

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

Thinking Positive Thoughts about Your Child

NEW BEGINNINGS CAN HELP ALL OF US to build strength and a positive view about what life will bring. A father told me how he worried for months about how his son would adjust to school. “The first day, my son said good-bye in five minutes, and I realized I had wasted all that time being anxious about how he would do.”

We can’t force ourselves not to worry. Trying to substitute positive thoughts helps when we start to think catastrophically about our children’s abilities to make their way. When we catch ourselves spinning a negative scenario in our minds, we can substitute a positive one: “I bet she can find the strength to handle this situation.”

When difficulties do arise, try reframing your thinking so you can assess how your child is coping. Instead of trying to leap in and fix whatever’s happening, ask yourself if she is already problem solving. “I’m impressed that you told your friend you didn’t like what she was doing. Look how you stood up for yourself!” Offer positive feedback for being able to handle difficult feelings, a challenge at any age.

It’s hard for parents when children express painful feelings, or complain that they don’t know what to do. Some situations are too much for children, and adults need objectivity to decide when that’s the case. In the meantime, empathizing helps them de-stress in the moment. Believing in their abilities to grow and handle challenges builds their resilience for the future.

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