



# Overcoming the fear of failure in teenagers

Learn how to turn fearing failure into facing it head on



If your child is struggling to get to school or fearing something, listen to Dr Rachael Sharman, Psychology Educator explain how you can help. Learn how to turn fearing failure into facing it head on. It's good to face fears, it will give your teen a sense of accomplishment and confidence.

[Music]

Rachael: If you have a child who's frightened even just to go through the school gate; I guess the first thing is to have a discussion with that child about specifically what it is. They may have some rational fears but likely they're a lot more irrational. Actually, talk them through what some of the problems they anticipate are and what they can do in that scenario if they do encounter that problem. Some people, when they see failure, they become extremely fearful. We really need to stop that because what will happen it'll become a self-fulfilling prophecy. So really avoid the temptation to give teenagers a get-out-of-jail-free card. You know, don't be signing up to letters to the school saying "Oh my teenager's terribly frightened of public speaking". You need to really encourage them to engage and to approach tasks, including tasks that they find a little bit scary. I mean, you can help them do it. You can model it. You can bring in older siblings or cousins or what have you. Do whatever you can but don't let them avoid that task. Once we get into that avoidance cycle, we do start to see anxiety building. So they'll see something coming that frightens them. They'll avoid it. They'll feel a sense of relief.

What will happen is the next time they see something coming towards them that they find fearful, they'll want to avoid it so they can get that sense of relief. It's a very negative cycle and it's extremely difficult to break. A lot of the feedback I've heard from teenagers was "I'm really surprised how bad that wasn't". You kind of you know held my hand and got me through the learner's test or you got me through this particular thing that I was really frightened of doing and, you know what, the world still turned. The sky didn't fall in. It really wasn't such a big deal and that's what you want to try and set up for your teen. We want to see teenagers who are confident and enthusiastic to actually approach a task, even if it is a little bit fear-inducing for them.

[Music]

VO: You can discover more on the Spark Their Future website.

Last Updated: 08 December 2022