

YOU AND YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

We all want the best for our children; want them to grow up as responsible, happy, caring adults able to take their place in society, have successful relationships at home and work, be productive in whatever they choose for themselves and achieve the goals they set themselves. So how do we go about helping to make sure this all comes true? What do we actually do in the roles of guide, teacher and nurturer?

There is one ingredient above all others that seems to contribute to the chances of a child turning out for the best - whatever that might individually mean - and avoiding the adult problems it is possible as a parent to worry about. That is their level of self-esteem.

Self-esteem is how a person feels about himself, how much he likes being him, how much he feels good just about existing.

'High self-esteem is not a noisy conceit. It is a quiet sense of self-respect, a feeling of self-worth. When you have it deep inside, you're glad you're you. Conceit is but whitewash to cover low self-esteem. With high self-esteem you don't waste time and energy impressing others, you already know you have value.'

Your child's judgement of himself influences the kinds of friends he chooses, how he gets along with others, the kind of person he marries, and how productive he will be. It affects his creativity, integrity, stability, and even whether he will be a leader or a follower. His feelings of self-worth form the core of his personality and determine the use he makes of his aptitudes and abilities. His attitude towards himself has a direct bearing on how he lives all parts of his life. In fact, *self esteem is the mainspring that slates every child for success or failure as a human being.'*

Dorothy Corkille Briggs, 'Your Child's Self Esteem' Dolphin Books, 1975

The first and foremost place to look when thinking about developing your child's self-esteem is at your own self-esteem.

Do you have "a quiet sense of self-respect, a feeling of self worth" - are you glad that you are you? Parents whose self-esteem is high are already a long way towards having children with positive self-esteem.

Everything that your children and loved ones deserve you also deserve, are you giving yourself those things or do you think that you are not important or that your needs can wait. How you treat yourself is a model for how your children will treat themselves.


YOUR OWN SELF-ESTEEM.

1. BEING NICE TO YOURSELF.

We all need what the psychologist Eric Berne called 'Strokes. A stroke is a unit of attention and it can be negative or positive. A smile or a loving touch are positive strokes, an angry frown or sharp slap are negative strokes.

The worst thing of all for humans [and animals] is to not be getting any strokes at all, in other words to be discounted or ignored, even negative strokes are better than no strokes at all!

Write down occasions when you
feel you have been put down.

Don't feel guilty if you think you don't
do this. It can stop you from trying
new ways and other choices. 

"PARENT-LINK" Session One page 9

BUILDING BRIDGES

Take some time to recognise the things that you do
as a parent that you like. Make yourself a list
and keep it where you can see it.

Here is an example of one person's list:-

- I like the way I give him freedom to make his own choices.
- I like the way I react when he is hurt or upset.
- I like the way I play gymnastics with him.
- I like the way I share his enjoyment of exciting adventure films.
- I like the way I haven't passed on to him my aversion to my false teeth.
- I like the way I let him help me cook.
- I like the way I let him love me !!!
- I like the way I have allowed him to teach me the enjoyment of comedy programmes.

WRITE YOUR LIST

YOUR CHANGING ROLE

As your children grow up the emphasis in your role as parent will inevitably change. When they are new born, the part you have to play is different from when they first go to school or when they enter their teens. Your ability to change roles as time goes on will help your children develop their self confidence and responsibility.

The following are some the changing roles you will play over the years:

When you child is _____ your role will mostly be

A baby

A toddler

In mid Childhood

An adolescent

An adult

The biggest role that you play, whether you choose to or not, is the role of a model for your child to learn from. How you are as a person, the way you, feel, think and behave shows your child how to be in the world.

The more loving , accepting and honest you are with yourself the more likely your child is to develop the same qualities.

BUILDING BRIDGES

How, ideally, would you have liked your parents to have been with you. How would they have sounded, looked like and felt. How would they have behaved towards you?

Write down the things that come to mind. This may include things that your parents really did that you liked as well as things you wished that they had done or been.