



Life Success and Responsibility

Life is a continuous series of challenges and achievements. At the end we hope that we have experienced more achievements than challenges. A major component of whether we have more “ups” than “downs” depends on how we handle both. We learn how to handle, “cope”, with challenges and achievements through various sources from a very early age; through interaction with our caregivers/parents, through our own behavior and reactions, through societal rules and expectations and through consequences of our actions and interactions. These all shape our perceptions of our world and our place in it.

While we can often feel that “life” is in control and we are a victim of our circumstances we all do have the ability to guide and control the outcomes, positive and negative, of the situations we are in; our “ups and downs”, challenges and achievements, by being responsible for our actions and the areas over which we do have control. To quote the famous Serenity Prayer “courage to change the things I can” From the time children are young being responsible for actions, interactions and words can be taught through modeling, instruction and positive reinforcement. This continues throughout our lives. Here are some of the ways we can model and reinforce responsibility in other and in ourselves creating more achievements than challenges in our lives.

- 1) Support children in being responsible for their actions and interactions from an early age by modeling and encouraging them to participate in family tasks, being kind and helpful.
- 2) As children mature provide them with age appropriate opportunities to be responsible for their own items, actions and tasks including, homework, chores, personal items, and interactions. Encourage self- reliance, praise appropriate choices and do not “rescue” them unless a situation is harmful.
- 3) Create opportunities to discuss potential situations, both positive and challenging. Explore ways to cope with the situation so that the most positive outcome is possible. Discuss options when a challenging outcome occurs that can still allow the person to get their needs met and live safely.
- 4) Ensure that appropriate education and job skills are obtained, for both children and adults, so that everyone has the ability to care for themselves in every situation
- 5) Model and teach effective social skills so that positive relationships are developed and maintained.
- 6) Foster understanding and support for traumatic and challenging experiences which create loss and grief. Help yourself and others in finding ways to process the grieving emotions and heal from the experience so that positive outcomes can lead to a fulfilling future.
- 7) Offer continued support and resources to others in need and seek support for yourself.

Responsibility for the successful outcomes in our lives starts and ends with each of us in partnership with supportive, caring persons and appropriate resources.