

EPCC Newsletter



Meditation as a Path to Resilience

BY SHIRLEY H. CHEN

On the radio the other day, a broadcaster introduced "hits from the twenty tens," and it led me to an intense reflection of the last decade in my life, particularly the year 2019. So much has happened that has challenged me to my fullest. I was presented with an exciting and risky career opportunity that took many months to come together. A large part of my discussions with my family and with my now 7th grade son's father was around my son's capability to adapt to and communicate with us his sense of well-being in response to changes - his resilience.

When I refresh myself on the definition of resilience, I am comforted to feel that my son has many of the qualities that are embodied in its definition. Resilience is having the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, the confidence of being able to handle any situation with strength and strategy, with grace and a positive outlook. Resilience is the ability to respond, absorb, and adapt to, as well as recover from a disruptive event. Although my son is not in his early childhood years, he has responded to new situations and environments openly and with a positive outlook. He now makes a dedicated effort to study and incorporate the social structures around him in a positive way for himself. I am such a proud mommy!

One of the most effective tools we use together to remind us of the importance of gratitude and positive intention, is the

tool of meditation. One morning, he came into my room, flopped down next to me, and requested to do a quick meditation with me. We love this one, <https://youtu.be/inpok4MKVLM>, and recommend it any time of the day. At the end of this article, please feel free to try another one as well!

According to the article *Resilience in Development: The Importance of Early Childhood* by Ann S. Masten, published online in the *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*, March 2006, "it is particularly important that children have the protections afforded by attachment bonds with competent and loving caregivers, the stimulation and nutrition required for healthy brain development, opportunities to learn and experience the pleasure of mastering new skills, and the limit-setting or structure needed to develop self-control."

This quote reminds me of the deep impact Early Childhood Educators can have in the lives of young children and their families. It makes sense that relationships, nutrition, challenges and setting boundaries are such a daily part of the focus in high quality learning environments for young children, especially in relation to promoting resilience in each individual. There are so many aspects to creating quality environments that we can all be a part of. My work as an early childhood educator is led with the intention to help

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EPCC at CAAEYC!

Exciting News! EPCC will be presenting a Pre Conference - Day Workshop. "Hand in Hand: Adults and Children Working Together to Create a Culture of Peace." See the [CAAEYC Conference Website](#) for details.

Join us at the Center For Social Change on Saturday, April 25th, from 10:00am - 3:00pm for activities and events:

- Panel on Resilience - Leading educators will share their work, questions and answers
- A variety of organizations involving children and social justice will have activities and materials to explore
- Singing and Networking
- Book Give-Away
- EPCC Workshops:
 - Using Nonviolent Communications to Build Relationships
 - A Toolkit for Educators: Intentional Strategies to Support Resiliency

Image Credits: Right: [Conference.caeyc.org](#)
Left: [Freepik.com](#)

BOOK REVIEW

"A Child Called 'It'"

By Dave Pelzer

BY JOYCE DANIELS

An amazing story of resilience is told in this memoir written by Dave Pelzer. From the ages of 4-12 he was abused by his mom - beaten, starved and neglected until teachers at school noticed that something wasn't right. *A Child Called "It"* chronicles those years. Police removed him from the home and placed him in foster care where he stayed until he joined the Air Force. *The Lost Boy* chronicles his years in foster care. *A Man Called Dave* tells of his adult life. Besides being the author of his memoirs he also writes self-improvement books.



RESOURCE

Children's Books on Resilience

Here is a list of recommended books from the article: *Building Resilience: Helping Children Cope with Violence in their Communities* by Jennifer R.M. Hill, Regina M. Adesanya from an article in *Young Children*, September, 2019.

BOOKS ON EMPATHY

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

By Judith Viorst (1972)

HAVE YOU FILLED A BUCKET TODAY? A GUIDE TO DAILY HAPPINESS FOR KIDS

By Carol McCloud (2007)

BOOKS ON TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES

THE BREAKING NEWS

By Sarah Lynne Reul (2018)

FAR APART, CLOSE IN HEART: BEING A FAMILY WHEN A LOVED ONE IS INCARCERATED

By Becky Birtha

Illustrations by Maya Kastelic (2018)

THE KISSING HAND (25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

By Audrey Penn

Illustrations by Ruth E. Harper and

Nancy M. Leak (2018)

MY DADDY'S IN JAIL

Anthony Curcio (2015)

A TERRIBLE THING HAPPENED

By Margaret M. Holmes

Illustrations by Cary Pillo (2000)

BOOKS ON ANGER MANAGEMENT/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION

THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT

By Drew Daywalt

Illustrations by Oliver Jeffers (2013)

ENEMY PIE

By Derek Munson

Illustrations by Tara Calahan King (2000)

LLAMA LLAMA AND THE BULLY GOAT

By Anna Dewdney (2013)

THE PEACE BOOK

By Todd Parr (2005)

BOOKS ON CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

ERANDI'S BRAIDS

By Antonio Hernández Madrigal

Illustrations by Tomie dePaola (2001)

THE GOLD COIN

By Alma Flor Ada

Illustrations by Neil Waldman

Translated by Bernice Randall (1991)

SMOKY NIGHT

By Eve Bunting

Illustrations by David Diaz (1994)



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[educatorsforpeacefulclassrooms
andcommunities.org](http://educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org)

Image courtesy of amazon.com

Icon courtesy of the Noun Project

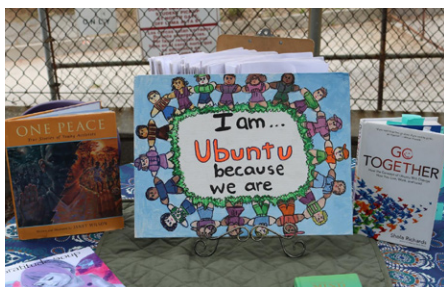


FEATURE

I Am Because You Are: Peace Camp 2019

BY LAURA HYATT

Due to the current political climate, the divisiveness in our country, and the violence in our schools, Peace Camp of the Foothills located in Altadena, California, decided to focus on community and what we all, as humans, have in common. Through skits, arts, crafts, and activities, we focused on the concept of Ubuntu, a South African word having to do with compassion, kindness, and connectedness. Often translated as "I am because you are" it reminds us that we are not alone and that we can see ourselves in others. If one member of a group or community is in need, we are all in need. We used our t-shirts to spread a message of unity to the community, with Maya Angelou's quote, "We are more alike my friends than we are unlike." Focusing on the fact that although we are all very different, with different views, beliefs, and ways of being, we have far more in common than we think. And if we focus on ways that we are connected, we will understand and relate to one another more.



"Ubuntu" reminds us to see ourselves in others and to act with compassion.

The theme was inspired by Shola Richards (<https://sholarichards.com>), who was bullied as a child and as an adult and wondered why no one was doing anything about it. His friend reminded him that he is somebody. Taking the problem as his problem and not someone else's problem, he is now an agent for change and a keynote speaker, best-selling author, and creator of The Positivity Solution. He shares the idea of Ubuntu with the world. Although Shola was out of town and could not attend our Peace Camp, he videotaped an inspiring message to our leaders and campers.

Throughout the week, we shared simple actions and movements by individuals inspired by passion, who, simply by exploring and sharing their passions, end up having a positive impact on their communities. We explored movements such as the Kindness Rocks project (<https://www.thekindnessrocksproject.com>), the Positivity Solution (<http://thepositivesolution.com/about-shola>), and the Found Object project (one of our volunteers shared how picking up trash in her community and sharing it on instagram has now started a mini-movement). A veteran Peace Camper, now a Jr. Leader, shared how she and her friends, inspired by Peace Camp, created the Upstanders club at her school, a group devoted to taking action and making a difference in their school and community. Started when she was in 3rd grade, the group has spent the last 3 years

committed to social justice projects. Looking directly at our high school leaders, who had been complaining about negativity at their school, Grace encouraged them to stand up, take action, and be the change that they wished for. She had done it and so could they. It was very inspiring for us all as Grace reminded us, once again, that one can change the world and have a lasting impact at any age.

We also shared social justice in songs (such as This Land is Your Land), spreading peace through nature art (Andy Goldsworthy), and writing for peace and social justice (Matti Stepanek). After discussing many different ways that our peace camp could impact the world, we decided that painting rocks and spreading messages of kindness to others is a great way for peace camp to have an impact. Although not quite sure of where to go with it yet, peace camp created an instagram - #peacecamprocks, to hopefully spread the message to others.

Our next Peace Camp will be centered around resilience, inspired by the CAAEYC theme for 2020.



WATCH A SLIDESHOW OF THE 2019 PEACE CAMP
<https://youtu.be/7Y4gN2R4vOM>

Meditation as a Path to Resilience

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the children I care for identify and collect tools that can lead them towards a healthy development in their self discovery, self love, relationship building and separating skills.

To me, It is so important to embrace that each person, at any age, is a mentor and student.

As I continued in my studies on the topic of resilience, I have come to an appreciation of the importance of this concept. There cannot be the concept of resilience without the idea of difficulty or disruption. Resilience is key to handling particularly difficult situations, such as separation from a family member, violence or death, within a child's community.

One strategy to use in working with resilience is the practice of meditation. The following steps are recommended.

1. When meditating, first, get into a position that you are comfortable.
2. Take 10 deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling fully.
3. Now imagine a place from your childhood where you felt safe and happy. Who is there? What do you see? What are you doing?
4. Now imagine offering your best self, being part of a community that can provide this same feeling for another child, another family.

5. Imagine being part of a community that can be a safe and respectful haven for everyone, from infants to young children to seniors and every age in between.
6. Imagine playing a significant role in providing a space in reducing children's stress and modeling resilience using a positive outlook and wearing a hopeful lens - as an individual, as part of a family, and as part of our connected world.

The article, *Building Resilience: Helping Children Cope with Violence in their Communities* by Jennifer R.M. Hill, Regina M. Adesanya, from NAEYC's journal *Young Children*, September 2019, is wonderful as a resource for educators to support children and their families in these times of crisis and stress. I especially like how this article highlights how an impacted family may not be able to support a child to its fullest potential without support from their community. It reminds me of the importance of staying actively involved in being a part of building a hopeful, peaceful and proactive community.

For further reading, see the Resource List of Children's Books on Resilience on Page 2.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR, SHIRLEY H. CHAN

I am so excited to join the EPCC writing committee. I first connected with EPCC at their workshop series Growing Peaceful Children and Families.

My decades of work in the ECE field has led to my current work in an innovative startup company. I love the wonder and joy that young children bring out in everyone around them!

My work with young children supports my passion in empowering individuals to recognize themselves as an integral part of their family and communities.

My son Gavin is my brightest light and mirror. I value quality time with family and friends, music, and storytelling.

"Resilience is very different than being numb. Resilience means you experience, you feel, you fail, you hurt. You fall. But, you keep going." - Yasmin Mogahed

EPCC at The Nest

BY GABY LITSKY



I recently had the opportunity to volunteer at "The Nest" in Tijuana, Mexico. It is a preschool located just across the street from Una Luz de Esperanza Shelter and serves Toddlers and Preschoolers as their families wait to cross the border. The preschool gives the children an opportunity to be children, play, experience art and music. The facility supports open ended exploration, cooperative play and opportunities to provoke thought and communication. The "local nesters" (usually parents and older teens) are trained in problem solving, providing provocative set ups and keeping the center clean. An emphasis is put on beauty and respect. The Toddler program requires a parent to accompany their child. The emphasis is on interacting with their children, learning some parenting and health basics. On Saturday and Sunday, school age children come after the younger children have left.

It was a wonderful, heart filling experience for me. If you are interested in becoming a visiting nester go to their website for information. If you are interested in giving financial support you can make a donation through their website:

www.thinkwithus.org/nest-tijuana.



CLICK TO DONATE TO THE NEST

Image Credit: Gaby Litksy

Icon Credit: hafiudin from the Noun Project

RECAP

EPCC Sacramento Training November 2019

On November 2, a workshop was held at Centennial Methodist Church in Sacramento. It was facilitated by two EPCC trainers, Lola Cornish and Joyce Daniels. Attendees were members of the church and the staff of the preschool that is housed at the church.

The goal of the workshop was to build a welcoming preschool program for all members of the preschool, church and neighboring community. To do this the attendees looked at curriculum development, cultural competence and family engagement.

Throughout the morning we looked at professional documents from NAEYC that support anti-bias education and encourage equity, and then discussed what is happening in the preschool currently and what could be done in the future. Additionally, we looked at the preschool environment to see if changes could be made.

At the end of the workshop participants were asked what they were currently doing with children and families that they would like to celebrate. Participants were also asked to talk about changes they'd like to make as a result of learnings from the workshop.

A stronger relationship between the church staff and the preschool staff seemed to be the greatest initial development as a result of the workshop. In addition there was a conversation among the preschool staff about including more diversity in the physical environment.

This custom training is one of the services that EPCC provides as a professional development opportunity for schools, centers and community groups. Contact us to provide a training in your own setting.



Read about 2019 Peace Camp and its theme of community on Page 3.

How can I get involved?

We are honored that you have opened and perused our quarterly newsletter.

We value your input and support for our peace education work that is so close to our hearts and minds. There are many ways that you can support our work with educators, families and communities across the country.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- Share your training or workshop experiences with others.
- Think about what you see on our website (educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org) that you might be interested in organizing for your community or sponsoring/funding or participating in yourself
- Tell others about the training opportunities we offer
- Refer others to our website
- Grant writing support, or leads
- Offer leads for training or speaking opportunities
- Offer leads for funding sources
- Offer leads for marketing our project

Please share this newsletter and refer others to our website, educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org. If you have any questions email us at pambonzvo@gmail.com.

Icons courtesy of the Noun Project

Alumni Corner

IF YOU HAVE COMPLETED LEVEL I & II THIS ALUMNI CORNER IS FOR YOU!

This invitation is for graduates of Levels I & II trainings who would like to become more involved. Please join an EPCC committee and their monthly scheduled telephone calls. Shirley H. Chen is an example of one who has joined the Writing Committee with her article on "Resilience" in this issue. Use contacts below.

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**WE LOOK FORWARD TO
HEARING FROM YOU!**