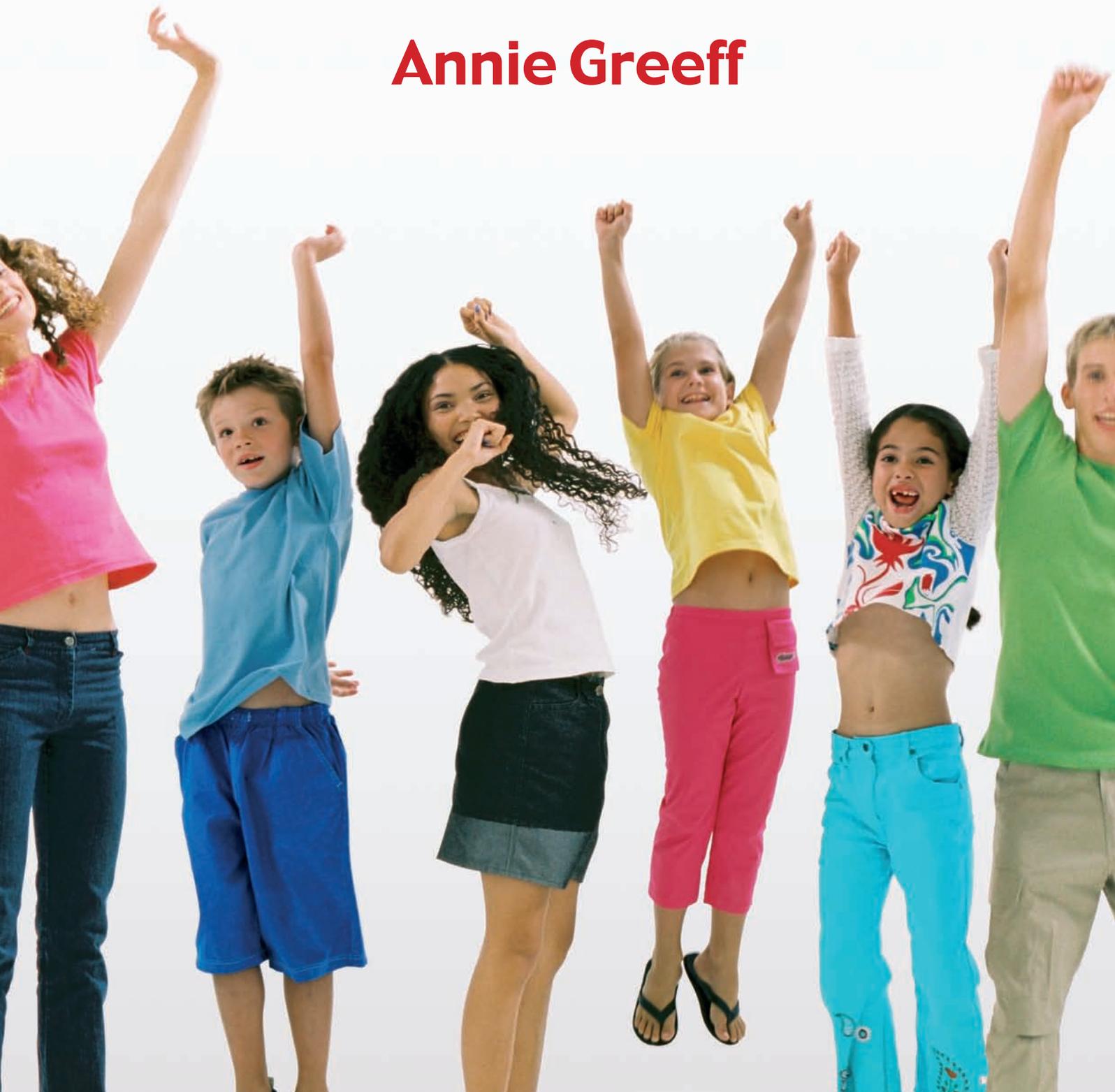


# Personal Skills for Effective Learning

Annie Greeff



**The Resilience Series**

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Contents

# Introduction

## Fostering resilience

Resilience is a broad concept, which includes the characteristics you need as an individual, your connection with others, and the support given by the environment you live in. In fact, when people develop resiliency traits and strategies on different levels, these protective strategies act together to create a strong, healthy cohesive society. The aim is to create an understanding of the interconnectedness of individuals, groups and society as a whole and thereby stimulate a sense of social responsibility while also acknowledging that each person can make a difference.

You can find out more about what resilience means in Unit 1, page 10.

Resilient people seem to have protective/support factors in three dimensions:

- individual
- relationships
- organization and environment.

The ideal strategy for fostering resilience is to develop coping skills within the individual and to ensure that the person experiences connection with others within a supportive environment. When support factors within and outside the person act in synergy, they 'automatically' compensate for the areas in which the person experiences difficulty. It is encouraging to know that when a person functions within a protective environment, over time, positive qualities form a stronger bond than that of the adverse influences.

If extreme old age (over ninety) is the ultimate proof of resiliency, research findings based on work done by Thomas Perls and Margery Hutter Silver (1999) indicate that the following traits are typical of well-adjusted, happy individuals in extreme old age:

- adaptability
- assertiveness
- sense of humour
- charisma

- involvement
- service to others
- sense of purpose
- caring relatives
- religion.

Age accelerators seem to be:

- regrets and bitterness
- detachment
- stubbornness to accept help
- compulsiveness
- emotional stress
- obesity
- alcohol consumption
- depression
- smoking
- inactivity.

We may not have control over the duration of our lives, but it is clear that we have significant control over the quality our lives, and many of the protective strategies are learnable competencies.

## Resilience and effective learning

Self-esteem and social skills influence our learning abilities as they determine how we form relationships with ourselves, with others and even with information! In short, they form the basis of how we look at life. If resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity or hardship, to overcome the negative influences that block achievement, then resiliency competencies enable learners to achieve excellence and enjoyment.

## Emotional development and developing resilient learners

For young people, major emotional challenges include peer pressure and the resultant need to fit in with a group. They have a need to be accepted and to function successfully within a group. To fulfil that need they have to develop personal and interpersonal

## INTRODUCTION

skills. When you understand and appreciate the application of what you learn, because you realize that the learning addresses your personal needs, the learning process will be more enjoyable and effective.

There is a saying that some situations are ‘windows of opportunity’ in terms of learning. When the learner is not ready, even the most impressive learning material may not reach its target. The opposite should also be true. If learning situations address specific needs at the right time, one could expect better results.

Typical traits in the emotional development of children in late childhood (6–11 years) seem to be the following:

- There is a desire to be part of the group and play according to rules, with the child wanting to be ‘in’.
- The child experiences periods of heightened emotionality and would rather express than control their feelings.
- They can name feelings more readily.
- They thrive on praise and acceptance and have to work harder to understand and manage feelings.

Although we have to acknowledge that people develop at their own pace, broad categories offer useful guidelines. Based on the generic assumptions about this life stage, *Resilience* places strong emphasis on group-work and refining emotional competencies.

### **Resilience and the National Curriculum**

The Appendix on pages 189–193 contains details about how resilience aligns with the National Curriculum outcomes for PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and Citizenship.

# Guidelines: Activity Sheet 7

## I am ...

### Learning points

It is not easy to describe ourselves, and by doing this activity young people become aware of themselves and their unique set of qualities. This activity is important for forming a realistic self-concept and self-appreciation.

### Comments

Using coloured pens and pencils, water colours, clippings from magazines and so on, the children design their own emblems or logos. The sharing of something that not a lot of people know about is based on the Johari window concept of self-disclosure and risk-taking, which requires people to respect each other and to treat the information shared with respect.

## Timing

20 minutes designing emblem

1–2 minutes per child sharing with group

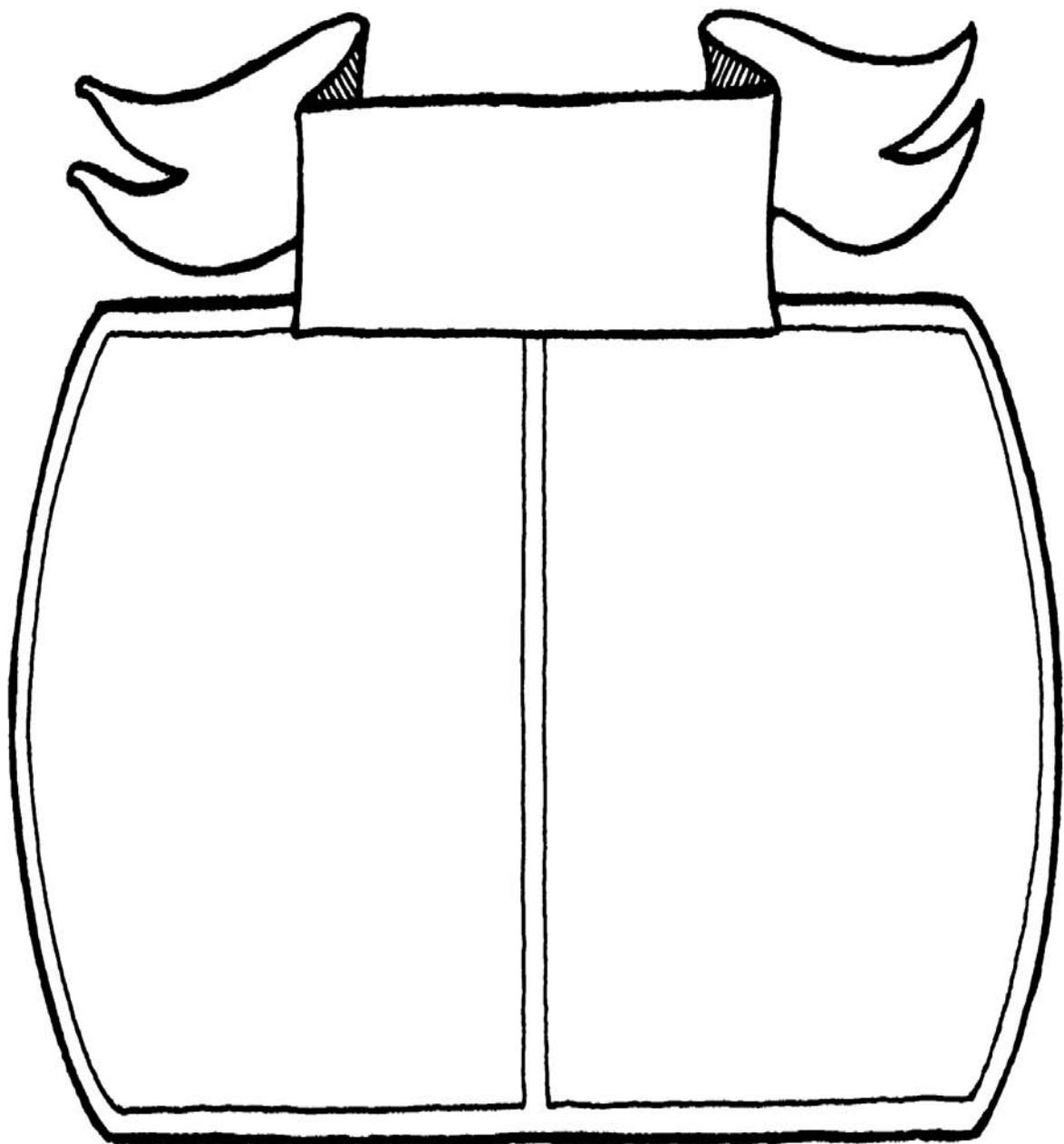
2 minutes closure

# 7 I am ...

## On your own

Use the emblem below, or draw your own emblem of yourself. It is similar to the logo of a company, or a family emblem. It represents you and says something about yourself.

- Write your name in the space on the ribbon. If your name has a special meaning, write that down as well. Was there a reason why you were given a specific name?
- In the space on the left of the emblem, list or illustrate a few things you are good at.
- In the space on the right of the emblem, list or illustrate something about yourself that not many people know and that might come as a surprise to them.
- Explain to the larger group what your emblem means.



# Outline

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<b>Overview</b>	<b>90</b>	1 The telephone game	<b>94</b>
Sticking up for myself	<b>90</b>	2 Different communication needs	<b>96</b>
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# Outcomes

On completion of this unit, children should be able to stick up for themselves and say how they feel without hurting others.

To be able to do this, children need to:

- understand their own emotions.
- know what caused their emotions.
- say how they feel.
- feel confident expressing their needs.
- choose the right time and place to express their emotions.
- accept that they will not always receive what they ask for.
- be prepared to get feedback and handle it well.
- be sensitive to other people's feelings.
- be comfortable apologizing and asking for forgiveness if they have made a mistake.
- forgive others.

I can be myself and ask for what I want, while I keep other's needs in mind.

I is OK if I have my own needs and things that are important to me apart from what others think I should do.

I can say what I think and feel.

I can make choices although everybody might not feel the same.

It is OK to make mistakes, because no one is perfect.

I can say what I think, while I also listen to what others have to say.

*Mindpower (1996)*

Outcomes

# Guidelines: Activity Sheet I

## The telephone game

### Learning points

Misunderstandings happen when we:

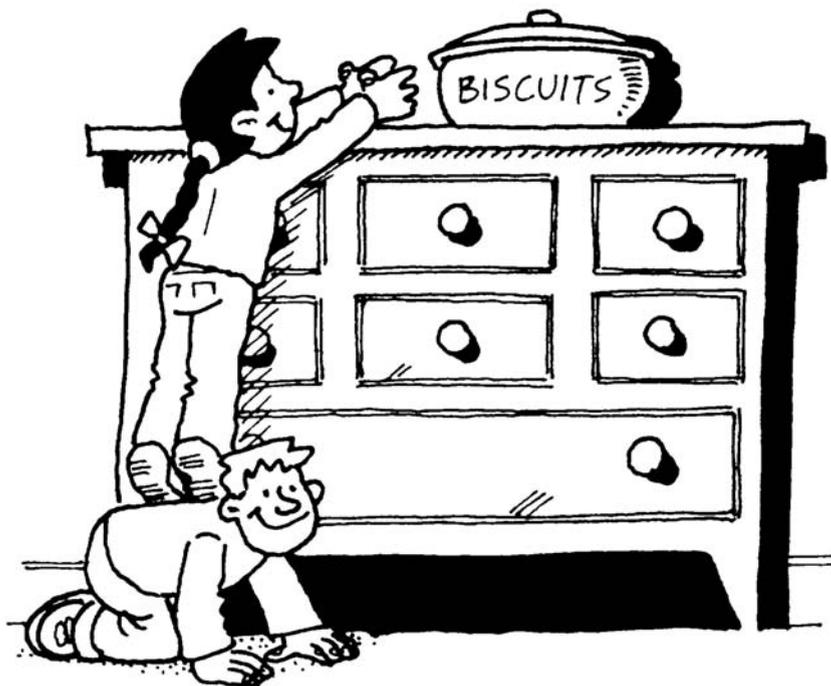
- give unclear messages.
- don't ask the right questions to check for understanding.
- do not repeat what the other person has said to ensure that we understand.

### Timing

- 1 minute introduction
- 2 minutes explaining rules and organizing group
- 3 minutes playing the game
- 3 minutes sharing learning experiences
- 1 minute concluding

### Comments

- With the group, discuss the gist of the activity, giving special attention to the rules.
- Instruct the large group to organize themselves in a circle.
- Show the picture below to the child starting the activity.
- When the activity is completed, show the picture to the whole group.
- Work through the questions and list the learning points.



# 1 *The telephone game*

## Large group activity

The whole group sits or stands in a circle. One person (sender) is going to start the game, and the last person (receiver) is going to tell the first person what they have heard.

### Rules

- 1 You have to whisper.
- 2 You are not allowed to ask any questions.
- 3 Once you have received the message, you have to pass it on, whether you are sure of the exact words or not.

### First person

Look at the picture that your teacher shows you. What do you see? Tell the next person what you see.

### Group

Each person passes the message on to the person next to them.

### Last person

As you are the last person, you have to tell the others what you have heard.

### First person

How is the message different from the one you sent at the start of the game?

## Large group discussion

How can you ensure that the correct message gets to the receiver?

**Personal Skills for Effective Learning** will enable you to promote self-managed, resilient learning in your classroom. This practical workbook contains a series of easy to follow, well designed modules with full teacher's notes and instructions. The modules include: Resilience; Identity; Emotions; My World; Free to be Me; and My Time. Each module comprises an introduction, guidelines for the teacher and photocopiable worksheets. Learning points are included with the worksheets to remind students of the main focus of the exercises and to assist in understanding what they are aiming to achieve.

“... this is the book I wish I had written. Annie has fulfilled, in quite a brilliant way, the messages and direction that myself and others have been banging on about for years. A real achievement to her and a precious gift to the rest of us.”

**Roy Leighton, Writer, Broadcaster and Practitioner in Confidence and Learning**

“This volume truly is a treasure chest.”

**Susan Moss, Professional Coactive Coach**

“... contains numerous useful activities for teachers to adapt to the age of children they teach. The book will be a valuable resource for educators researching the field of emotional intelligence.”

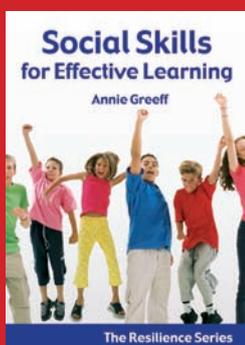
**Dr Eva Hoffman, Author, Founder and Director of Inspired Learning**

“The thinking behind this work is excellent and the range of exercises is fascinating and creative. A very useful resource to stimulate classroom or youth work on this important topic.”

**Keith V. Trickey, Senior Lecturer, School of Business Information,  
Liverpool John Moores University**

“The subject matter is spot on—it's exactly what schools up and down the country are looking for at the moment and the way the author has set out the progression of the materials works really well.”

**Bruce Potts, Education Consultant, Trainer and Author**



**Also available:**

**Social Skills for Effective Learning** shows you how to foster caring relationships through positive role modelling. The book includes sections on interpersonal and adaptive skills, empathy, finding solutions, conflict, moving on, money matters, and diversity.

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