling their grandchildren of how they overcame the villain pandemic of 2020? Fagle’s second suggestion is that we boost everyone’s sense of competency. When people feel competent, they’re less on edge, they’re more forgiving and more self-compassionate. We need to reinforce for eachother what we can do when what we can’t do seems to be constantly confronting us.

Steve: 06:14 Again, those words take a little bit of time to ponder. Let me repeat them. We need to reinforce for each other what are the things that we can do when what we can’t do seems to be constantly confronting us. At this time, we want to play to people’s strengths and work with them to establish reasonable and attainable goals. This is one reason I began this series of podcasts for parents. Many parents felt that virtual learning in the quarantine was asking them to become

their child's teacher and I described instead, the role of being your child's learning coach. As a parent, I should not be in the position of teaching how to solve this math problem or balance a chemistry equation or define the social studies terms. What I can do is question, encourage. I can support sticktuitiveness. I may encourage exploration of where to get help or maybe I even build the acceptance that it's okay to not be able to do this now and learn it later with your teacher's input.

Steve: 07:36 Those are behaviors that I call being a learning coach. Be sure that you're recognizing and praising when your learner has persevered. When they've used trial and error, when they were willing to start over or challenge themselves. There's no need to wait for a learning outcome success. Acknowledge the learning mindset, the learning attitude and the learning character. These are what make heroes. Lastly, Fagle suggests that we focus on connection and common goals. In times of crisis, everyone's wellness is intertwined. Research shows that emotions spread across a social network, they spread across the family. And we need to take care of one another if we want children to feel centered. A school counselor shared with me that a middle school student told her that she did not understand why there were all these stories on the news and articles and newspapers for parents on how to deal with having your kids at home.

Steve: 08:53 But she wasn't finding any for students on how to deal with your parents being at home. Common goals bring people together, strengthening our connections and our relationships. Being intentional about our goals and our vision for our family is a process no family should go without. And in times of extra stress, such as COVID quarantining or returning to school and work in situations that are far from our previous routines, common family goals can be supportive of our needed behaviors and actions. A blog post titled, "The Importance of Setting Family Goals and How

to Do It," shares some steps to follow. The link is again, included in the lead-in to this podcast. When we take the time to reflect on how we'd like our family to grow, we invest in our family success. It's highly likely that if we don't take the time to develop goals for our family, we won't take the necessary steps to move closer in that direction. When families come together to work towards a common goal, they're more likely to succeed. They're more likely to succeed because if we don't look forward as a family, we won't move forward. They're likely to succeed because thinking about goals prompts us to think about what matters. They're likely to succeed because when we work together, we strengthen our relationships. Families who set goals are likely to proceed because when we develop goals, our children learn an important life skill. Achieving family goals, working on family goals helps a family develop a greater sense of personal agency.

Steve: 11:07 I like to use the word empowered. When we become intentional about what we'd like to accomplish as a family, we're not only creating
a more meaningful family life, but we're also creating a roadmap for our family's future. By building family resilience, we will strengthen all the family members resilience and preserve relationships so that we can emerge together stronger. I encourage you to keep developing your family's hero journey. Thanks for listening.

Steve [Outro]: 11:54 Thanks again for listening. You can subscribe to Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud on iTunes and Podbean. And please remember to rate and review us on iTunes. I also want to hear what you're pondering. You can find me on twitter @stevebarkley or send me your questions and find my videos and blogs at barkleypd.com.