

Resilience Skills for Children: Approaches from Positive Psychology



Saint Patrick's
Boys' National School



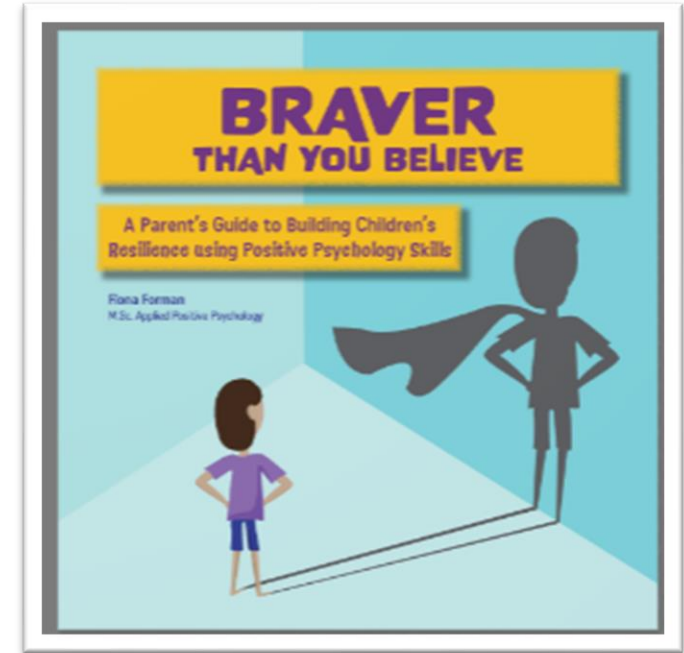
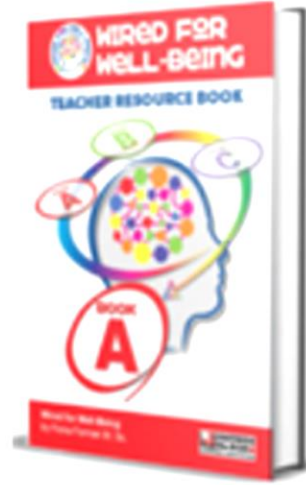
FIONA FORMAN, M.SC. APPLIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

19-10-22



A photograph of a corkboard with a yellow sticky note. The sticky note has the word "Welcome" written in red cursive, underlined with a red line. The corkboard is tilted and set against a dark blue background. A light blue vertical bar is visible in the top right corner of the overall image.

Welcome






**'IT IS EASIER TO
BUILD STRONG
CHILDREN THAN
TO REPAIR
BROKEN ADULTS.'**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS





**Self-care is not selfish.
You cannot serve from an
empty vessel.**

Eleanor Brownn

Overview

Overview of Positive Psychology

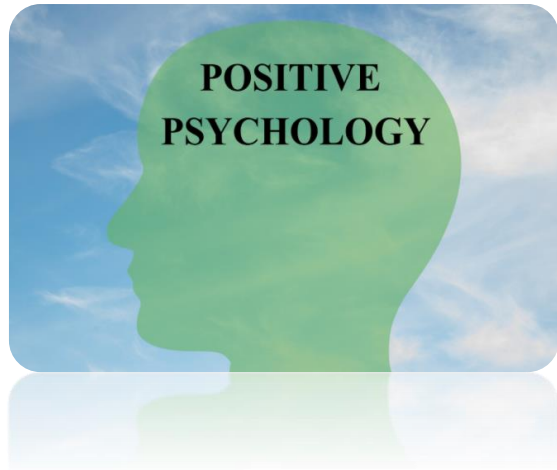
Recent challenges facing our children

Resilience – what & why?

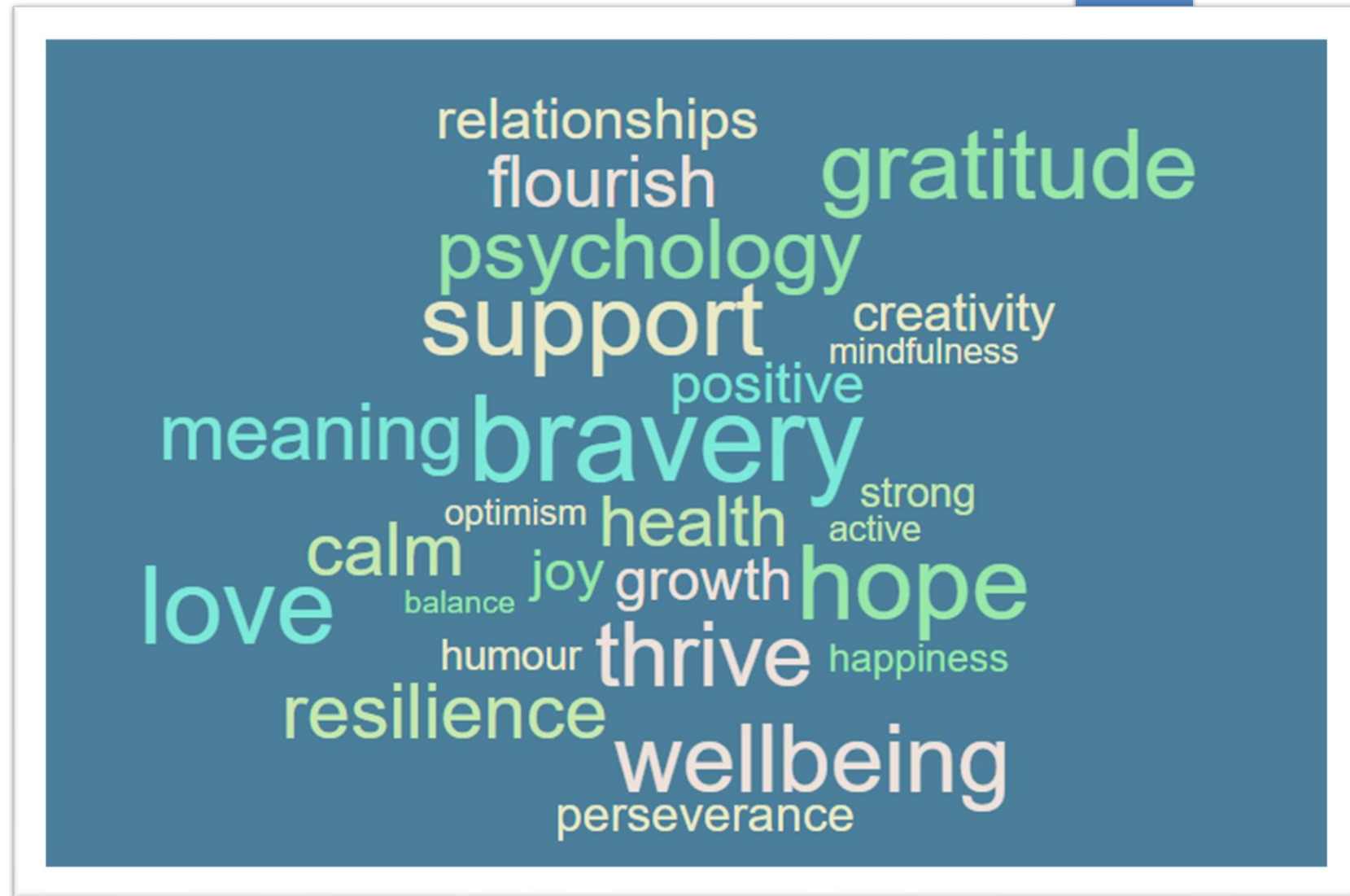
Resilience – how?

8 Resilience Skills – Focus on 2 - Resilience
Tool Kit

Final messages



The Science of Well-Being & Resilience



Why? Recent Challenges

Challenges - social distancing, lockdown, less opportunities to socialise etc. posed by the pandemic resulted in increased levels of

- ▶ **restlessness**
- ▶ **anxiety**
- ▶ **irritability**
- ▶ **separation anxiety**
- ▶ **inattention**

[Idoiaga et al., 2020](#); [Jiao et al., 2020](#); [Orgiles et al., 2020](#); [Pisano & Galimi, 2020](#)

Also – increased intensity of emotions

Regression – seeking safety & reassurance



If your child is experiencing these difficulties...



Be patient – it will take time!
No quick fix



Prioritise nurturing the development of the skills needed



Create opportunities to formalise and explicitly model these skills



Attitude of gentle curiosity instead of judgement or worry

Ongoing challenges

- **Increased levels of anxiety in young people**
- **More pressures, social media etc**
- **Modern culture – results driven, comparative, competitive unattainable images of perfection..**
- **‘Shame of being ordinary’** (*Brené Brown*)
- **Self-worth tied into achievement, appearance, popularity, external validation**
- **Unintended consequences of the self-esteem movement**
- **No room for imperfection, failure, disappointment – pressure to be and feel ‘amazing’**

We can't fix everything for our children..

Don't underestimate the power of listening and nurturing, your time and attention

comforting, encouraging, supporting, understanding, buffering....

Listen to validate, not to fix!

“

Listen.

People start to heal the moment they feel heard.

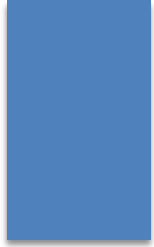
CHERYL RICHARDSON

Reflection:

*What does
resilience mean to
you?*

*What words come
to mind?*





Resilience



- 'The capacity for positive outcomes despite challenging or threatening circumstances' (Egeland, 1993)
- The *belief* in your ability to cope with, and adapt to, difficult and challenging events
- A *process* which evolves over time and can involve different steps or stages
- Not about being *tough* or *immune* to strong emotions such as sadness, grief or disappointment – working through them, expressing them & processing them in a healthy way
- We are all more resilient than we think
- Activated and nurtured at times of stress and challenge

Tait, 2008

BEING EMOTIONALLY
UNAFFECTED BY AN
UPSETTING EVENT ISN'T
RESILIENCE,
IT'S DISASSOCIATION.

SARAH BOYD

Resilience – how?



Support



Empower

Equipping children with a sense of:

Belief

Bravery

Trust in themselves

“

The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to mankind.

BESSEL VAN DER VOLK

Resilience Skills – Tool-Kit!

- ▶ 1. Emotional Regulation
- ▶ 2. Solution-Focused Planning
- ▶ 3. Self-Compassion
- ▶ 4. Helpful Thinking



- ▶ 5. Growth-Mindset
- ▶ 6. Recognising & using Character Strengths
- ▶ 7. Healthy Distraction
- ▶ 8. Looking after physical well-being

Identifying your Top 5 Strengths

CHARACTER STRENGTHS			
Love	Curiosity	Honesty	Creativity
Kindness	Leadership	Bravery	Open-Mindedness
Forgiveness	Perspective	Self-control	Love of Learning
Optimism	Humour	Perseverance	Appreciation of Beauty
Caution	Fairness	Gratitude	Meaning
Zest	Teamwork	Humility	Social Intelligence

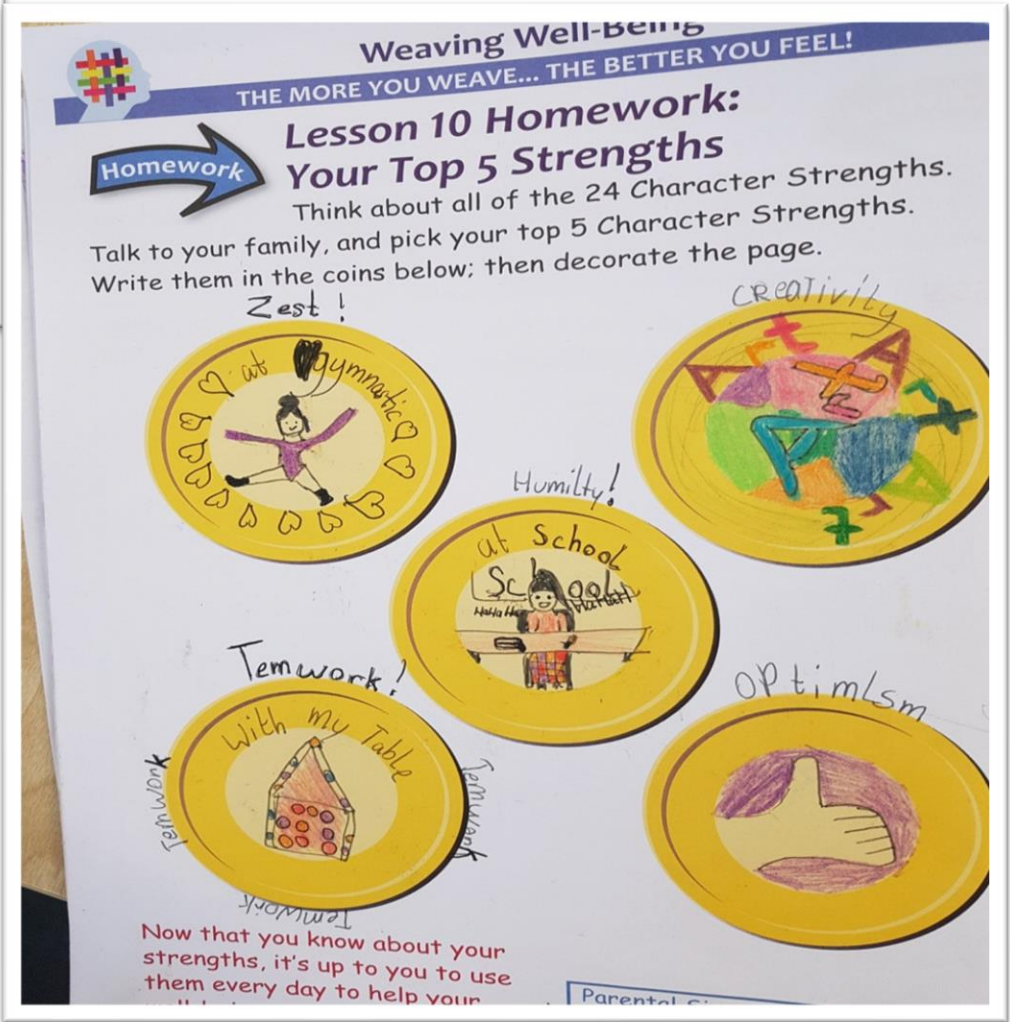
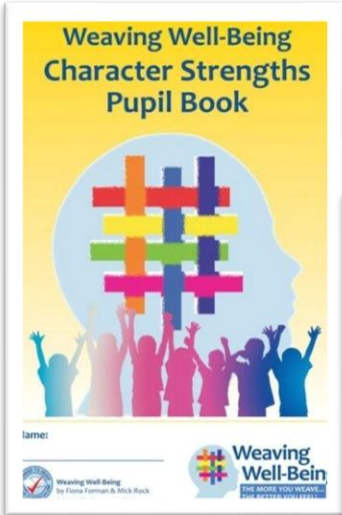
<https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>



www.fionaformanwellbeing.com
www.otb.ie



<https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>



Now that you know about your strengths, it's up to you to use them every day to help your...

Parental...

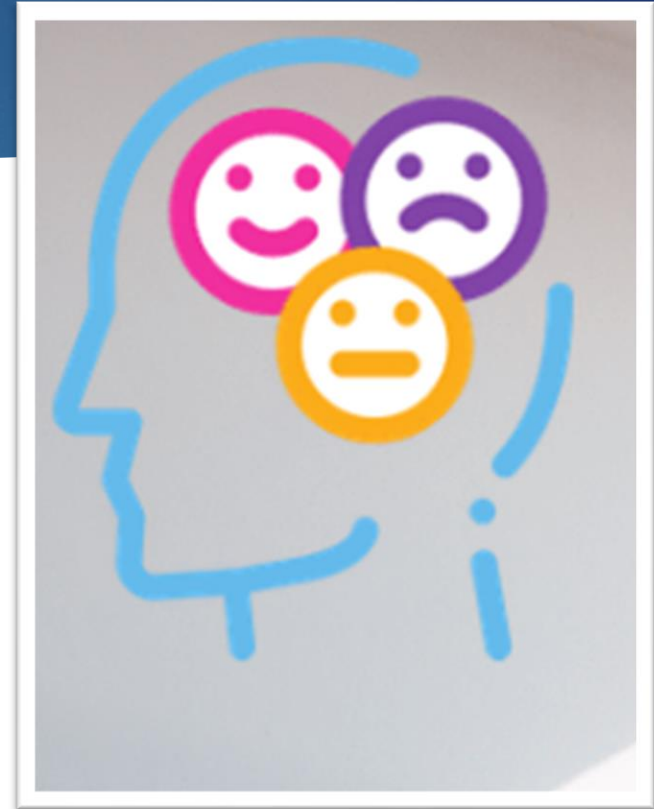
Emotional Regulation

Emotional Regulation:

process of consciously managing your own emotions

Linked to higher levels of well-being & resilience

Mayer & Salovey, (1997).



Emotional Regulation – how?

- Making space for all emotions
- Not judging
- Allowing children to feel how they feel
- Not rushing in to fix or change emotions
- Self-awareness – managing our own emotions as a starting point
- Develop ‘distress tolerance’



Emotional Regulation



Normalise,
allow, accept
express &
validate



Don't rush in to
try to 'fix it'



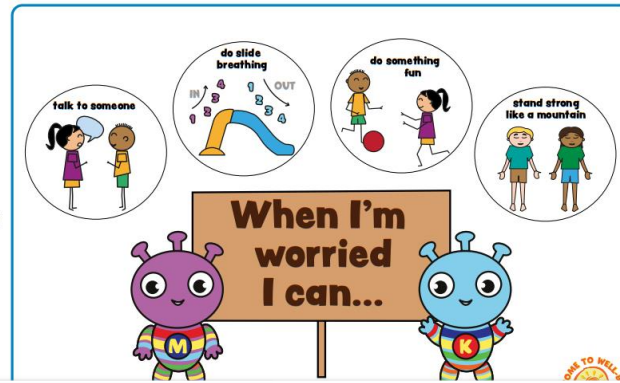
Listen,
empathise
soothe &
nurture



Designated
'worry time'

Emotional Regulation:

Normalise
Accept
Express



All feelings are OK

Tell me how you feel today,
all feelings are OK.

Sad or happy,
worried or free,
let it in and let it be.

It will pass
and then you'll know,
feelings come
and then they go.



Nurturing Your Child's Emotional Well-Being
with **Fiona Forman**



Online via **Zoom**
Tuesday 8th November at 8pm



<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/nuturing-your-childs-emotional-well-being-tickets-427075934617>

Solution Focused Planning

- Gives children the opportunity to come up with their own solutions to challenges or worries
- Linked to higher levels of resilience, self - efficacy & self-confidence



Lyubormirsky, 2008

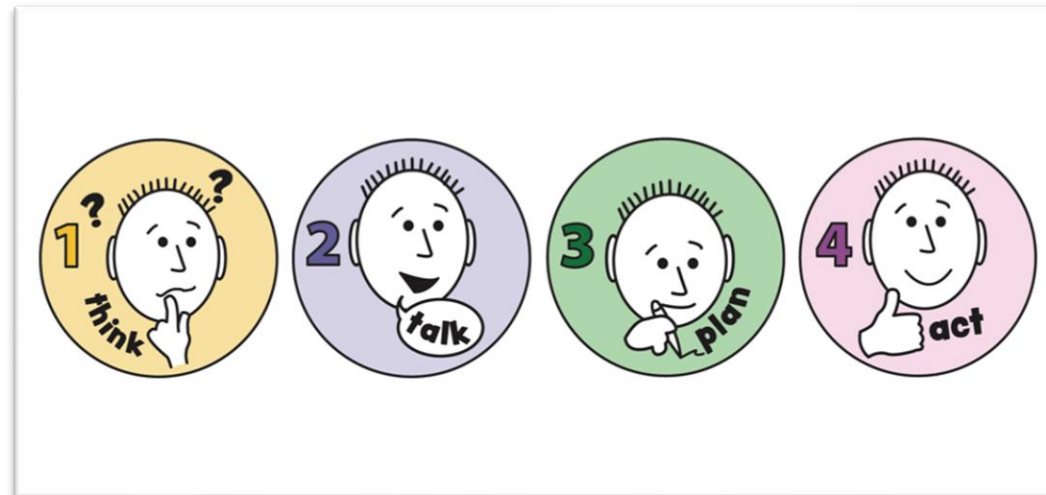
Solution-Focused Planning

When children are faced with a problem or worry, ask:

What do you think we should do?

- Put a plan into action *together*
- Give children a 4-step process for coming up with solutions:

Think, Talk, Plan, Act

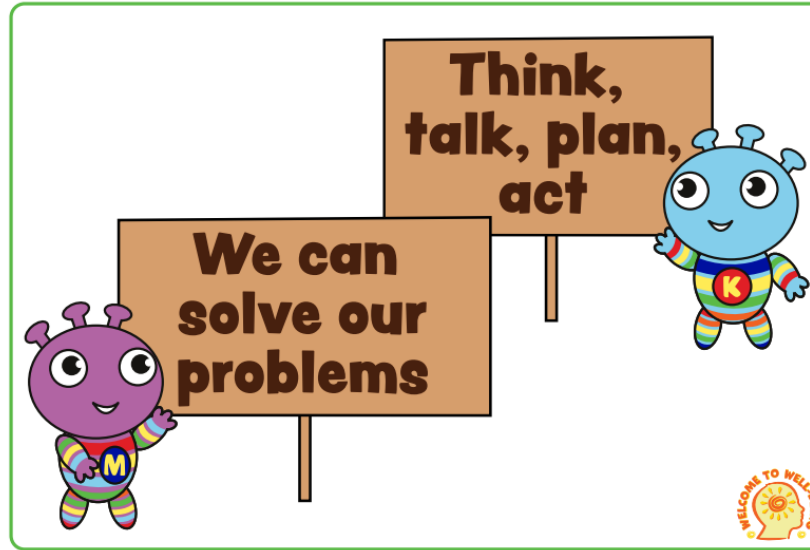


SW19: Planning Sheet for: Think, talk, plan, act

In the boxes below, draw or write your plan for a problem you are dealing with at the moment.

My problem	1. Think (My thoughts about the problem.)
2. Talk (Who will I talk to?)	3. Plan (What is my plan?)
4. Act (When will I do it?)	Did it work? Tick 'Yes' or 'No' <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If it didn't work, try another plan!

109



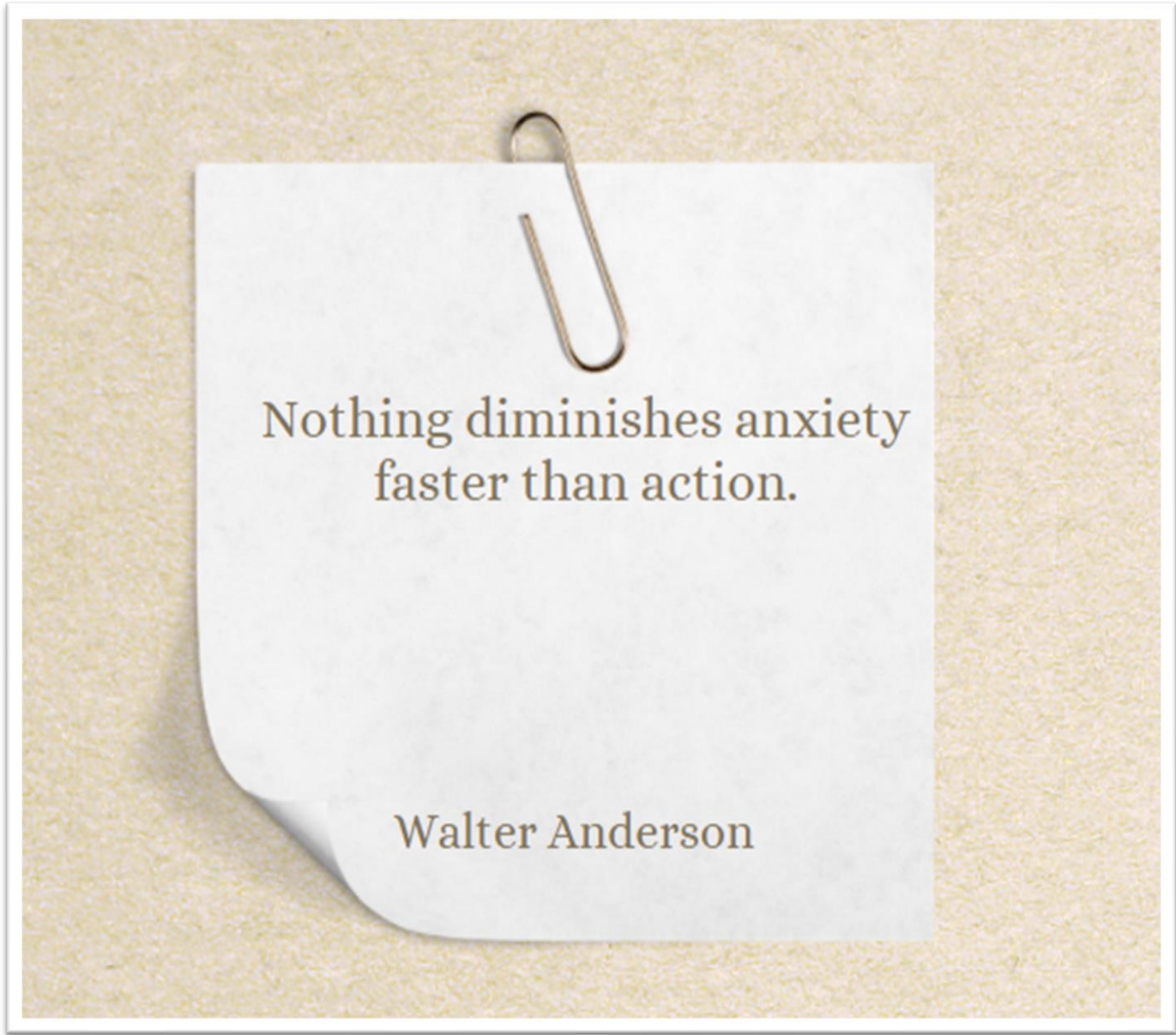
CP9

Welcome to Well-Being - Book C: Feeling good with Mo and Kai - Teacher Resource Book
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Think, talk, plan, act

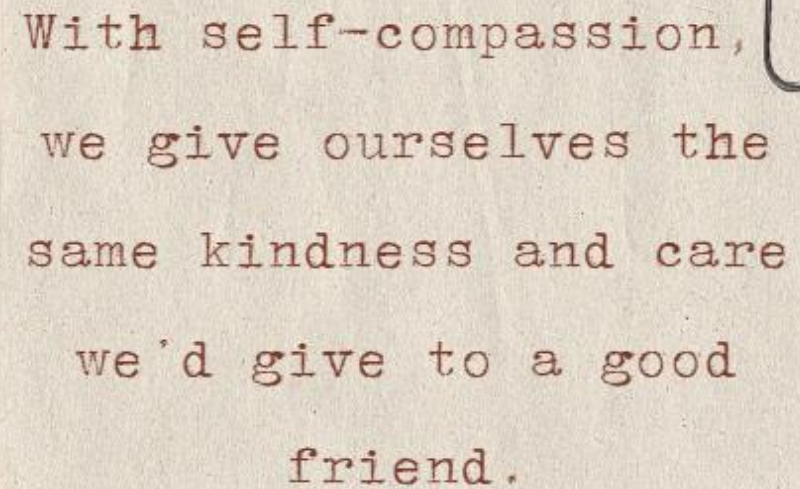
Problems sometimes
come my way,
big or small
I'll be okay.
Because I know
just what to do,
I have 4 steps
to get me through.
Think, talk, plan, act,
that's the way
and that's a fact.
And if Plan A
does not work yet,
there's lots more letters
in the alphabet!



Nothing diminishes anxiety
faster than action.

Walter Anderson

Self- Compassion



With self-compassion,
we give ourselves the
same kindness and care
we'd give to a good
friend.

Kristin Neff

Self-compassion – why?

Bluth & Neff, 2018

Neff, 2011

Increased levels of well-being

Increased resilience

More positive self-image & self-acceptance

Better relationships

Decreased anxiety

Decreased fear of failure

Self-Compassion – Why?

- ▶ Increased levels of anxiety in young people
- ▶ More pressures
- ▶ Modern culture – results driven, comparative, competitive unattainable images of perfection..
- ▶ ‘Shame of being ordinary’ (*Brené Brown*)
- ▶ Self-worth tied into achievement, appearance, popularity, external validation
- ▶ Unintended consequences of the self-esteem movement
- ▶ No room for imperfection, failure, disappointment – pressure to be and feel ‘amazing’

Self-Esteem vs. Self-Compassion

Self-Esteem


Having positive judgements about yourself

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion - relating to yourself in a positive way, without judgement



Kristen Neff

A silver paperclip is attached to the top edge of a white rectangular note. The note is pinned to a light brown corkboard background. The text on the note is centered and reads:

**Just when self-esteem deserts you,
self-compassion steps in and gives
you a sense of being valuable, not
because you've reached some
standard, or you've judged
yourself positively, but because
you are a human being, worthy of
love in that moment.**

Dr. Kristen Neff



[The Space Between Self-Esteem and Self-Compassion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvTZBUSplr4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvTZBUSplr4>

[Self-Compassion, Self-Esteem & Well-Being](https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/SC.SE_.Well-being.pdf) (Neff, 2011)

https://self-compassion.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/SC.SE_.Well-being.pdf

Self-Compassion – how?



- **Unconditional positive regard**
- **Compassionate self-talk**
- **Embracing imperfection**
- **Normalising failure**
- **Modelling self-compassion**

“ Unconditional Positive Regard

When someone understands how it is to be me, without wanting to analyse or judge me, then I can blossom and grow in that climate.

CARL ROGERS

”



Seeing, validating & valuing children *just as they are*

Accepting children for *who they are*, not for *what they do or achieve*

Being recognised, valued and affirmed as they are

Compassionate Self-Talk

- ▶ Discuss the idea of self-talk – *how we speak to ourselves in our own heads*
- ▶ *What unkind things do we say to ourselves, especially if we fail, are disappointed or feel like we are not good enough?*



I'm very bad at a lot
of subjects

I'm not good at my hobbies
Like my friends are.

I'm not good enough
for anything and I
will never get better

You will never
be good enough

I wish i was as pretty
as that person
I wish i was taller.

You're not good
enough at things.

I'm so stupid
I'll never get
this right.

you're stupid
why would you
do that.

~~You're not so w~~

Kind Self-Talk

- *Why do we say these things to ourselves?*
- *How does it make you feel?*
- *Would you say these things to a friend?*
- *Would you allow someone else to say these things to you? (Concept of inner critic/inner bully)*
- *What can you say instead?*



Compassionate Self-Talk Phrases

I don't have to be perfect.

I don't need to compare myself to anyone else.



Right here, in this moment, I'm ok.

My best is good enough.

I don't have to be, or feel, amazing all of the time.

Nobody has it all figured out.



Compassionate Self-Talk Phrases

Everybody feels like this sometimes.

I'm good enough, just as I am.



Not everyone has to like me.

I have my own strengths and talents.

I am more than my achievements.

It's ok to make mistakes.



KIND MIND

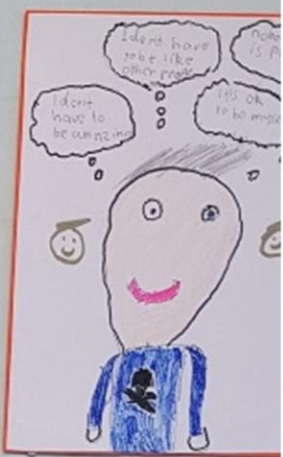
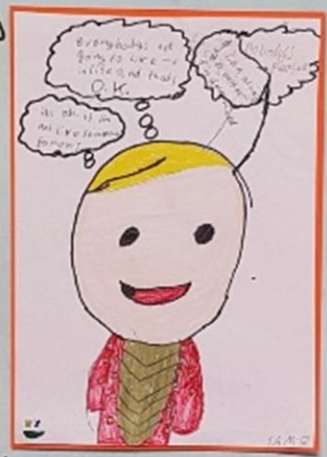
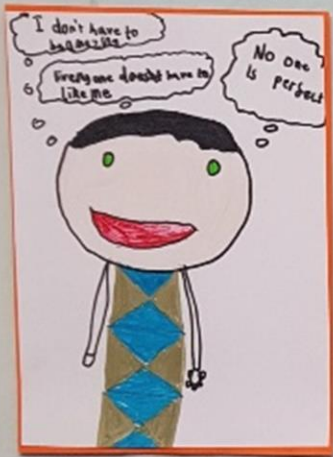


Wellbeing is.

Everyone makes mistakes!

Speaking to ourselves in a kind way!

I can handle this!

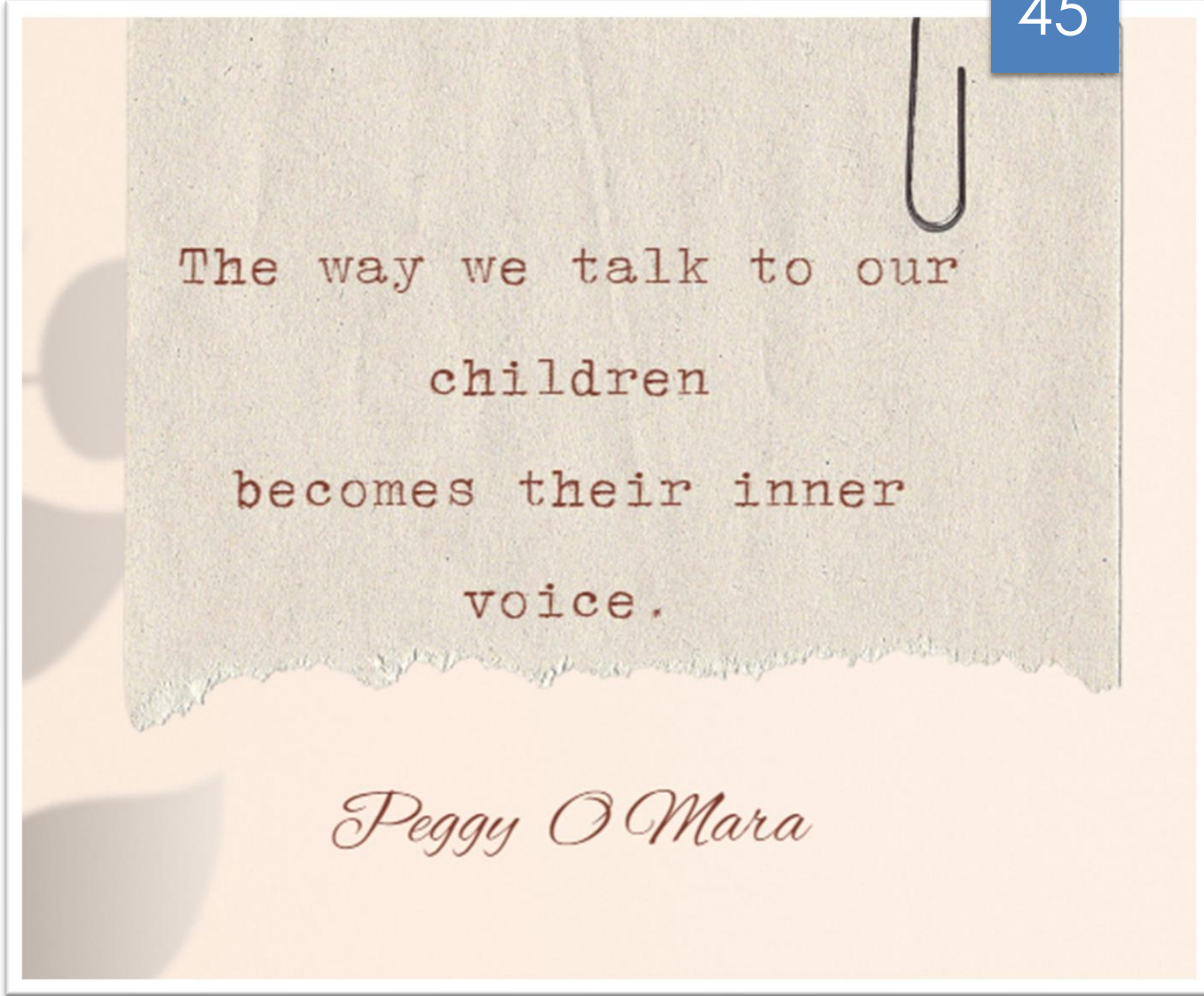


I don't have to be perfect!

I don't have to be amazing!

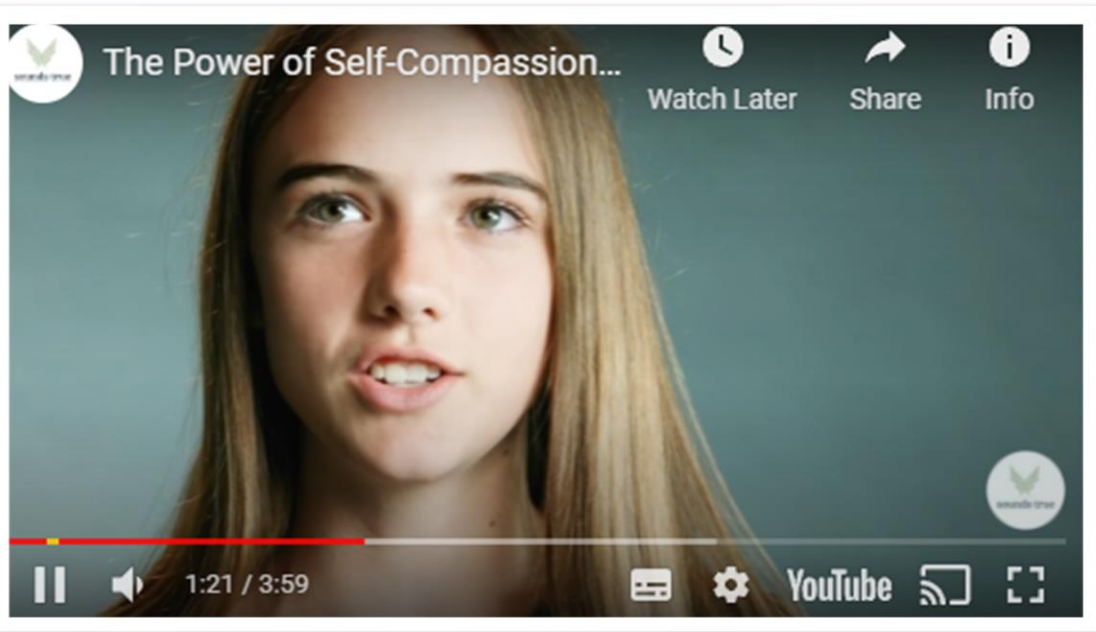
How?

- ▶ *Through how we speak to them....*
- ▶ *Through how we speak to ourselves*



The way we talk to our
children
becomes their inner
voice.

Peggy O'Mara



<https://youtu.be/BTQP7XzDxjl>

Welcome to Well-Being C


Hand to heart

When I'm feeling
small or sad,
not good enough
or just plain bad,

I put my hand
against my heart
and tell myself
I'm strong and smart.

I'm good enough
just being me
and no-one's perfect
as can be.

So then I smile
and smile a lot.
I'm good enough
no matter what!

A silver paperclip is attached to the top edge of a white rectangular note. The note is pinned to a light brown corkboard background. The text on the note is centered and reads:

**To be yourself in a world that is
constantly trying to make you
something else is the greatest
achievement.**

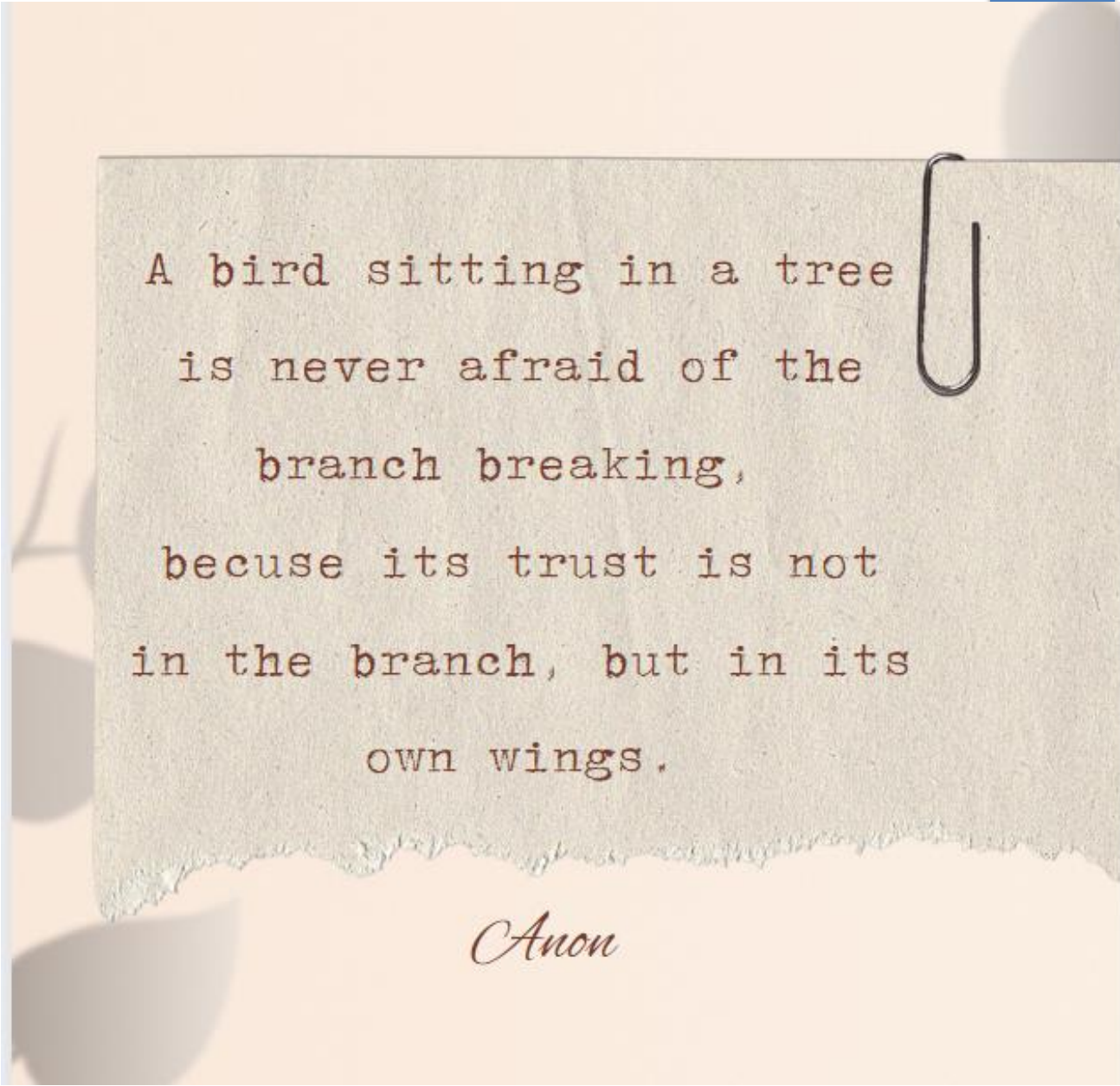
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Final Messages and Review

- ▶ Resilience is vital
- ▶ Combination of support and skills needed
- ▶ Normalise
- ▶ Personalised 'Resilience Tool Kit'
- ▶ *'What can you do right now to help yourself to feel stronger/better?'*



Closing Quote

A piece of light-colored, textured paper with a deckled bottom edge is pinned to a light beige background with a silver paperclip on the right side. The paper contains a quote in a typewriter-style font.

A bird sitting in a tree
is never afraid of the
branch breaking,
because its trust is not
in the branch, but in its
own wings.

Anon

Thank you & questions!

- Thanks so much to Barry & Brigid again for the opportunity!
- Thanks so much for joining me!
- Contact – fiona.forman@gmail.com
- Twitter - @FionaWellBeing
- Instagram –fionaformanwellbeing

<https://www.otb.ie/shop/braver-than-you-believe/>

