How to Build Character in your Children

Day 5:

**Resourcefulness**By Carlos Santiago

As a boy, I loved to take things apart. My mother’s declaration that a toy or household item was broken was like a cavalry bugle charge to my ears. Within moments, I would swoop in with screwdriver in hand and a bold proclamation that I could fix it.

Truth be told, most items ended up in dismembered heaps in my room. Yet occasionally, between removal of the first screw, and the realization that I had parts left over, the broken item would find new life. When it did, a wave of pride would ride over me and last for days.

The joy I experienced fixing things as a young boy, taught me to reject “it’s broken” as a final answer and look for creative ways to overcome difficulties.

Today, when one of my kids’ toy breaks, I am still quick to play the role of “the fixer.” The problem is that in my enthusiasm to save the day, I inadvertently rob them of a critical ingredient in developing their own resourcefulness—the opportunity to fail. I’m ashamed to admit how many times I have taken tools away from my kids and declared, “You’re going to break that!”

What I frequently forget is that those piles of parts in my room represented more than failures; they represented lessons learned. Each disassembled carcass taught me how things worked and how they did not. Each failure opened my mind to learn a new lesson, and without them I would never have had the opportunity for success.

Psalm 119:71 says, “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.”

Some lessons can only be learned the hard way. If our kids are going to learn how to be resourceful, we can’t always fix their problems. We need to allow them to experience a little affliction every now and then.

The next time your child comes to you with a broken toy or a broken relationship, resist the urge to fix it for them. Instead, lead them with questions that will help them troubleshoot and fix the problem themselves. Sometimes you might think that the solutions your kids come up with won’t work, but as long as they aren’t harmful, let them try. That’s all part of the process.

**Scripture:**

Romans 5:3-5 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Psalm 119:71 My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees.