

# Foreword

In my work training thousands of educators over the past decade—in the United States and other countries—I have seen the shift from self-esteem training to resilience training. There is a growing conviction that building resiliency in students is crucial to adequately prepare them for life in the 21st century.

What is fueling this migration to a resiliency approach? Mainly, it's happening because of the recognition that simply focusing on what is wrong with students does not produce the desired academic and behavioral outcomes. "People are more motivated to change when their strengths are supported," concludes Saleebey (1997, p. 13).

Educators tell me their students often go through a near-miraculous metamorphosis when the message "what is right with you is more powerful than anything that is wrong with you" (Henderson, 1999, p. vi) replaces the sense of inadequacy that is the unfortunate by-product of risk and deficit approaches. When students consciously understand how they have overcome challenges in the past and how they can use these same factors to overcome current life problems, a sense of self-efficacy emerges that is more potent than any other self-esteem building I have seen.

*Building Resilient Students* clearly shows that giving this gift to students does not involve adding one more thing to the plates of already overwhelmed educators. As the book carefully details, building student resiliency is integrally connected with the best educational approaches—many or all of

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which are already being used in schools. This book will give its readers a new set of glasses with which to view their work with students. Building resiliency, readers will learn, is not a program or curriculum per se but an attitude, philosophy, and set of strategies that can permeate everything an educator does—and fits best with the latest educational megatrends.

This book also provides educators with important validation and affirmation. They will see that what they do reaches far beyond what they suppose and will also see how their efforts in creating successful learners extend to providing a contribution to their students' resiliency that often lasts a lifetime (Higgins, 1994). And they will learn specific, detailed ways to be the most-effective resiliency builders they can be.

This is a book that should be read and embraced by all educators concerned that they not only help students learn the basics but that they also adequately prepare them for successfully meeting the challenges of life.

Nan Henderson, MSW  
President  
Resiliency In Action  
San Diego, CA