



January 2021

# PARENT PERSPECTIVES

This edition of Parent Perspectives is submitted by Texas Affiliate Director, Cyd Rogers. Cyd shares information about grit and resilience for our Future Problem Solving students. Cyd is a forty-one year Texas educator, a part of the Austin Independent School District Advanced Academics department, and is in her 15<sup>th</sup> year as the Texas Future Problem Solving Program's Affiliate Director.

Back in the 1990s, author Robert Fulghum wrote a best-selling book titled All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.

This has always been a favorite book of mine. His message is powerful and applicable to almost everyone. The collection of essays, thoughts, and gentle advice is still very poignant and relevant today. Fulghum provides us with simple life skills such as:

- Share everything
- Play fair
- Don't hit people
- Put things back where you found them
- Clean up your own mess
- Don't take things that aren't yours
- Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody
- Wash your hands before you eat
- Live a balanced life. Learn some, and think some, and draw, and paint, and dance and play - and work some everyday!



After experiencing the first few months of the pandemic, I realized that while this type of sage wisdom is helpful, meaningful, and even enjoyable to read, our students, teachers, and everyone living in these unprecedented times need more in-depth skills with which to cope. So, I thought I'd write a blog or an activity for some teachers I was working with here in Austin ISD. Each day I added to my own writings, but it wasn't ever quite enough. My ideas seemed lackluster at best.

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Out of the blue, a student reached out to me wanting to start an FPS program at her school. She had so many innovative and intriguing ideas about gathering the kids together, promoting the proposed club via social media, and approaching her school administration on implementing a new club! Through this interaction, I began noticing and asking how schools and districts around our state were managing to continue our vital and essential learning competition program. What I learned was that through our own participants' resiliency, perseverance, and even grit, our FPS-ers were finding a way to work together, research, and compete--regardless of their current learning environments or circumstances.

In some of my recent meetings and online trainings, I've had **students** teach me short-cuts for Zoom, how to have group FaceTime calls, how they have mastered interaction with team members while competing in our online Google template and the list goes on and on. It suddenly hit me that our students are developing a new brand of grit and resilience.

In the beginning, it may have come from necessity, but now, our FPS-ers are proving every day that they can problem-solve on the spot, in the cloud, and with one another while wearing masks and practicing social distancing. They are utilizing multiple technological devices and enhancing their learning. Their teachers and coaches are also evolving more and more each day!

Cont.

*"The pandemic has made FPS-ers even better problem solvers (if that was possible)! Even in the midst of a global pandemic, FPS-ers came together to problem solve, and made the club and competitions work online." -Shaili Shouche, Dawson High School, Pearland, Texas*



***“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”***

**~ Nelson Mandela~**

***"The pandemic has made FPSers more resilient by making us adapt to entirely new conditions. Our club meetings are all virtual now, making it harder to collaborate with our teams, but we've learned how to overcome this new environment. Adapting together has made us stronger than ever before."***  
-Bidisha Halder~

**Dawson High School CmPS  
Pearland, Texas**



My final take away is that perhaps I've learned more from our FPS kids than from Fulghum's book. Our FPS kids are learning to exemplify resiliency on the spot! They are happiest when they are given an opportunity to be challenged, to continue to grow, to collaborate, to think, and be creative. Through these attributes they continuously find ways to succeed. They are honing their resiliency skills, and I must say we can all learn from their grit and ability to persevere!! I truly believe that THESE are the attributes that Dr. Torrance thought of when developing the Future Problem Solving Program over forty-six years ago.

I encourage you to celebrate our students' resiliency, and continue to expose them to new opportunities to practice resiliency skills—just as Future Problem Solving does through each of our competitive components. I've included a few tips and links for you about how to encourage resiliency. May each of us continue to allow our FPS-ers thrive resiliently through Future Problem Solving!~~ Cyd Rogers



## Activities to Build Grit & Resilience in Children

*Adapted From: BigLifeJournal.com*

- 1. Help your child find purpose:** Discuss their goals and purpose in life. Talk about the steps that would be required in order for your child to reach their goal. Encourage them to create a dream board, or journal to help visualize their purpose and goals.
- 2. Encourage your child to conduct “grit interviews”:** Encourage your child to interview parents, older siblings, grandparents, neighbors, teachers, family friends, or others who have worked hard toward achieving a long-term goal.
- 3. Share stories of gritty famous people:** Encourage your child to study famous people (and their failures) like Michael Jordan or J.K. Rowling. These examples will show your child that perseverance through failure can lead to great success.
- 4. Teach about grit through nature:** Read together the Tupac Shakur poem “The Rose That Grew from Concrete.” Then discuss what represents the “concrete” in their life. What are their obstacles? Next, discuss how your child can “break through concrete” like the rose. What can they do to overcome obstacles and reach their dreams?
- 5. Teach about grit through literature:** Read classic stories of perseverance like “The Little Engine That Could” or Dr. Seuss’s “Oh, The Places You’ll Go.” Help your child form connections to their own life. Talk about their challenges, response to failures, and how to live with grit.
- 6. Ask, “What’s the hard part?”:** When your child feels discouraged or tempted to give up, try asking them, “What’s the hard part?” After the two of you have identified the challenge, ask what they could do to overcome “the hard part.”
- 7. Try the “grit pie” exercise:** The pie represents an obstacle your child is facing. Each slice of pie symbolizes a cause of the problem. For each slice, analyze whether their thoughts about the problem are permanent or temporary and whether they blame themselves or others.
- 8. Share your passions:** Show the child your excitement about activities outside of working and parenting, and devote time to developing these passions especially in these times of the pandemic.

***“I can be changed by what has happened to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it.”***  
***~ Maya Angelou ~***

## Check out these links to other sources on resilience:

<https://www.aconsciousrethink.com/4257/5-reasons-everyone-make-vision-board/> Learn WHY to create a dream board or vision board and how to create them!

[https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy\\_hone\\_3\\_secrets\\_of\\_resilient\\_people?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_3_secrets_of_resilient_people?language=en)

Everyone experiences loss, but how do you cope with the tough moments that follow? Resilience researcher Lucy Hone shares three hard-won strategies for developing the capacity to brave adversity, overcome struggle and face whatever may come head-on with fortitude and grace.

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/social-emotional-learning/social-skills-for-kids/power-defeat-how-to-raise-kid-grit.html>

Parents magazine online article that gives suggestions on how to build grit within your child.

<https://youtu.be/iAK5wMzRXAI>

In this talk, Angela Duckworth presents her influential work on grit—the tendency to pursue long-term goals with perseverance and passion. *Why effort matters more than Talent*

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/grit-the-power-of-passion-and-perseverance-angela-lee-duckworth>

Leaving a high-flying job in consulting, Angela Lee Duckworth took a job teaching math to seventh graders in a New York public school. She quickly realized that IQ wasn't the only thing separating the successful students from those who struggled. Here, she explains her theory of "grit" as a predictor of success.

## The Rose That Grew From Concrete

*By Tupac Shakur*

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?

Proving nature's law is wrong it learned to walk without having feet.

Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air.

Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared.

