

Dr. Robert Brooks and Resilience

We are huge fans of Dr. Robert Brooks! A clinical psychologist, he is the author of nearly a dozen books, and his research and writing on the topic of resilience has served as an inspiration in our approach with the Staples Resilience Project.

In his book, [Raising Resilient Children](#), Dr. Brooks stresses the important role that caring adults play in their interactions with children and young adults. He asserts that adults who are successful at nurturing resilience in children “convey unconditional acceptance or love, focus on identifying and applying the strengths or ‘islands of competence’ of youngsters and not just on ‘fixing’ their deficits, help children learn to deal with both successes and setbacks, teach children problem-solving and decision-making skills, discipline in ways that promote self-discipline, and create opportunities for youngsters to enrich the lives of others.”

This is not always easy, especially when children and adolescents possess challenging dispositions and engage in questionable behavior. Dr. Brooks urges us to “stay with and nurture children even when children push us away...we must appreciate that it is easier to assume the role of a charismatic adult when children invite us to do so; it is more challenging when their behaviors serve as barriers to assisting and encouraging them.”

These adult relationships are vital, and serve to reinforce a child’s sense of personal control. To support the development of resilience in young people, adults need to “communicate in an empathic way to children that while they [may] have had little, if any, control over the emergence of certain adverse events in their lives, what they can learn with the assistance of supportive adults is to gain increasing control over their attitude towards and the constructive ways in which they respond to negative events.”

Dr. Brooks is a pre-eminent speaker and writer on the subject of resilience. We hope you will be lucky enough to attend one of his upcoming talks. You may also enjoy his most recent monthly article, summarized in this [email](#).

Here is Dr. Brooks’ [one-minute definition](#) of resilience and the importance of “charismatic adults.”

The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.

shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance/staples-resilience-project