

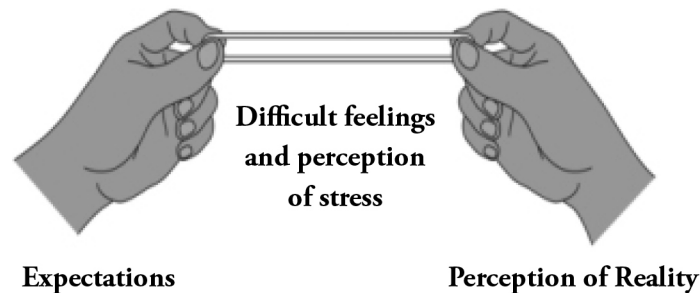


## All They Really Need: Trusting the Wisdom of Nature to Raise Resilient Kids

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# THE ELASTIC, THE BOX, AND THE TABLE

Stress can be thought of as the *tension* between what we expect and our perception of reality. This can be physical (like blood sugar balance) or psychological (like enjoyment of our job). Like an elastic band, the right amount of tension can help motivate us to create the reality we want (have a snack! Look for a new job!). But if the tension is too great, we risk breaking. One strategy to relieve unbearable tension is to examine our expectations and/or challenge our perceptions, loosening one side or the other (or both!) of the elastic band.



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Describe the situation as objectively as you can. Who is/was involved? Where were/are you? What is/was happening? What emotions and body sensations arise when you sit with this situation? What thoughts bubble up for you around this scenario. These are your perceptions. (Revisit the BASIC compassion worksheet for support with this).

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Now write down your “expectations.” These could be your wants, needs, or wishes, and may be just the opposite of your perceived reality (example: I want a job that is fulfilling and pays well; I want to have enough money to travel; I need more time with my family).



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Critically challenge your expectations:

- Are your expectations feasible and realistic?
- Who created this expectation? You? Your parents? Society?
- What would you say to a loved one who communicated this expectation?

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Imagine, then write down what you want to be true. If you were to wake up tomorrow, and this were to be your reality, what would that be like (e.g., relaxed, excited, my life has meaning)? Write down or in some other way express what thoughts and feelings come up for you when you imagine this coming true.

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What needs to happen to make this so? Break it down into as many pieces as you can (e.g., to get a new job, I need to update my resume, find an appropriate posting, and be hired). Transfer these to individual slips of paper, one per slip.

