

Dealing With Disappointment

The following information is taken from a guidance series titled “**You Can Choose.**” The series includes videos and accompanying handouts that support the content taught in the videos. In addition, more information can be retrieved on the internet at the following address:

www.goodcharacter.com

This information comes from the video with the same title as this handout - video number 6. The first box contains helpful hints to guide children in dealing with disappointment. The second box provides some direction for parents as they assist their children in dealing with disappointment. The third box is for parents only.

For Children

When things don't turn out the way you hoped, it may seem like the end of the world. Here are some things you can do to keep disappointment from getting you down.

- Stop. Calm down. Give yourself some time. Things might not seem nearly so bad tomorrow.
- Get your feelings out in a way that doesn't hurt you or anybody else.
- Talk about it with your parents or a good friend.
- Ask yourself if this is really worth getting angry or upset about.
- Think about what you can learn from the experience and how you can do better next time.
- Don't judge yourself. Failing at something does not mean that you are a failure.

For Parents (Helping Their Children)

Here are some things you can do to help your child learn how to keep perspective and handle disappointments in a positive way.

- Stop the “I'm a failure” syndrome before it starts. Don't let your child feel like a complete failure because something didn't turn out well. Make it clear that a defeat or loss isn't the end of the world and doesn't mean he or she's no good.
- If your child experiences a disappointment, talk about it and help him or her learn from the experience. Emphasize the importance of having a positive attitude and not giving up or feeling like a failure because of one experience.
- When your child is suffering a disappointment, remind him or her of other times when things went badly but turned out okay. Let your child know you've felt that way, too.
- Tell your child about times when you've had a similar experience.

For Parents (Helping Themselves)

Think back to a recent setback or disappointment in your career or personal life. Think about how you felt. How long did it take for you to bounce back? Did you formulate an action plan? Did you blame yourself, or others? Did you eat a quart of rocky road ice cream?

How you handle a setback defines who you are.

Let's say there are two ends of the spectrum: the optimist and the pessimist. You may be at any point of the spectrum.

The optimist experiences a challenge. They see it as a temporary situation, something that they'll get past. An optimist will often make a plan for recovery, and take action. An optimist looks to the future.

A pessimist is at the opposite end of the spectrum. They see a problem, and the problem affects every aspect of their life, and no solution to the problem is in sight. There is usually someone to blame for this problem.

Have you ever tried to help a pessimist solve a problem? They will argue with you that every possible solution will not work. There is no happy future; all is hopeless.

A pessimist will say that an optimist is not realistic. Maybe that is the case. However, perhaps that slightly unrealistic view is what allows the optimist to meet the challenge head on and succeed.

How can you move along the spectrum to be on the sunny side of the street?

Examine your behavior. Be honest with yourself.

When a challenge arises, step back and see it for what it is. Look for the opportunity within the challenge. Sometimes the opportunity is merely the experience gained from getting through it.

Don't let the problem become your life.

Move into action to resolve the problem immediately. Make a plan and get started.

Believe in yourself and your power.

Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can or you think you can't, you are right." Optimists may have greater success, health and happiness. Pessimists may experience a self-fulfilling prophecy of unhappiness and despair. You choose your spot on the spectrum. Guess where you'll find me.