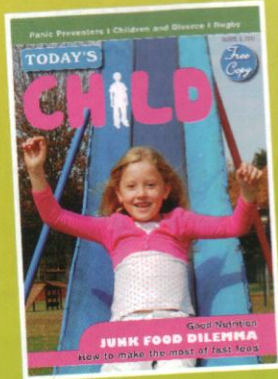


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## YOUR KEY TO PRETORIA



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## Straight Talk...

Conversations that get results

Maureen has a B Sc degree in Psychology from Edinburgh University. Maureen's passion is for showing people how to improve the quality of their conversations even under the most difficult conditions.

by Maureen Collins

[www.straight-talk.co.za](http://www.straight-talk.co.za)

## Learning to be resilient

You probably don't know that the US Army is rolling out a training programme called Comprehensive Soldier Fitness for its 1.1 million soldiers. And you're probably wondering what relevance it has for bringing up your children.

The programme teaches resilience, something essential in a soldier but no less essential in the ordinary man, woman or child in the street as they make their way through life. Resilience is the ability to control your thoughts and emotions so you are able to stay positive even when things get difficult. Some people seem to be naturally resilient. They have the ability to remain flexible and optimistic; and look at every problem as a challenge to be tackled

and overcome, no matter what comes their way. Fortunately for the rest of us, resilient thinking skills can be learned.

The pioneers of resilience training are two psychologists at Penn University, Seligman and Reivich. They have shown that when young people are taught resilience skills, they are able to control the way they react to negative events in ways that don't make bad situations worse. They are also less likely to fall into depression.

While few of us become soldiers, fighting for our lives on the battlefield, many of us find life itself a constant battle. We struggle to find and hold on to our jobs; we worry about money; we suffer from

ill health and some of us have accidents; our relationships cause us pain; and we worry about our children, who are dealing with the same challenges. The ability to keep going, even when the going is tough, is a valuable asset.

The notion of developing your strengths and virtues by controlling your thoughts is not a new idea. It was proposed by Aristotle, and was the basis of the warrior philosophy taught to Spartan and Roman soldiers. What's new is that it is now becoming more of a science and less of a moral philosophy.

Have you developed good resilience skills and are you helping your children develop theirs?