



OVERCOMING STINKING THINKING

*"People are not disturbed by things,
but by the view they take of them."*

— Epictetus

The stoic philosopher Epictetus said, 'People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of them.' Our judgments of what is happening to us may be more important than what actually happens to us.

When we experience difficulties or adversities and blame them on being 'dumb' or 'unpopular' or 'hopeless', the consequences typically point away from resilience and promote stinking thinking. These are permanent, pervasive, and personal attributions about who we are. Unfortunately our children often make these attributions – and too often, they learn them from us.

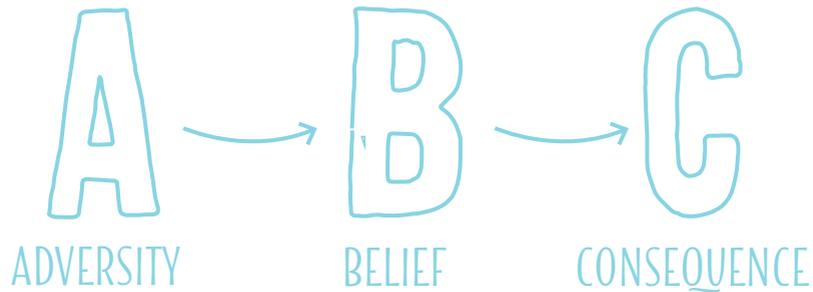
When we experience difficulties or adversities and blame them on circumstances or things external to who we are, the consequences are more likely to grow resilience and promote healthy, optimistic thinking. When we see those bad things as not permanent, but temporary, and not as pervasive but instead as specific, and not personal but rather impersonal, we can shrug them off or move beyond them more easily.

This is not about avoiding responsibility. Rather, it's about identifying unhelpful beliefs that hold us (and our children) back, and changing those beliefs.

The ABC model teaches that we all experience adversity (A) and suffer consequences (C). For example, a child sits a test and fails. She tells you she wants to quit maths... or school. Her belief is likely to be that "I'm dumb". This pervasive, permanent, personal belief (B) leaves her feeling lousy and impacts on the consequences.

ACTIVITY 3: Using the ABC Model

Ask your child's permission to work through the ABC model with them next time they encounter adversity and display some stinking thinking. Help them through real-life situations by questioning unhelpful beliefs and encouraging more positive ones. If they respond badly, wait for emotions to calm, and then try again.



Try asking the following questions:

1. What was the adversity you experienced?
2. What were the consequences of that adversity?
3. What are your beliefs about the adversity?
4. How can changing your beliefs change the consequences?

REMEMBER:

Just because you
BELIEVE
SOMETHING
doesn't mean it's
TRUE