

Families

WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

STORY FOR ALL AGES



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The Fowler and the Quail

Long ago, the Bodhisattva was born a quail and lived in the forest as the leader of thousands of quail. In that forest lived a man, a fowler, who made a living by capturing quail to sell at the market for food.

The fowler would imitate the leader's call to draw the quail together. When many quail responded, the fowler would fling his net over them all, and gather them up to sell at the market.

The Bodhisattva was determined to help the quail avoid this terrible fate. He called them together to hear his plan: "When you hear a quail's call, be alert. It might well be the deceptive call of the fowler. If we keep our wits about us and work together, we can escape the fowler's net.

"Here's what to do: The very moment he throws his net over you, let each one put their head through an opening in the mesh. Then, all together, you must flap your wings. Fly with the net until you can let it down on a thorn

bush. The net will catch on the thorns, and you all can escape from underneath." All the quail nodded in agreement: They would work together.

The next day, the fowler came and called the quail together, then threw the net over them. But this time, the quail lifted the net and flew to the nearest thorn bush, where they left it. The fowler was still untangling his net from the thorns when the sun set, and he went home empty-handed.

Day after day, the quail remembered the Bodhisattva's wisdom, and day after day, the fowler went home with an empty net. 🌸



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From a Buddhist Jataka tale. "Bodhisattva" means "enlightened being;" it is also a name for the Buddha.

Whether from a breadwinner's job loss, an unexpected expense, or anxiety as prices rise, economic issues affect every member of a family. "The Fowler and the Quail" calls us to faith not only in ourselves and the possibility of a better future, but in the strength of community.

Read on for tools and tips for resiliency, and know you are not alone.

**Resilient
Together
in Tough
Times**

The Family pages are adapted from Tapestry of Faith lifespan faith development programs.

www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith

Resiliency In and Around Us



Resiliency starts with awareness. Tragedies and disasters dominate the news, yet we also hear of individuals and communities rebounding after a crisis. Pay attention to reports of people rebuilding their lives after hurricanes, fires, and other natural disasters. Lift up the efforts of local volunteers, environmental activists, and religious and civic groups making things better. Point out acts that show courage, patience, generosity, and a willingness to ask for or offer help—all signs of resiliency.

Closer to home, reach out to a family member or friend you consider resilient. Help children interview them: What makes them resilient? What steps do they take to bounce back? Afterward, ask children why they think these people are resilient. Does faith help them? Faith in whom, or in what?

Taking small steps to address a big problem is a sign of resiliency. Encourage children to talk frankly about their biggest problems. Help them identify steps to start making a difference and feel more in control of the situation.

Model resilience by sharing an appropriate experience, perhaps from your childhood:

Who helped you?

Did your resiliency help others?

How did you do it?

When did you bounce back from a difficult time?

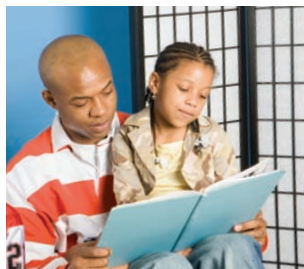
What was your first small step?

Yes, We're Not Going to Disneyland

Resilience can mean finding fun things to do without spending money.

- Roast a perfect marshmallow.
- Collect family photos and artifacts and spend time sharing family stories.
- Gather a few families at someone's home. Have adults teach a craft or a household skill to other people's children, or form teams to prepare a meal to share. Bonds outside the immediate family can be a souvenir children keep longer than any travel trinket.
- If no one has a morning obligation, stay up late.
- If you are up really early, watch a sunrise.

Any more ideas?



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Welcome to the Commons

Resilience is not just for individuals, and the Commons is a vast arena that invites us to be resilient together. "The Commons is all that we share and the ways we share it, an immense bounty of wealth that belongs to each of us—air and water, national parks and city streets, scientific knowledge and the latest dance steps," says Jay Walljasper, author/editor of *All That We Share: A Field Guide to the Commons*. A concept from social, environmental, and urban planning theory, the Commons resonates with the UU interdependent web of life. Yet, when we breathe clean air, walk across a city plaza, or send an email, how conscious are we of the Commons?

Become aware of all we share and the many ways we are not alone. Here are a few tips to build your relationship with the Commons:

- 1. Challenge** the prevailing myth that all problems have private, individualized solutions.
- 2. Notice life's pleasures** outside the market place—gardening, conversing, playing music, playing ball, snuggling, and more.
- 3. Take time to enjoy** what the Commons offers. Have some fun. (As the radical Brazilian educator Paulo Freire once declared, "We are bigger than our schedules.")
- 4. Let children see** you enjoying the Commons and working with others to sustain it.
- 5. Keep in mind** that security and satisfaction are more easily acquired from friends than from money.
- 6. Become a mentor**, officially or informally, to people of all ages around you. (You may learn as much as you teach.)
- 7. Don't be afraid** to ask for help. 🌸

Resiliency Circles

“To survive this period of uncertainty, we must regain use of our mutual aid muscles that have atrophied,” says Chuck Collins, who initiated the Resiliency Circle project at his UU congregation in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

Many UU congregations now have Resiliency Circles (also called Common Security Clubs), where people meet regularly to help one another through tough economic times. Members share their stories and learn they are not alone. They connect their personal crises to larger, societal issues, with questions such as

“Why is the economy in distress? What is our vision for a healthy, sustainable economy? What are the sources of real security in my life?”

A Resiliency Circle lifts the shame associated with money problems, as members discover ways to increase their economic security through mutual aid. One might help another weatherize their home, or rework their budget to reduce debt. Some groups buy food or household items together so all can save money, or set up a work exchange system. As members use their skills and resources to help one another, they reduce their overall economic vulnerability and build a sense of empowerment. Resiliency Circles often work on local or national social justice issues, too, sharing lessons they have learned about how economic forces affect us all. ✿



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The Story of Stuff

Everyone’s life is connected to “stuff”—the materials extracted from the Earth, transported, manufactured into goods for consumption, transported again, sold, used, and then disposed of. Watch a 20-minute video that exposes environmental and social issues, and calls us to create a more just and sustainable world. You will learn, laugh, and possibly look at the stuff in your life differently forever. www.storyofstuff.com

Can you forgo some everyday consumption? Make a game, instead of buying one? Buy used instead of new? Reuse shopping bags? Share items with another family—ladders, blenders, children’s outgrown clothing, even cars?

Perhaps decide to live in a cooperative home.

Recycle or compost everything you can. Teach your children a new relationship with stuff. They will live with most of today’s “stuff” for the rest of their lives. ✿

things





are in the saddle,
and ride mankind.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Bringing the Grain to the Storehouse: A Game from Mali

You will need sand or soft dirt, a little water, some shells or pebbles, and a die.

■ First, build a granary for storing millet—a structure two feet square. ■ Use moist sand or dirt. On each side, hollow out five steps, starting three inches from the bottom. ■ Each player starts with six shells or pebbles, which are the millet they must get to the storehouse roof. To reach the first step, a player must roll a  on the first turn. Each player gets two chances. If they are unsuccessful, they must wait their turn and try again. To reach the second step, they must roll a , and so on, until a  puts them on the roof. Each time a player rolls a , they may start a new shell or pebble moving up the steps.



Reward cooperation. When a player lands on the same step as someone else, the two proceed together and have twice as many chances with the die of getting the millet to the top.

Teamwork: When any player rolls a six, every player’s millet waiting on the fifth step goes to the roof.



Talking about Money Problems

You cannot protect children from financial anxiety in the home, and it may be harmful to try. Children will sense adults' worries and become worried themselves, even before obvious changes in family circumstances. Saying nothing can heighten a child's fear as they wonder what horrible secret you are keeping or whether they have done something wrong. On the other hand, sharing details can give a child even more to worry about.

- Assure children that you, the adults, are fine.
- Acknowledge, "We're in a tough spot at the moment, but we are going to work it out."



- Remind them that you have each other, and that is the most important thing.
- Draw out children's questions about how their lives will be affected and answer honestly.
- Connect economic events, such as teacher layoffs, to help children understand your family's problems are neither isolated nor unique.
- Give children ways to help. Invite them to suggest cuts in family spending, and try to honor their ideas.
- Build children's resiliency by modeling spiritually solid, resilient behaviors: Do not hesitate to ask for, and offer, help in your neighborhood and social networks. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude for all the resources you have.

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**Take courage friends.
The way is often hard,
the path is never clear,
and the stakes are very high.
Take courage.
For deep down,
there is another truth:
You are not alone.**

—Rev. Wayne Arnason, Reading 698
in *Singing the Living Tradition*

FAMILIES: WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF FAITH

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FIND OUT MORE

- Adults and older children may like to take a "Resiliency Quiz" on the website of Nancy Henderson, MSW. Discover qualities that help people bounce back from a significant trauma or crisis. One is patience. www.resiliency.com
- The Tapestry of Faith curriculum Toolbox of Faith offers a session on resilience, based on the biblical story of Miriam. www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith
- Read Chuck Collins's blogpost "We're In This Together," and find out about Resiliency Circles online at www.localcircles.org.
- See Jay Walljasper's blogposts, starting with "I Have Just Two Words for You" on the New Clear Vision website, www.newclearvision.com.
- *Ode* and *YES!* are two magazines with stories of resiliency and sustainability on our interconnected web. www.yesmagazine.org / www.odemagazine.com
- Many communities have a "time bank" where members earn credits by performing a service for other members: Give a one-hour piano lesson, then cash in your hour for pet care, a ride to an appointment, a meal cooked and delivered, or another service you need. Learn about the Greater Boston time bank at www.timetradeircle.org. Find a time bank near you at www.timebanks.org.

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