

Facilitating Resilience

Researchers began to wonder why some children living with high risk factors not only survived, but thrived. Werner and Smith (1982) were among the first researchers to study how youth self-right rather than focusing the deficits in a child's life. Read the following brief biographical sketches. Each individual described managed to accomplish a great deal in life in spite of multiple barriers. Use these individuals or students with whom you work to identify protective factors that allowed for success and risk factors that must be managed. The two great lessons from this body of research are:

1. All individuals, families, schools, and communities have risk factors.
2. It is not necessary to eliminate all risk factors in order to facilitate resilience. Moderating the effects of the risks by providing support where available and attending to the strengths can often make the difference between success and stagnation or regression.

Guess Who?

___ 1. Even as a small child, I wanted to be famous. Perhaps this is because my mother had told me that she could have been somebody if she had not gotten pregnant with me. I lived in an orphanage and with foster parents until I was 3 years old. My mother married 8 times. My dad was arrested for drugs and writing bad checks. He was a morphine addict. I was defiant, had low self-esteem, and had a poor attitude. Teachers thought that I was just uncooperative. I found out that I have a learning disability when my daughter began to have trouble in school. We both took some tests. Now I know that I didn't learn to read until I was 18 because of the learning disability. I am not bad or stupid. I just didn't learn things the same way that my friends did. You probably would recognize me for being a singer, actress, and Oscar winner.

___ 2. My dad left my mom before I was born. She moved to Mississippi and gave me to my grandparents. I learned about honest work from my grandfather who was a farmer. I learned about the power of words from my grandmother. At age 5, I moved to Michigan. By then, I had developed a stuttering problem. I quit talking to anyone other than my best friend Chubbie, a one-eyed crow, and Shep, the family dog by the time I was 8. I was afraid that I would be rejected by my family, teachers, and peers if I talked. When I was 15, a teacher thought I had plagiarized a poem. To prove that I had really written it myself, he demanded that I recite it on the spot in front of the class. Everyone was amazed that I had such a rich and moving presentation style. Mr. Crouch, my teacher, urged me to join the debate team. After that, my confidence really began to soar. You know me as the voice of Darth Vader and Mufasa.

___ 3. My dad left my mom, brother, and myself when I was young. My mother was a strong person who always encouraged me to strive for my highest level of achievement. Mom and I didn't know that I had a learning disability. By the time I got to high school, things were just too difficult for me. I dropped out of school. I also got involved with drugs such as marijuana and LSD. By the time I was 17, I knew that I needed help. I checked myself into a rehabilitation center. Before I finally got the opportunity to show the world what I could do, I had more rough times. For awhile, I lived on welfare. Because of what I know, I do as much as I can for single mothers, drug addicted youth, those with AIDS, and others in need. I have been nominated for the Academy Award and have received a Golden Globe and Image Award. I was also named the Humanitarian of the Year in 1989 by the Starlight Foundation.

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	Poor impulse control (Garmezy, 1985)	Internal locus of control (Lazarus, 1991; Murphy & Moriarity, 1986; Werner & Smith, 1982)
	Attributions of helplessness (Bernard, 1990; DiGiuseppe & Bernard, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1982)	Sense of humor (Masten, 1994)
	External locus of control (Lazarus, 1991; Murphy & Moriarity, 1986))	School success (Rutter & Quinton, 1984)
	Academic failure (Werner & Smith, 1982)	Easy temperament/Able to recruit friends and adult assistance (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1979, Murphy & Moriarity, 1986)
	Relationships with peers who are engaged with antisocial behavior, drugs, or alcohol (Masten, 1994)	Relationships with supportive peers & adults (Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001)
Familial	Poverty (Werner, 1989)	Parents/caregivers who value an education (Comer, 1988; Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001)
	One or both parents/caregivers addicted to drugs or alcohol (Berlin & Davis, 1989)	Parents/caregivers who are able and willing to access resources (Werner, 1989; Sorenson, 1993)
		Parents/caregivers who provide healthy limits & age appropriate supervision (Werner, 1989)
	Single parent/caregiver home (Gore & Echenrode, 1994)	At least one adult who has a warm, loving relationship with the child (Werner & Smith, 1982)
		Warm, cohesive family structure (Garmezy 1985)
Community	Few school resources (Freiberg, 1994; Peng, 1994; Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001))	Schools with high academic and behavioral standards (Freiberg, 1994; Peng, 1994)
	Unresponsive school personnel (Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001)	School & teacher responsiveness (Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001)
	Few opportunities for developing a system of support (Giovannoni & Billingsley, 1970; Hunter & Kilstrom, 1979)	Network of family and community involvement including church attendance (Giovannoni & Billingsley, 1970; Hunter & Kilstrom, 1979)
	Inadequate health care (Garmezy, 1985; Sorenson, 1993)	Adequate health care, housing, food, and transportation resources (Garmezy, 1985)

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Websites

Active Learning

Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom

<http://www.ntlf.com/html/lib/bib/91-9dig.htm>

Active Learning Strategies

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/addition/active.php>

ALPS: Active Learning Practice for Schools

<Http://learnweb.harvard.edu/ALPS/home/index.cfm>

Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/additonal/tips/newActive.php>

Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota

<http://www.co-operation.org>

Jigsaw Classroom
<http://www.jigsaw.org>

Learn and Serve Clearinghouse
<http://www.servicelearning.org>

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
<http://www.sedl.org/scimath/compass/volno2/welcome.html>

Classroom Management

Dr. Mac's Amazing Behavior Management Advise Site
<http://www.behavioradvisor.com/oldindex.html>

Effective Classroom Management (Weinstein, 2003)
<http://www.itm-info.com/mvp2/images/mvp1audio.pdf>

Florida Positive Behavior Support
<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu>

Jim Wright's Intervention Central
<http://www.interventioncentral.org>

Kid Tools
<http://kidtools.missouri.edu>

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support
www.pbis.org

Tough Kids: Practical Behavior Management
<http://www.montana.edu/cs/conferences/mbi/files/handouts/jensen/toughkidsteachers/whoarethey.ppt>

Character Education Resources

Random House Thematic Book Lists: These themes are related to social-emotional growth topics.

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/tgindx/theme.html>

Character Education Resources and Materials for K-12 Schools
<http://www.goodcharacter.com/>

Service-Learning

<http://www.servicelearning.org>



Risk Factors & Potential Roadblocks

RISK FACTORS	TARGETED YOUTH
Learning Problems	
Problems with Manners	
Poor Peer Relationships	
Poor Relationships with Adults	
Lack of Persistence	
Poor Impulse Control	
Learned Helplessness	
Controlled by Others	
Few Interests	
Few Coping Strategies	
Difficult Temperament	
Other:	



Assets & Protective Factors

PROTECTIVE FACTORS	TARGETED YOUTH
Wide range of interests	
Easy Temperament	
Academic Achievement	
Ability to Learn	
Sense of Morality	
Sense of Initiative	
Ability to distance self from harm	
Skills/Talents	
Positive peer relationships	
Positive relationships wit adults	
Sense of humor	
Problem-solving Skills	
Ability to set goals & work to achieve them	
Physical health	
Able to attract positive attention	
Resourceful	
Willing to access support	
Many coping strategies	
Other:	



Reframing Risks as Potential Strengths

Risk Factor	Hidden or Unrecognized Strength	Strategies or Skills to Develop Further	Potential Outcome



Protective Factors and Opportunities for Success

Achievement*	Attachment*	Autonomy*	Altruism*

*From: Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockern, S. (1998). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.