

We grow through what we go through

"Thoughts and longings are one way, then world happens in its own way yet." Sophie Laguna, Infinite Splendours

This unusual year has brought out the best in many parents. For most families the year was set to go one way and then the pandemic threw plans and expectations into disarray.

Every family has a story to tell. Loss, disappointment, frustration and anger have been common themes. But so too have adaption, endurance and perseverance.

One of my daughters resigned from her nursing position when COVID-19 reached her workplace earlier this year. With two young children (one compromised by poor health) she had little choice. Although hugely conflicted, she got on with her life and took up a new position. Her story is one of adaption and moving forward.

What's your story? Is it one of disappointment and loss or is it one of flexibility and renewal? Is it a story of annoyance and frustration or is it a story of patience and adjustment? We can't change the things that happen to us but we can control how we respond. It's either a story of negativity and despair or one of positivity and hope.

The narrative or story we create around events either holds up our progress or powers us forward. The stories that we choose to tell ourselves are prophetic.

Learning through experience

When I began teaching, my first principal gave me some superb advice. He said to stick close to the struggling students because they would make me a better teacher.

His advice was spot on. It takes comparatively little effort or skill to teach the bright child or the well-behaved child, but the more challenging kids were a completely different story. I had to dig deep, seek advice from colleagues, try new teaching and behaviour management methods and develop patience and understanding that I didn't know I had. It was the difficult students and the challenging situations that really developed my potential as a teacher.

The same applies to family life. Challenging kids, difficult developmental stages and unpredictable events encourage our growth as parents and people, releasing previously dormant abilities and character traits. This year has presented challenges in spades and accelerated the learning and development of many parents.

Recover, refresh and reset

Human beings crave predictability and this year has been

anything but predictable. That's why this year has been exhausting for many families.

Christmas couldn't come at a better time. The routine of the festive season signals predictability and control. It provides a chance for you to recover from a difficult year, refresh your depleted mental and physical resources and reset for the year ahead.

Your children will need to do the same. They need to recover from a stressful year, enjoy the opportunity to refresh their resources and reset their focus for a new school year.