A Good Day is When Bad Things Don’t Happen
Dr. Sam Goldstein

Changing the Lives of Challenged Children

www.samgoldstein.com

Knowledge is power.

Sir Francis Bacon

The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance - it is the illusion of knowledge.

Daniel J. Boorstein
Caution should be taken in jumping to readily onto the bandwagon of whatever happens to be the prevailing enthusiasm of the moment.

Sir Michael Rutter

**The Future**

The purpose of life is to prepare the next generation for their future.
Survival of the Species

- Salmon and snakes are born with sufficient instincts to survive.
- Bear cubs require at least one or two years with their mother to insure survival.
- Higher primates require three or four years.
- Humans require at least ten years.

My Grandparent’s Future

![Image of family photo]

My Grandparent’s Future

![Image of family photo]
My Parent's Future

My Parent's Future

Our Future
A Man Goes Fishing

After 40 years of working with challenging children I’ve discovered the two most important variables in changing lives:

Instinctual Optimism & Intrinsic Motivation
How Challenged Children Become Failure Avoiders

Todd’s Story

“I thought he’d be a smart criminal...”

Ryan’s Letters To Ms. Walter
Part I

(Handwritten note:)

Dear Mr. Walter,

Sorry for being in the parent contact.
It was just too hard to write quickly. She wouldn’t have been smart enough to get it done.
It took forever. It was flat. I had to rewrite it for her.
Ryan's Letters To Ms. Walter Part II

Dear Ms. Walter,

I hope this finds you well. I'm still struggling with my math homework. I guess I didn't study enough for the test. I'm not happy about it. It feels like a complete and total failure.

Sincerely,
Ryan

Ryan's Letters To Ms. Walter Part III

Dear Ms. Walter,

I'm really sorry for my behavior last week. I hope you can forgive me. I've been working really hard to improve my math skills. I'm really excited to see my progress.

Sincerely,
Ryan

Ryan's Letters To Ms. Walter Part IV

Believe it or not, today was not an disaster. It was actually quite enjoyable. I think I'm starting to enjoy math. I've even made several mistakes on the problem set, but I'm making progress!

Sincerely,
Ryan
Challenged children become failure avoiders when the well meant efforts of parents and teachers fail.
A lesson from Michael.

Do Children Care What We Think? Part I

to Mrs. Cowdell

Dear Mrs. Cowdell,

I am writing you this letter. I am just asking if you can change my grade. Today, I knew that I did, and maybe everybody else did. I want to be a better person. I feel that I just had just a bad and full grade. This week, I'm sure you knew how the tests were, very important.

Sincerely,

Drew

Do Children Care What We Think? Part II

Mrs. Cowdell,

Why I Will Never Do This Again

Dear Mrs. Cowdell,

Mrs. Cowdell, here are some recommendations that I will do. I will try my best in every homework. I will try my best to get a good education and my future. I will not do any bad things. I don't want to be a bad girl. I'm sorry. I love to learn and I don't want to be a bad girl ever. As you can see on this paper, I love school.
### The Unfortunate Mindset of Challenged Children

- Confused.
- Failure avoiding.
- I don’t have much control over my life.
- Helpless.
- The world is unfair.
- Emotions get you into trouble.
- If I like doing it, they won’t let me.
- Resistant.
- Dumb!

### The experience of growing up with a developmental, emotional or environmental challenge steals away opportunities to develop a resilient mindset.

### Todd Reaches Maturity

A Common Outcome
Why must we change our view of challenged children?

What Do We Know?
- In 2014 there were 73.7 million children (0 – 18 years) in the U.S.
- By 2030 that number will increase to 85.7 million.
- In 2012 15% lived in poverty
- In 2011 27% were living in one parent homes.
- In 2012 36% lived in homes with at least one significant problem.
- In 2017 over 1/2 million children were in foster care.
CHILDREN’S DEFENSE FUND

- An American child was reported abused or neglected every 35 seconds in 2003 (3 million).
- 30% of all victims below age 3; 50% below age 7.
- 60% are neglected.
- Nearly 600,000 American children are in foster care, with 130,000 waiting.
- 7 1/2 million children are home alone after school.

Committee for Children

- One of every seven children reports being bullied in school regularly.
- Seventy-eight percent of children reported being bullied at least once in the past month.
- Thirty-one percent of girls and eight percent of boys in grades 8 - 11 reported harassment often.

In 2016 4,599 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 committed suicide.
Fixing What’s wrong is a good start but building strengths and stress hardiness is essential.

Todd Finds A Path
“I think I could do this!”

**Resilience**

- A process leading to good outcome despite high risk
- The ability to function competently under stress
- The ability to recover from trauma and adversity

“I’m not afraid about my girlfriends and myself, we’ll squeeze through somehow, though I’m not too certain about my math.”

Anne Frank  
June 21, 1942
“I have lots of courage, I feel so strong and as if I can bear a great deal, I feel so free and so young! I was glad when I first realized it, because I don’t think I shall easily bow down before the blows that inevitably come to everyone.”

Anne Frank
July 15, 1944

Resilient children are not simply born that way nor are they made from scratch by their experiences. Genetic and environmental experiences loom large as protectors against a variety of risks to healthy development ranging from resistance to bacteria and viruses to resilience to maltreatment and rejection.

Kirby Deater-Deckard

Most Powerful Predictors of a Resilient Child

- Easy temperament
- Consistent family relationships
- Competent caregivers
- Development of self-esteem
- A sense of emotional security
**Resilience is Predicted By Three Factors**

- Within the child
- Within the family
- In the community
“This person loves me.”

We come into the world with predispositions to learn how to cooperate, to discriminate the trustworthy from the treacherous, to commit ourselves to be trustworthy, to earn good reputations, to exchange goods and information and to divide labor. . . .Our minds have been built by selfish genes but they have been built to be social, trustworthy and cooperative.

Matt Ridley
The Red Queen

Go Do Strategies To Foster a Resilient Mindset

• Teach empathy by practicing empathy.
• Teach responsibility by encouraging contributions.
• Teach decision making and problem solving skills that foster self-discipline.
• Offer encouragement and positive feedback.
• Help children deal with mistakes.
The Mindset of a Resilient Child

- Optimistic and hopeful.
- Feel special and appreciated in the eyes of others.
- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- View mistakes, hardships and obstacles as challenges.
- Solve problems and make decisions.
- Internal locus of control.
- Believe and set out to solve problems.
- Possess empathy.

Adopt a learning to ride a bike mindset!

It Must Never Come to This!

No so called parents
I hate your fucken guts
Rob
You lied and said that you would spend time with me,
Kathleen
Some with you
DEAR GOD,
I wish I could be
better in School.
Can you help me.