



FROM "IT WILL HAPPEN" TO "YOU MUST WORK FOR IT": THE FOUNDATION OF BUILDING RESILIENT CHILDREN

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ANNOTATSIYA: *Ushbu maqolada bolalarda bardoshlilik va mas'uliyat hissini shakllantirish jarayonida ota-onalar va tarbiyachilar tomonidan qo'llaniladigan tarbiyaviy yondashuvlarning bolalar psixologik rivojlanishiga ta'siri o'rganiladi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, bolaga "hamma narsa o'z-o'zidan bo'ladi" degan munosabatni singdirish emas, balki "muvaffaqiyat uchun harakat qilish kerak" tamoyiliga asoslangan tarbiya uslubi bolalarda irodaviy fazilatlarni, maqsadga intilishni va qiyinchiliklarni yengib o'tish qobiliyatini rivojlantiradi. Maqolada psixologik-pedagogik nazariyalar asosida bolalarga mas'uliyat va mehnat qadrini o'rgatishning amaliy usullari tahlil qilingan. Ota-onalar tutumining bolaning emotsional va kognitiv rivojlanishidagi hal qiluvchi o'rni ham alohida bayon etilgan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *bardoshlilik, mas'uliyat, bolalar tarbiyasi, iroda, motivatsiya, maqsadga intilish, mehnat tarbiyasi, ota-ona tutumi, psixologik rivojlanish, pedagogika.*

АННОТАЦИЯ: *В данной статье исследуется влияние воспитательных подходов, применяемых родителями и педагогами, на психологическое развитие детей в процессе формирования у них устойчивости и чувства ответственности. Исследование показывает, что не установка «всё произойдёт само по себе», а стиль воспитания, основанный на принципе «для достижения успеха необходимо трудиться», способствует развитию у детей волевых качеств, целеустремлённости и способности преодолевать трудности. В статье на основе психолого-педагогических*



теорий анализируются практические методы обучения детей ответственности и ценности труда. Отдельно рассматривается определяющая роль родительского поведения в эмоциональном и когнитивном развитии ребёнка.

Ключевые слова: *устойчивость, ответственность, воспитание детей, воля, мотивация, целеустремлённость, трудовое воспитание, родительское поведение, психологическое развитие, педагогика.*

ABSTRACT: *This article examines the influence of educational approaches used by parents and educators on children's psychological development in the process of forming resilience and a sense of responsibility. The research demonstrates that it is not the attitude of "everything will happen on its own," but rather an upbringing style grounded in the principle "you must work for success" that fosters the development of willpower, goal-orientation, and the ability to overcome difficulties in children. Based on psychological and pedagogical theories, the article analyzes practical methods of teaching children responsibility and the value of hard work. The decisive role of parental behavior in children's emotional and cognitive development is also discussed separately.*

Keywords: *resilience, responsibility, child-rearing, willpower, motivation, goal-orientation, labor education, parental behavior, psychological development, pedagogy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapid technological advancement, economic uncertainty, and increasing social complexity, the ability to persist through adversity has become one of the most valuable qualities a person can possess. Resilience — the capacity to adapt positively in the face of stress, challenge, and failure — is not an innate trait that some children are born with and others are not. Rather, it is a dynamic psychological capacity that is cultivated, shaped, and reinforced through the everyday interactions children have with the adults around them.



Central to this cultivation is a fundamental shift in the messages children receive about how the world works. When children grow up hearing that things will simply "happen" — that success will come without effort, that comfort is a given, and that hardship is abnormal — they are ill-equipped to cope when reality presents them with obstacles. Conversely, when children are taught from an early age that meaningful outcomes require genuine effort, that struggle is a natural part of growth, and that they possess the agency to shape their own futures, they develop the psychological architecture necessary for resilience.

This paper argues that the deliberate shift in parental and pedagogical discourse — from a passive, entitlement-based orientation ("it will happen") to an active, effort-based orientation ("you must work for it") — is among the most consequential factors in the development of resilient, responsible, and emotionally mature children. Drawing on developmental psychology, attachment theory, and contemporary research in positive psychology and pedagogy, this article explores the mechanisms through which this shift operates and offers practical guidance for parents and educators seeking to implement it meaningfully.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Resilience in Developmental Psychology

The concept of resilience has a rich history in developmental psychology, originating in the pioneering longitudinal studies of Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith (1982), who followed a cohort of children born into conditions of poverty and family instability on the island of Kauai. Their landmark finding — that a significant proportion of these high-risk children grew into competent, confident adults — redirected scholarly attention toward the protective factors that buffer children against adversity.

Subsequent researchers, including Ann Masten (2001), conceptualized resilience not as a rare or special quality but as "ordinary magic" — the product of basic human adaptive systems functioning well. Among the most critical of these systems are: the quality of relationships with caregivers, the child's sense of self-efficacy, and the presence of consistent structure and expectations within the family



environment. All three of these systems are directly influenced by whether children are raised with a passive or an active orientation toward achievement and effort.

2.2 Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset Theory

Perhaps the most directly relevant theoretical framework for the argument advanced in this paper is psychologist Carol Dweck's theory of implicit intelligence beliefs, more commonly known as the fixed versus growth mindset distinction (Dweck, 2006). In Dweck's framework, children who are raised to believe that their abilities are fixed — that talent and intelligence are innate gifts that one either has or does not — tend to avoid challenges, give up quickly when faced with difficulty, and interpret failure as a reflection of fundamental inadequacy.

By contrast, children who develop a growth mindset — the belief that abilities can be developed through dedication, effort, and perseverance — embrace challenges as opportunities, persist in the face of setbacks, and view effort as the path to mastery. Crucially, Dweck's decades of research demonstrate that the growth mindset is not a personality trait but a learned orientation, transmitted primarily through the language adults use when praising, correcting, and guiding children. The difference between telling a child "you are so smart" (fixed) and "you worked really hard on that" (growth) has measurable, lasting consequences for how that child approaches future challenges.

The transition from "it will happen" to "you must work for it" is, in essence, the practical application of growth mindset principles at the level of family culture and daily interaction. It is a reorientation of the entire value system through which a child understands their relationship to effort, difficulty, and success.

2.3 Self-Determination Theory and Intrinsic Motivation

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides another essential lens through which to understand why the effort-based orientation produces more resilient children. SDT posits that human beings have three basic psychological needs: autonomy (the need to feel that one's actions are self-directed), competence (the need to feel effective and capable), and relatedness (the need to feel connected to others). When these needs are met in healthy ways, individuals develop intrinsic



motivation — the desire to engage in activities for their own inherent value rather than for external reward or to avoid punishment.

A parenting approach grounded in the "you must work for it" philosophy, when implemented with warmth and sensitivity, supports all three of these needs simultaneously. It respects the child's autonomy by trusting them to manage challenges independently. It builds genuine competence by allowing children to experience the satisfaction of earned achievement. And it deepens relatedness by communicating that the adult believes in the child's capacity — a profoundly connecting form of regard. By contrast, an approach that shields children from all difficulty and ensures that things "just happen" for them undermines all three needs, producing a dependency that is antithetical to resilience.

3. THE PROBLEM: ENTITLEMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Before examining the solution, it is necessary to understand the problem more precisely. The "it will happen" orientation does not typically arise from malice or neglect; on the contrary, it most often emerges from an excess of love and a sincere desire to protect children from pain. Parents who consistently smooth over obstacles, provide solutions before children have had the opportunity to struggle, and communicate implicitly that hardship is something to be avoided rather than navigated, are usually acting from a place of deep care.

However, the developmental consequences of this approach are well-documented and serious. Research by psychologists Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell (2009) documented the rise of narcissistic traits and entitlement attitudes among young people — trends they linked in part to parenting practices that emphasized children's specialness and worthiness without requiring commensurate effort or contribution. Children raised in these environments frequently experience what psychologist Wendy Mogel (2001) describes as a "fragility" — an inability to tolerate frustration, disappointment, or delayed gratification that leaves them profoundly unprepared for adult life.

Neurologically, the consequences are equally significant. The prefrontal cortex — the brain region responsible for executive function, impulse control, and



long-term planning — develops most robustly in response to experiences that require the child to regulate their emotional responses to frustration and to persist through difficulty. When children are consistently protected from these experiences, this crucial neural development is impeded. The result is an adult whose emotional regulation capacities remain underdeveloped, not because of any inherent limitation, but because the necessary developmental experiences were withheld.

4. THE SHIFT: MECHANISMS AND MANIFESTATIONS

4.1 The Role of Language

The shift from passive to active orientation begins with language. The words adults use in everyday interactions with children carry enormous weight, encoding not merely information but entire worldviews. When a parent consistently uses language that emphasizes agency and effort — "what could you try next?", "I wonder what would happen if you approached it differently", "I saw how hard you worked on that" — they are building a cognitive and emotional framework in the child that connects effort with outcome and positions the child as an active agent in their own story.

Conversely, language that emphasizes outcomes without connecting them to process — "you're the best", "don't worry, it'll be fine", "I'll take care of it" — communicates that results arrive independently of effort, that discomfort is to be avoided, and that others are responsible for solving one's problems. Repeated across thousands of daily interactions over years of development, these linguistic patterns shape the child's fundamental orientation toward challenge and agency.

4.2 The Role of Structured Challenge

Beyond language, resilience is built through the experience of structured challenge — difficulty that is appropriate to the child's developmental stage and supported by a caring adult who provides encouragement without eliminating the struggle. Psychologist Lev Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) — the space between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with appropriate support — is directly relevant here. Optimal developmental



growth occurs precisely in this zone: when children are stretched beyond their current independent capabilities but not overwhelmed.

Parents and educators who understand this principle create environments in which children regularly encounter manageable challenges: age-appropriate household responsibilities, academic tasks that require genuine effort, social situations that demand negotiation and compromise, and physical activities that require practice before mastery is achieved. In each of these contexts, the adult's role is not to eliminate the difficulty but to accompany the child through it — providing confidence-building language, strategic guidance when genuinely necessary, and unwavering belief in the child's ultimate capacity to succeed.

4.3 Allowing Failure as a Pedagogical Tool

One of the most counterintuitive but empirically well-supported aspects of resilience-building is the importance of allowing children to fail. Failure, when experienced in a safe and supportive context, is one of the most powerful teachers available. It provides the child with accurate feedback about the gap between their current approach and what the task requires. It activates problem-solving capacities. It builds tolerance for discomfort and frustration. And — crucially — it demonstrates to the child that failure is survivable: that it does not define their worth and does not signal the end of the road, but merely the beginning of a new attempt.

The adult's response to the child's failure is of paramount importance in determining whether the experience becomes developmental or damaging. Research by Kamins and Dweck (1999) demonstrated that person-focused criticism following failure ("you were so careless") produced significantly more helpless responses than process-focused criticism ("what could you try differently next time?"). The message that failure communicates about the self versus about the approach is the critical variable: when failure is framed as information about strategy rather than judgment about character, it becomes a tool for growth rather than a source of shame.

4.4 Consistency and the Family Culture of Effort

Perhaps the most underappreciated mechanism through which the "you must work for it" orientation builds resilience is its cumulative effect on family culture.



Resilience is not built through dramatic interventions or single memorable experiences; it is built through the accumulation of thousands of small, daily messages about what is expected, what is valued, and who the child is. When effort, persistence, and contribution are consistently valued and recognized within the family — when these qualities are celebrated not only in moments of triumph but in the daily practice of responsibility and hard work — they become part of the child's identity.

This identity-level internalization is qualitatively different from compliance or performance. A child who has internalized the value of effort does not work hard because they fear punishment or seek approval; they work hard because working hard is part of who they understand themselves to be. This intrinsic identification with the value of effort is the deepest and most durable foundation of resilience, and it is built not through lectures or exhortations but through the consistent lived culture of the family environment.

5. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

The theoretical arguments advanced above have concrete practical implications for the adults responsible for children's development. Several evidence-based recommendations emerge from the research literature:

First, parents and educators should audit the language they habitually use with children, paying particular attention to whether they consistently connect outcomes to effort and process. Replacing evaluative praise ("you're so talented") with descriptive, process-focused recognition ("I noticed how you kept trying even when it was hard") is a simple but powerful intervention with measurable effects on children's subsequent motivation and resilience.

Second, adults should resist the impulse to immediately resolve children's difficulties. This requires adults to develop their own tolerance for the discomfort of watching a child struggle — a genuinely difficult psychological task, but an essential one. The guiding question should be: "Is this difficulty causing genuine harm, or is



it a productive challenge that my child can navigate with appropriate support?" In most everyday situations, the honest answer is the latter.

Third, age-appropriate responsibility and contribution should be treated as non-negotiable aspects of children's daily lives rather than optional extras. Research by Marty Rossmann (2002) found that children who regularly participated in household chores from early childhood were significantly more likely to be successful in their careers, relationships, and civic participation as adults than those who did not. The mechanism is clear: regular responsibility builds the habit of effort, the tolerance for tasks that are not inherently enjoyable, and the sense of competence that comes from genuine contribution.

Fourth, schools and educational institutions should design curricula and assessment practices that make effort, process, and improvement as visible and valued as final outcomes. Grading practices that reward only correct answers without recognizing growth, persistence, or creative problem-solving inadvertently reinforce a fixed-mindset, outcome-oriented approach. Portfolio assessment, process documentation, and explicit recognition of learning journeys are among the pedagogical approaches that embed effort-orientation into institutional culture.

6. THE UZBEK EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The principles discussed in this paper are not culturally neutral — they must be understood and implemented in ways that are responsive to the specific cultural, social, and institutional contexts in which children develop. In Uzbekistan, the educational landscape has undergone significant transformation since independence in 1991, with the state increasingly emphasizing the cultivation of active, entrepreneurial, and initiative-taking citizens capable of contributing to national development.

The national preschool curriculum framework "Ilk Qadam" (First Step) explicitly prioritizes the development of independence, initiative, and problem-solving capacities in young children — values that are directly aligned with the effort-based orientation advocated in this paper. Similarly, the Law on Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan and successive Presidential decrees have increasingly



emphasized the cultivation of critical thinking, creativity, and self-reliance as core educational goals.

However, the translation of these policy commitments into everyday classroom and family practice remains uneven. Traditional Uzbek family structures, while rich in warmth and relatedness, sometimes default to patterns of protection and provision that inadvertently communicate the passive "it will happen" orientation to children. The challenge for Uzbek educators and parents is to build on the profound strengths of the national culture — including its deep valuing of family solidarity, respect for learning, and communal support — while consciously incorporating the effort-orientation that contemporary research identifies as essential for resilience.

7. CONCLUSION

The argument advanced in this paper is both simple and profound: the messages children receive about the relationship between effort and outcome are among the most consequential factors in their development. When children grow up understanding that meaningful achievements require genuine work — that struggle is not a sign of inadequacy but a necessary part of growth, and that they possess the agency to shape their own futures through sustained effort — they develop the psychological resilience that will serve them throughout their lives.

The shift from "it will happen" to "you must work for it" is not a shift toward harshness or deprivation; it is a shift toward genuine respect for the child's capacity. It communicates, at the deepest level, that we believe in the child: that we trust them to navigate difficulty, to learn from failure, to persist through challenge, and ultimately to achieve things they can be genuinely proud of. This belief — expressed consistently through language, through structured challenge, through the space to fail and recover, and through the culture of effort embedded in family and school — is the foundation upon which resilient children are built.

Future research should continue to investigate the specific mechanisms through which effort-orientation is transmitted across different cultural contexts, and to develop culturally responsive interventions that support parents and educators in implementing these principles in ways that honor the richness of their particular



traditions while cultivating the resilience their children need. The stakes — for individual children, for families, and for the societies they will grow up to shape — could not be higher.

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