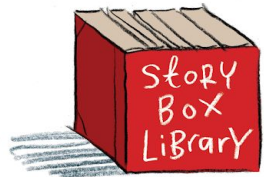


# ***Resilience and Emotional Literacy in Early Years***

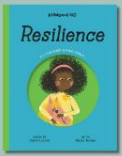
*Story Box Library, in partnership with The Resilience Project, author Zanni Louise & clinical psychologist Dr Ameika Johnson, discuss Resilience.*

**THE  
RESILIENCE  
PROJECT™**



# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



Zanni Louise's latest book, *Human Kind: Respect* is released this coming April!

Part of a series of books that focus on helping children understand their emotions, feelings and responses to them, *Respect*, the latest addition to the *Human Kind* series, encourages children to value themselves and others.

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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



*Human-Kind* books help you and your kids discuss what matters. Written by Zanni Louise and beautifully illustrated by Missy Turner, the books share anecdotes inspired by real-life kids.

The books include resources for parents & teachers, written by clinical psychologist Dr. Ameika Johnson.



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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



Why are these books important?  
Kids are eager to talk about their experiences.

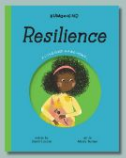
The depth and their ability to articulate will probably surprise you, as will their vulnerability and honesty.



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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



*Sometimes you want to be honest because you don't want the icky sticky web of a lie to tangle you up.*

Lila draws on the carpet.

Miss Rachel is cross. 'Who did this?' she asks.



Lila doesn't say anything. But the web gets bigger, and more sticky. She gets more tangled.



Later, when everyone has gone, Lila takes a big breath, and makes a big choice.



'Come, let's fix it together,' says Miss Rachel.

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# Children's books & emotional resilience

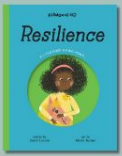
WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



***“I popped the Human-Kind book series on the bookshelf in the girls’ room and hadn’t had a chance to tell Miss J about them as I thought Miss A would be more interested.***

***Miss J finds the new books and is drawn to this one and reads it to herself in her own time... later that evening she comes to me to confess that she hasn’t always been honest and would like to be more honest. Shares very openly some incidents that she hasn’t been very honest and relates them to each part in the book. I told her how proud I was that she was brave enough to tell me and how we can’t change the past but we can chose to be more honest in the future. She explains to me that being honest makes you feel close to people, keeps you safe and helps people trust you. I am so impressed at the impact this book had on her but also proud and amazed by her emotional intelligence to relate it to herself and how lying has affected her and others around her and that she wants to be more honest.”***

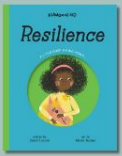
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## The mental health of Australian children

- **Before the pandemic: 1 in 7 children aged 4-17 yrs had a mental health condition** (Lawrence et al., 2015)
- **During the pandemic: 1 in 3 were in the high or very high range for emotional symptoms** (Sicouri et al., 2023)
- **Since 2020: More children under 5 yrs presenting with anxiety & sleep problems** (APS, 2022)





## Universal primary prevention

- Programs that target all children
- Build social & emotional skills
- Improve resilience
- Reduce the likelihood of mental health conditions later in life







## **‘Emotion socialisation’: How parents/carers contribute to children’s emotional competence**

- Discussion of emotions
- Expression of emotions
- Modelling appropriate emotion regulation
- Responses to emotions
- Emotion coaching



# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



## ***'I Feel the World'***

- **Explores feelings with curiosity & acceptance**
- **Helps children develop a healthy relationship with their feelings**
- **Encourages children to observe feelings without judgment (mindfulness)**



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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



Feelings come in different shades,  
sizes, colours, textures, shapes.

Big and bold and loud and strong.  
A quiet hum. A gentle song.

Smooth like pebbles in my hand.  
Light as air or fine as sand.

Like the sun, some shine bright.  
Some glow like a starry night.

- **Helps children describe their feelings ('Name it to tame it')**
- **Provides information about feelings, e.g.:**
  - **All feelings are okay**
  - **Feelings have purpose**
  - **Feelings always change**
- **Uses metaphors & imagery**
- **Offers strategies to cope with feelings**

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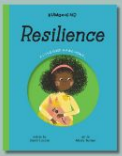


**Relationships are the  
foundation of  
resilience**



# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



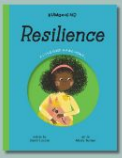
***“When we allow our children to deeply depend on us, to really lean into the embrace of our care, literally and figuratively, then what happens is that – out of the gift of deep dependence – true independence emerges.”***

Dr Vanessa LaPointe

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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



## Strengthen relationships by:

- Being present & authentic
- Noticing needs for connection vs exploration
- Responding to emotions with warmth & empathy
- Playing, sharing joy & delighting in them
- Setting loving limits
- Repairing 'ruptures' in the relationship



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***“Parenthood is above all a relationship, not a skill to be acquired. Attachment is not a behaviour to be learned but a connection to be sought.”***

Dr Gabor Maté



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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



Let's talk about persistence

Can you remember a time when you were persistent?



**Duncan** farmer

"My best sheep dog, Stomper, was lost. We searched the paddocks for long hours. I found him trapped in a log. I was very glad I did not give up and that Stomper was safe."



**Madeleine** neuroscientist and epidemiologist

"Part of my work is finding out new things by running experiments. Sometimes they don't work out. That feels really hard, but when this happens I take a break and some deep breaths and I try again. Keep going and never lose hope."



**MISSY** artist (and the illustrator of this book)

"I've always dreamed of drawing for a living, but it seemed scary to try being an artist in case I failed. I took some classes, practised and practised, and drew and drew. And then I drew some more! I put together a book of my artwork to show at an art fair. I was so nervous. But someone liked it, and I got my first illustration job that day!"



**Ed** paramedic

"I had a very sick lady at work who refused to go to hospital. She was going to die if she didn't. We tried everything to persuade her, but nothing worked. When everyone had given up trying and were leaving, I tried once more. I said, "I'll do a headstand in front of you if you agree to go to hospital." She laughed and said, "I'd like to see that." So I did a headstand. She came to hospital and we saved her life."

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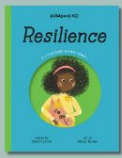
Ed Armytage, paramedic (Human-Kind: Persistence)

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# Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



***“The shortest distance between two people is a story.”***

Patti Digh



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## The role of children's books:

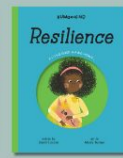
- Build connection
- Provide opportunities for independent reflection
- Calming & regulating
- Rituals & routines



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## *Discussion questions for children*

Courage means doing things that are important, even if they are scary. Sometimes we need courage to do the things that keep us healthy, happy and safe.

- Can you think of a time you needed courage?
- What feelings did you get in your body?
- What were some of your worries?
- What did you do that helped you to have courage?
- Who helped you?
- Can you think of some things you would like to do in the future that might need you to be courageous?



- Provide rich opportunities for discussion
- Facilitate learning through narrative, characters & illustrations
- Give parents/carers confidence to address tricky topics

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## Some tips for managing big feelings:

- Take slow, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose (count to 3) and out through your mouth (count to 3).
- Close your eyes. Notice the ground under your feet and the sounds you can hear.
- Look around you. What do you see?
- Notice the feelings in your body. Do you have a racing heart, tense muscles, butterflies in your tummy, jumping feet or wriggling hands?
- Try to name your emotion. Are you excited? Worried? Frustrated?
- Move your body. Jump, skip, dance, play, run, climb or kick a ball!
- Have some quiet time. Snuggle under a blanket, read a book, listen to music or draw a picture. Cuddle a pet, a toy or someone you love.

These skills take time and lots of practice. Remember your parents and carers are there to help you.



**The broad appeal of  
*I Feel the World* has shown  
how valuable these kinds of  
books can be.**

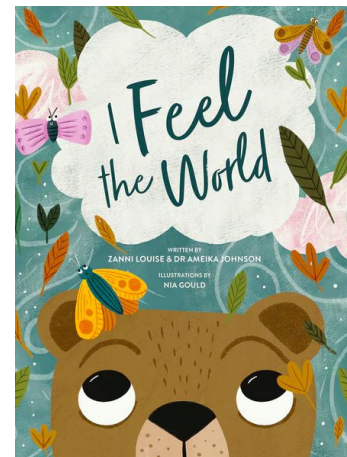
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***“This beautiful picture book is fabulous and would make an excellent Christmas gift! Zanni Louise, Dr Ameika Johnson and Nia Gould have created something very special for homes, early childhood and schools! I will be getting a book for each of my families.”***



Maggie Dent, parenting author and educator

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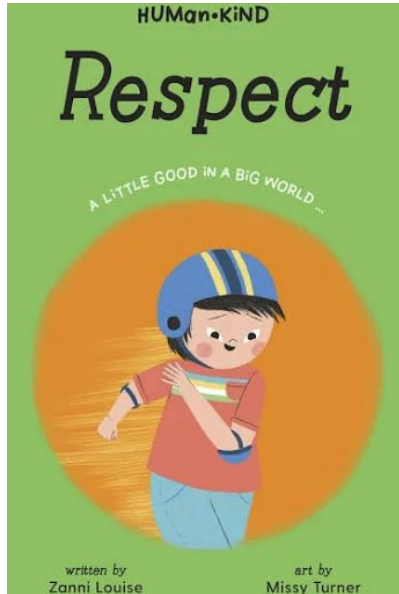
## Useful resources

- *'The Whole-Brain Child'* and *'No-Drama Discipline'* (Daniel Siegel & Tina Payne-Bryson)
- *'Parenting from the Inside Out'* (Daniel Siegel & Mary Hartzell)
- *'Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting'* (John Gottman)
- *'The Single Most Important Parenting Strategy'* (Becky Kennedy, Ted Talk)
- *'Tuning in to Kids'* parenting program: [tuningintokids.org.au/parents](http://tuningintokids.org.au/parents)
- Berry Street: [berrystreet.org.au](http://berrystreet.org.au) (trauma-informed resources & PL for educators)
- Raising Children Network: [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)
- Maggie Dent: [maggiedent.com](http://maggiedent.com)
- Hey Sigmund: [heysigmund.com](http://heysigmund.com)
- Raised Good: [raisedgood.com](http://raisedgood.com)



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