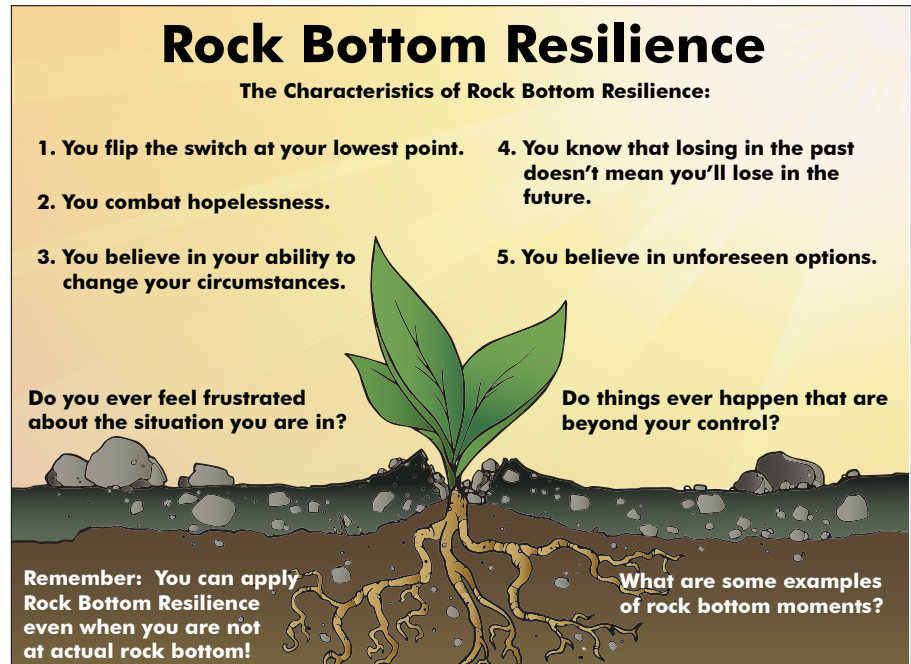


Rock Bottom Resilience

Resilience for Youth - Unit 6

Key Concept:

When you're at your lowest point, you believe in your ability to change your circumstances, combat hopelessness, and fight on.



Vocabulary

- Rock bottom moment
- Unforeseen options
- Self-talk
- Actual rock bottom
- Personal rock bottom
- Combat hopelessness

Secondary Concepts:

- Actual rock bottom means you've hit the lowest point in your life and feel hopeless about the future, and personal rock bottom means you've hit rock bottom in one area of your life only. You can be resilient under both circumstances!
- You take control of the present, knowing that losing in the past does not equal losing in the future.
- You believe in potential unforeseen options even during difficult times.

Personalize your Lesson:

- What rock bottom moments are your students experiencing right now? How can you gear this lesson towards their specific challenges?
- How have you overcome your own rock bottom moments?
- Who comes to mind when thinking of examples of people who have exhibited Rock Bottom Resilience?

Introducing Rock Bottom Resilience

Discussion

Ask and discuss the following with students:

- Have you ever seen a seedling like this one blowing in the wind?
- Have you ever wondered where it's going to end up and what will happen to it?
- What does a seed usually need to grow? (Discuss water, soil, and sun.) How much of that does it have in this environment?

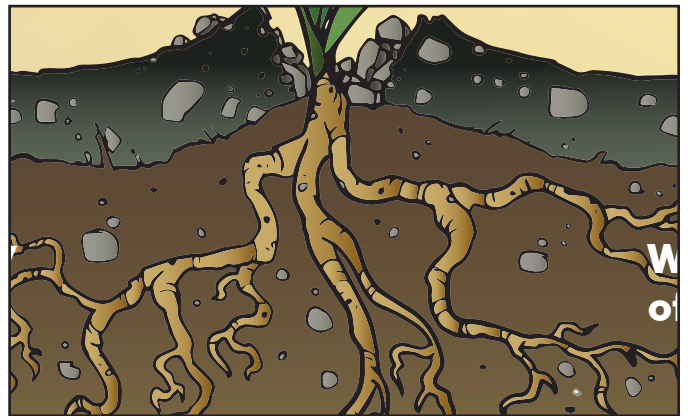
Visual Analogy Walkthrough

Discussion Point 1: Beneath the concrete

Discussion

Ask and discuss the following:

- Can a seed control the environment it ends up in?
- Do you ever feel like that seed? How so?
- Do things ever happen to you that are beyond your control?



Discuss with students how sometimes the circumstances beyond our control are lucky and work out well, while other times these circumstances are unfortunate, negative, and difficult.

Ask and discuss the following:

- Do you ever feel frustrated about the situation you are in?
- Does anyone have an example they're willing to share?

Explain that when you find yourself in an environment like the seed in this picture -- where things aren't going well -- we often call that a rock bottom moment.

Ask and discuss the following:

- What are some rock bottom moments that people might experience?

List student responses on one side of the board. When students have finished this brainstorm, write "Actual Rock Bottom" above the list. Examples may include:

- Failure

- Loneliness
- Being bullied
- Betrayal of a friend
- Parents' divorce
- Abuse
- Loss of a loved one
- Drugs

Explain the importance of not comparing ourselves to others. Just because someone else's "rock bottom" may look bigger or worse, it doesn't mean our own rock bottom moments in life don't need to be addressed. The fact is, not all rock bottom moments in life will be "earth shattering."

Ask and discuss the following:

- What are some examples of moments in life that are difficult but not necessarily earth shattering?

List student responses on the other side of the board. When students have finished this brainstorm, write "Personal Rock Bottom" above the list. Examples may include:

- Breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Getting a poor grade
- Not making a team
- Getting in a fight with a friend

Explain that we define actual rock bottom as a time when a person is at their lowest point in life and has no options. We won't all find ourselves at that point, but we *will* all experience personal rock bottom moments frequently throughout life -- things that are difficult or painful, but that don't necessarily fall in the category of actual rock bottom. The strategies we're about to learn can help us with both kinds of rock bottom, and may even help us avoid some actual rock bottom situations.

Ask and discuss the following:

- What did life look like before the plant broke through the concrete? (Note: If you are using the animated PowerPoint, be sure to click "next" here for the plant to animate in.)

Using the animated PowerPoint or your own images, display pictures of plants growing in unusual situations. Ask and discuss the following:

- Have you ever seen a plant growing in a situation like this -- on a sidewalk or through a brick wall?
- Why do you think it kept pushing through?
- Isn't it amazing how a fragile little plant has the power to push through and break apart very hard forces like asphalt or concrete?



Directions

Have students reflect on a personal rock bottom moment they've experienced in life, or maybe

even an actual rock bottom moment they've experienced. If anyone is willing, ask students to share what motivated them to push through that rock bottom moment.

Discussion Point 2: Characteristics of Rock Bottom Resilience

Discussion

Explain that when someone has a great deal of challenges, yet pushes forward and is resilient, we call that Rock Bottom Resilience.

Ask and discuss the following:

- What characteristics have you observed in people who have successfully come out of rock bottom situations?

Discuss with students some examples of specific people who have exhibited these characteristics. Consider showing a video or telling a story of the Rock Bottom Resilience of one of the following individuals, or another person who has been resilient in the face of a rock bottom moment:

- Helen Keller
- Robert Downey, Jr.
- Oprah Winfrey
- Nelson Mandela
- Jen Bricker
- Beethoven
- Lucille Ball
- Thomas Edison

Tell students that we'll now be looking at some other characteristics of individuals who have Rock Bottom Resilience, like the plant coming out of the asphalt or concrete.

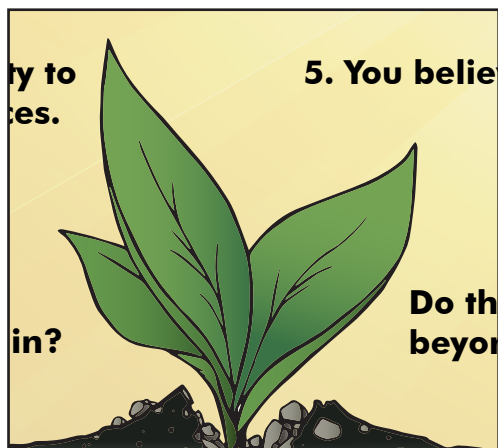
Characteristic 1: You flip the switch at your lowest point.

Discussion

Ask and discuss the following:

- Who remembers what it means to flip the switch?

Explain that sometimes people dealing with difficult challenges -- usually with the cycle of addiction -- don't have the desire to change, and people will say it's because, "They haven't hit rock bottom yet." When they do reach their lowest point, though, they usually recognize a need to change and flip the switch.



1. You flip the switch at your lowest point.

Ask and discuss the following:

- Is it possible to flip the switch and be resilient without hitting such a low point?

Characteristic 2: You combat hopelessness.

Discussion

Explain that strategies to combat hopelessness include utilizing the other sources of resilience, for example:

- Relational Resilience -- You can turn to the people in your life who care about and support you, or think about the people who depend on you and use that as motivation.
- Street Resilience -- You can think about what got you into this Rock Bottom moment, then use that circumstance as fuel to make a difference and come out of this situation.
- Resource Resilience -- Look at the resources available to you. Is there anything you can use to help you combat hopelessness and move forward?

2. You combat hopelessness.

Characteristic 3: You believe in your ability to change your circumstances.

Discussion

Explain that a person's belief level can grow the more that they use positive self-talk and the more they see positive results come from their actions.

3. You believe in your ability to change your circumstances.



Ask and discuss the following:

- Who knows what self-talk means?

Explain that the mind is an incredibly powerful “muscle” in our body. A lot of our ability to be resilient comes from our ability to tap into the power of our mind and beliefs when we have a challenge. When challenges arise, the things we tell ourselves about the problem have a big impact on how we handle that problem. We call these “conversations with ourselves” self-talk. That’s why we want to use *positive* self-talk, directing our inner voice toward positive outcomes instead of negative.

Emphasize that it’s important that we focus our self-talk on things we have control over. We can’t control the things other people say, think, or do, but we can control our own belief in ourselves and our ability to overcome difficult obstacles in life.

Characteristic 4: You know that losing in the past doesn’t mean you’ll lose in the future.

Discussion

Explain that if we’ve been placed in a circumstance that is difficult or beyond our control, it doesn’t mean we are “stuck” there. If we believe

4. You know that losing in the past doesn’t mean you’ll lose in the future.

in our ability to move forward in life and take steps to reach our goals, our life can take us to greater places than we ever imagined.

Characteristic 5: You believe in unforeseen options.

Discussion

Ask and discuss the following:

- What are some of the options that the plant couldn't see when it was stuck in that crack?

5. You believe in unforeseen options.

Explain that the plant had hope that there was something on the other side of the concrete (the sun), and that there was some soil where it could plant its roots. So it kept fighting even before it could see those things.

Tell students that applying Rock Bottom Resilience can help you discover options that you didn't know were there before, just like the plant discovered the sun and the soil when it kept moving and growing.

For example, you may want to attend college but your rock bottom moment is that you won't be able to afford it. Instead of giving up, you work hard in school and at your job. Unforeseen options may include scholarships, a raise at your job, a grant for a local community college that can eventually help you transfer to your dream school, or simply that you'll have enough money if you save up for a year instead of going to college straight out of high school. All of these things would be like the sun and soil for the little seed in the dark concrete. It kept working and pushing through without knowing what it would find, and eventually these life-giving resources made themselves manifest.

Remember: You don't have to be in jail or be a homeless drug addict to apply Rock Bottom Resilience. You can apply these principles when you are at your own personal rock bottom, without having to compare yourselves to people that are worse or better.

You can apply Rock Bottom Resilience even when you're not at actual rock bottom.

Remember: You can apply Rock Bottom Resilience even when you are not at actual rock bottom!

