



## A Mother's Belief

In the spring of 2016, I spoke at the national conference of the Tourette Association of America. After my presentation Kirsten described an experience her son Henry had had two days earlier.

Henry has Tourette syndrome (TS) in addition to 'High Functioning Autism'. This young man is 13 years old and was invited to give a three-minute talk at a Congressional Luncheon on Capitol Hill describing what it is like to have TS.

His story begins the night before his presentation. His mother suggested that he practice his talk, thinking it would be helpful for his confidence. He agreed but as he began practicing his stuttering tic went into full force. He gave up and "shut down". He lost confidence and told his mother he couldn't do it and stopped. His wise mother suggested they get some sleep and try again in the morning.

The next morning his mother said to him "Today is going to be an amazing day. You have the opportunity to speak on Capitol Hill." She encouraged and supported him and helped him regain his confidence. She helped him understand that he could do it and then, with a mother's love, she reminded him that if he found it too overwhelming, she would stand up with him and finish his talk, if necessary.

When it was time for him to speak Kirsten stood next to her son, ready to help if needed. He started to speak and his stuttering returned full-blown, but he kept going and finished his talk. The courage that he showed was visible to all who were there. The whole audience rose to a standing ovation in his honor.

This mother's actions were so courageous. No parent wants their child to fail and every parent in this situation would worry, but this mother went farther by helping him prepare and then supporting him by being ready, if he needed her. Supervised risk taking is an important resiliency skill we can use to help our children when they need it.



Calvert F. Cazier, PhD., MPH

## Anne's Corner

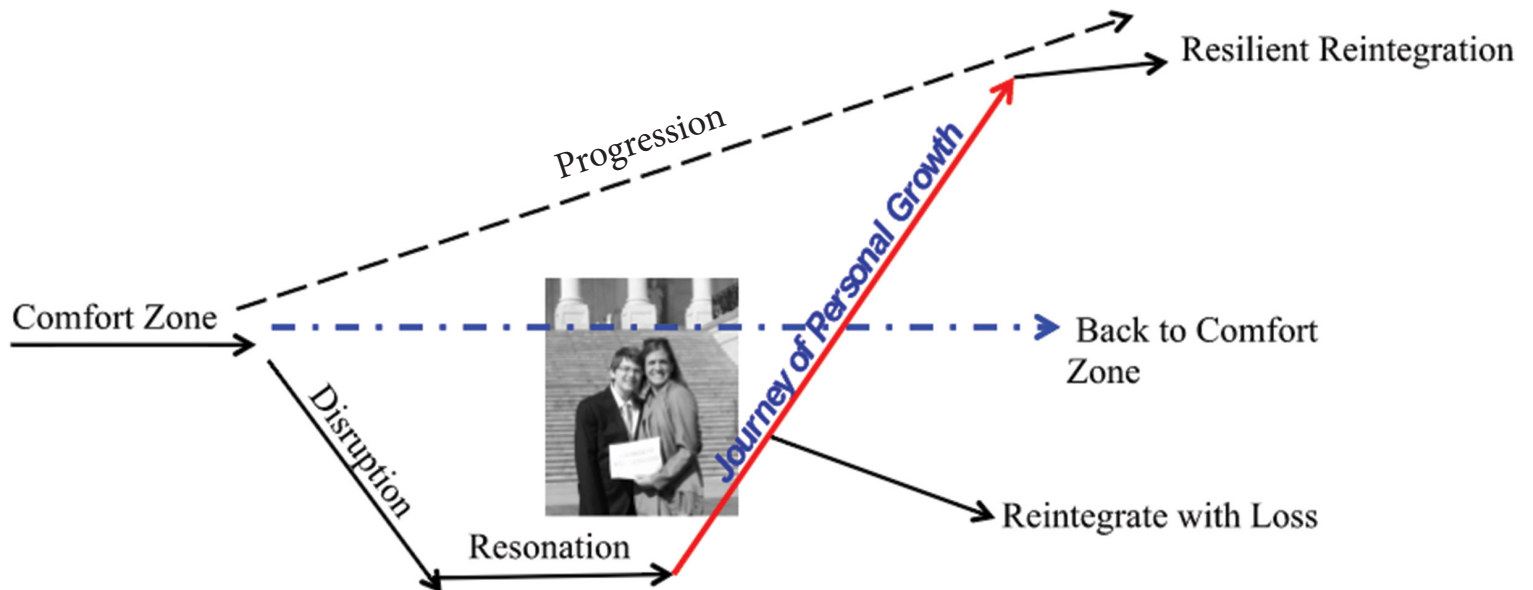
- Trying something new is inherently risky. We may do great the very first time we try, or we may fall far short of our dreams. No matter how you look at it though, if we don't even try, we will never put ourselves in a position to reach those dreams. As a parent, encourage your child to try something new or something that stretches them even just a little bit every day. Help them gain wisdom by practicing weighing the possible positives and negatives. Let's see, if I try to jump over that creek, I might have the sweet thrill of landing squarely on the other side and knowing I can do it. Or I might end up with a wet shoe. But even if I end up with a wet shoe, how bad would that really be? Would it be worth it to know that I gave it my all? And if I get my shoe wet, how about trying again, because if I keep trying, someday I can earn that sweet thrill.

- Praise your child for choosing wisely and for trying and trying again, for effort and persistence, rather than only when they accomplish their goal. Encouraging your child to take wise risks everyday will help them develop a deep sense of confidence in trying new things and reaching for their dreams.

Anne Evans-Cazier, LCSW



# *Adapted Resiliency Mapping Model*



Henry's mother knew how afraid he was and also how important honoring his commitment to speak at the Congressional Luncheon was for his personal development. She was there to support him and lend a hand if he needed one. Standing behind him supporting him along his journey to personal growth. Henry's journey was aided by the figurative extended hand of his mother.

Richardson, G. E. (2002). The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58(3), pp. 307-321.





## Because He Has Tourette

I have known several parents who made excuses for their children, mistakenly thinking they were helping them.

Several years ago a principal at a local junior high told me about a boy in his school who was struggling with self-esteem issues, but really wanted to be the student who made the morning announcements over the PA system. After consultation with his teachers, the principal decided to give him a chance and the boy excelled with this opportunity. Within a week, this boy's father called and demanded that someone else make the morning announcements. Curious, the principal asked why and the father told him, "Because he has Tourette syndrome."

This father was making excuses, perhaps because he was embarrassed for his son, but this excuse rather than strengthening his son interfered with his personal growth. I believe the following poem illustrates what we want to help our children learn as they navigate their lives.

*Life is like a mountain railroad,  
with an engineer that's brave;  
We must make the run successful,  
from the cradle to the grave;  
Watch the curves, the fills,  
the tunnels; never falter, never quail;  
Keep your hand upon the throttle,  
and your eyes upon the rail.  
-Author unknown*

We all want the best for our children and we don't want them to fail but we also want to help them understand that making excuses will not lead to success. When we as parents provide excuses, we may believe we are making our children's lives more tolerable but the reality is personal growth comes when like the engineer they have the chance to stretch and grow.



Calvert F. Cazier, PhD., MPH

## Anne's Corner

- In my opinion the father in this story really missed the whole point of trying things that are hard and even a bit risky. Of course it would have been a risk to make the announcements. Of course his son could have made a mistake or been teased for being different, the father himself could have been embarrassed and, although painful, all of these could have been opportunities for growth. The son could also have been successful and gained the respect of others, made new connections, and felt more a part of his school community, the father could have been proud of his son for taking the risk, whatever the outcome, also great opportunities for growth.

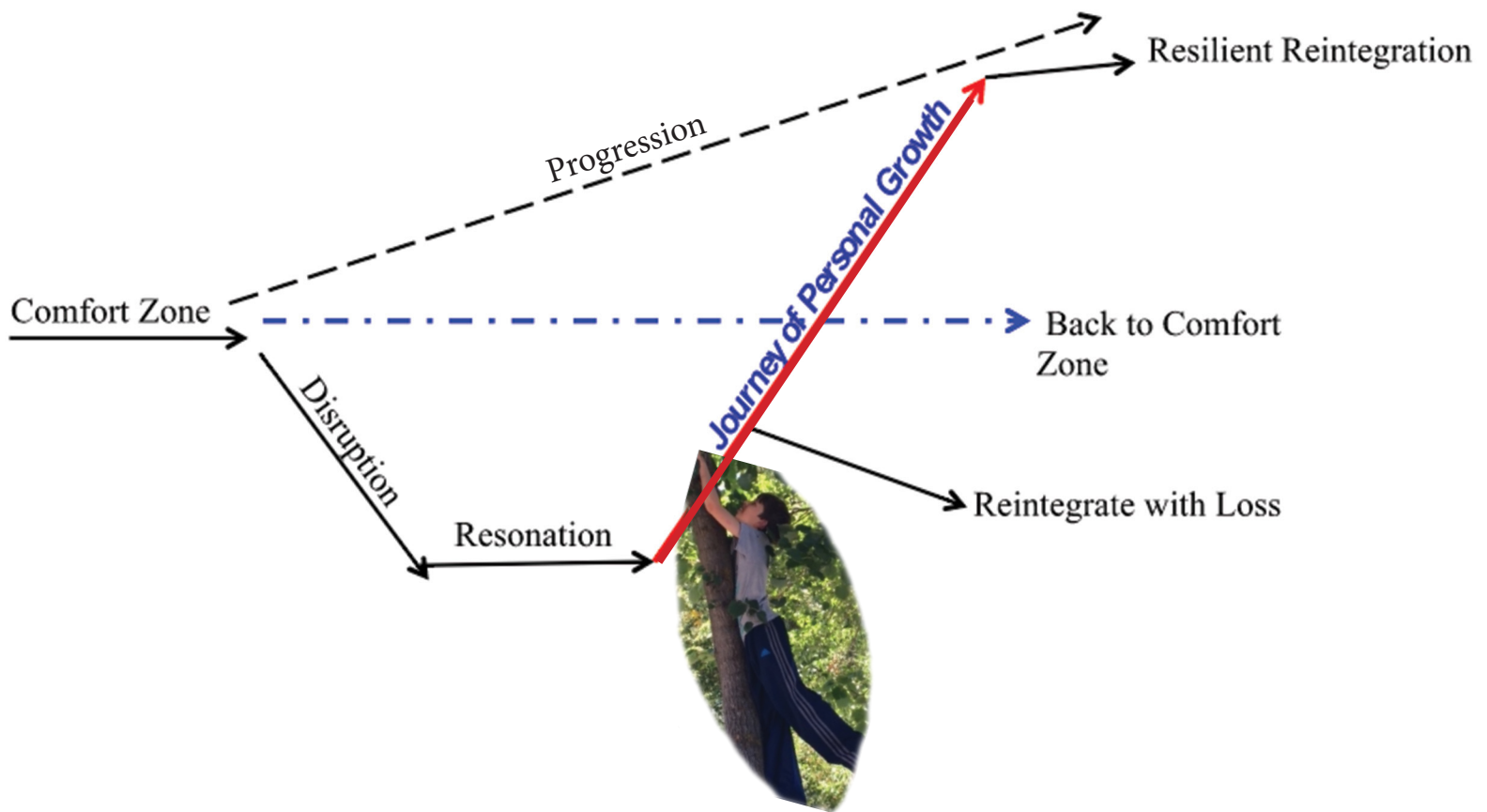
- Where are you and your child? When they want to do things where they might struggle or even fail, do you encourage and support them, or try to protect them? When they are afraid to take risks, do you encourage them to play it safe, or help them look at all the possibilities and tell them that you think they are amazing just for being willing to try and then learn from whatever happens?

- Start now, however old your child is, and make it a fun family tradition to create a game of challenges: if they ran to the tree in the park, challenge them to go on to the next one or to run back even faster. If they are bored, challenge them to come up with three ideas of something to do for under \$5. Always reward effort, personal growth and progress, not some objective standard of achievement. By encouraging your child to step up to small challenges you can help them prepare to take bigger risks, confident in the knowledge that you value them and they can value themselves regardless of the outcome.



Anne Evans-Cazier, LCSW

# *Adapted Resiliency Mapping Model*



Jackson's father tried to protect him from other students but his actions hurt his son more. His interference stopped his son from doing something that was important to him, pushing him down into the disruptive trough. As a result, Jackson had to make the journey to resilient reintegration alone making success much more difficult!

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