

# OWN YOUR STORY PARENT RESOURCE PACK



# A NOTE FROM LIVE DIFFERENT

Thank you for having a Live Different presentation at your school! The message of this year's presentation is "Own Your Story", and it is all about resilience and hope, inspiring students with the incredible ability that they have to not just bounce back from difficulties, but to become stronger and use their story to make a difference.

Research on resilience shows that one's construal, their "story", is a critical factor in their ability to overcome and thrive despite setbacks<sup>1</sup>.

Even more interesting, however, is how dramatically a student's core narratives and mindset can be "edited" with extremely brief and simple "nudges"/interventions<sup>2</sup>, resulting in long lasting positive changes. This is why we build our school presentations around personal storytelling. Even very brief exposure to short stories of other people overcoming obstacles can have an incredible, long-term impact<sup>3,4</sup>.

There is a bit of a catch to this however. Research also suggests that the effect of these positive stories or messages is greatly enhanced when it is internalized through reflection and meaning-making<sup>5,6</sup>.

This is where you come in. The stories or messages your students heard in the presentation might have sparked something in them. By taking the time to use these materials to facilitate further reflection, you will be helping to fan that spark into flame, and to turn inspiration into lasting change.

We appreciate that the demands on classroom time can make such "extra-curricular" activities difficult to fit in, so we thank you deeply for your willingness to make an important difference in your students' social-emotional growth by utilizing these resources.

— The Team at Live Different

1 Konnikova, Maria. "How People Learn to Become Resilient." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 21 Feb. 2019, [www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/the-secret-formula-for-resilience](http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/the-secret-formula-for-resilience). "Perception is key to resilience: Do you conceptualize an event as traumatic, or as a chance to learn and grow?" This article is an excellent primer on the subject of resilience.

2 Miu, Adriana Sum, and David Scott Yeager. "Preventing Symptoms of Depression by Teaching Adolescents That People Can Change." *Clinical Psychological Science*, vol. 3, no. 5, 2014, pp. 726-743, doi:10.1177/2167702614548317. Using just a 25 minute exercise on a large group (n = 599) of students, depression rates were 40% lower compared to the control group NINE MONTHS later.

3 Walton, G. M., and G. L. Cohen. "A Brief Social-Belonging Intervention Improves Academic and Health Outcomes of Minority Students." *Science*, vol. 331, no. 6023, 2011, pp. 1447-1451, doi:10.1126/science.1198364. This brief one-hour intervention (using personal stories plus reflection exercises) achieved impressive results: compared with a control group, the experiment tripled the percentage of black students who earned G.P.A.s in the top quarter of their class, and it cut in half the black-white achievement gap in G.P.A. It even had an impact on the students' health — the black students who received the belonging message had significantly fewer doctor visits three years after the intervention.

4 Wilson, Timothy D., and Patricia W. Linville. "Improving the Academic Performance of College Freshmen: Attribution Therapy Revisited." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 42, no. 2, 1982, pp. 367-376, doi:10.1037/0022-3514.42.2.367. In this study college drop-out rates were reduced 80% with a 30 minute intervention that shared simple stories of students "who did poorly at first, but do better later"

5 Mallett, Robyn K., and Timothy D. Wilson. "Increasing Positive Intergroup Contact." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2010, pp. 382-387, doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2009.11.006. The group that heard positive stories of inter-racial friendships, AND did a writing exercise to relate it to their own experience, had formed 3 times more new inter-racial friendships. The group that did not do the writing reflection portion did not see as much change.

6 "The Health Benefits of Expressive Writing." *U.S. News & World Report*, U.S. News & World Report, [health.usnews.com/wellness/articles/2016-08-31/the-health-benefits-of-expressive-writing](http://health.usnews.com/wellness/articles/2016-08-31/the-health-benefits-of-expressive-writing). There is even a fascinating connection between writing about difficult experiences and physical health, even resulting in biopsy puncture wounds healing much faster.

# PARENT ACTIVITY

Live Different, a Canadian youth development charity, aims to engage and empower youth in a lifestyle of compassion and service.

Your child recently participated in a Live Different presentation called “Own Your Story”. The theme was all about resilience and hope, inspiring students with the incredible ability that they have to not just bounce back from difficulties, but to become stronger and to use their story to make a difference.

Motivational stories and messages have been proven to have the power to prompt important long-lasting changes in students’ lives, particularly when they are given the opportunity to internalize the messages through personal reflection.

One the reflection activities that the students were given the opportunity to do individually and/or in the classroom was the “Own Your Story Challenge”, where they can practice reframing and finding opportunity for learning and growth within a challenging experience. The following at-home activity will help reinforce what your child has been learning.

## AT-HOME REFLECTION ACTIVITY:

- 1 Watch the “Own Your Story Challenge” here: <http://livedifferent.com/ownyourstory>. Alternately, below are the question prompts from the “Own Your Story Challenge”:
- 2 After working through these questions, take a few minutes with your child to share what your responses and experience were. This will not only help to reinforce the important concepts of resilience, but can also be a valuable moment of connection with your child.

### QUESTION #1

Think of a challenging experience or obstacle that you have faced in life. What happened, and how did you feel about it?

### QUESTION #2

How did you (or could you) learn, grow, or become stronger from this experience?

### QUESTION #3

How could your experience make a difference or help others?

**THANK YOU FOR  
CREATING SPACE  
FOR OTHERS TO  
OWN THEIR STORY.**



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