

Building Your Child's Sense Of Self-Worth

by Joe McGee

Excerpted from 8 Things No Kid Should Leave Home Without

Sometimes people associate their experiences, their possessions, or their family tree with their worth. If they're proud of one of these things, it boosts their confidence. But if they're ashamed of one of those things, they let it squash their sense of worth. People with a good sense of self-worth know they're valuable in spite of all these things. They base their value on something else.

Kids who have a tremendous sense of self-worth will go far in life. As a parent, you are responsible to build your children's sense of self-worth and give them the confidence they need to succeed.

If you don't feel good about yourself, there are some negative things that happen. I saw this in some of the kids in my school. They were intelligent, but something stuck to their souls that made them feel bad inside. They thought people or circumstances were holding them down, but they weren't. **They** were holding themselves down by how they saw themselves.

If you build your kids' self-worth, you can help them avoid these problems.

1. Poor Self-Worth Creates Chameleons.

If you don't feel good about you, you don't know who you are, and you'll change yourself to mimic whomever you're with so you will feel accepted. Lots of good kids go bad because of this.

2. Low Self-Worth Makes You Wishy-Washy.

If you don't know who you are and you don't feel good about yourself, you won't trust your own opinion. You'll always be asking yourself, "What if I make the wrong decision?" You'll play it safe and never make a choice.

3. Low Self-Worth Invites Rejection.

When people are down on themselves, everybody else gets down on them too. You can spot low self-worth because it starts in kids as bad thoughts about themselves. "*I'm no good.*" "*I'm so dumb.*" "*I'm no good at English.*" As parents, we have to shut these thoughts down.

4. Low Self-Worth Cripples Emotions.

People with low self-worth are always thinking about themselves. They make terrible friends and marriage partners because they need continuous affirmation to feel good. "Am I okay? Please affirm me." They constantly want affirmation, but they never give anything back.

5. Low Self-Worth Squanders Potential.

When a person feels little about himself, he makes little choices about his life. He squanders his potential by setting little goals and making friends with little people. He reasons, *“I’m little, and this is all I deserve.”*

6. Low Self-Worth Makes Moral Pushovers.

When you don’t feel good about yourself, you’ll do some dumb, sinful stuff. You’ll look for someone or something to give you some worth. You’ll look to the flesh to get it if you don’t have it in the spirit.

Three Steps To Building Self-Worth In Your Kids

1. Tell them Bible stories.

There are eleven places in the Bible where parents are commanded to tell their children the stories of the Bible. When we do that, we’re introducing them to their Father God. That’s the first step toward building a personal relationship with Him, which is the only thing that will give them true self-worth.

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. Psalm 78:5-8

A child with self-worth is a child full of hope. They see that tons of people in the Bible fell and got back up, and they know, “Even if I mess up big, God still loves me and has a plan for my life, and nothing’s going to change that.” If they have that truth inside them, their self-worth will soar.

2. Affirm them.

As we build our kids’ self-worth by teaching them Bible stories and leading them to a relationship with Jesus, we need to give them affirmation. Affirmation is showing our love and approval through our words. Words are powerful.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Proverbs 18:21a

Romans 13:1-8 says that everyone in a position of authority has two responsibilities. **First**, we are to confront and punish what is evil. And **second**, we are to praise that which is good. Half of all the time we spend with our kids should be used for praising the good that’s in them. That’s a spiritual law. Whatever is good in them is accelerated by our words of praise.

God affirmed Jesus before He faced the devil. He said, “This is My Son, and by the way, I’m really pleased with Him” (Matthew 3:17 and 17:5). God wants us to affirm our kids too.

David encouraged himself in the Lord. I Samuel 30:6

You also have to teach your kids that when you don't have anybody around to affirm you, you have to do it yourself. "I'm the redeemed of the Lord. I'm the apple of His eye. I'm the head and not the tail." Say what God says about you, and you'll speak life back into your own soul.

3. Accept Your Kids The Way They Are.

I don't mean that parents should accept their kids' sin, but words stick. Punishment will pass. Words are forever. What we say brings life or death for a very long period of time. We can make that spiritual law work *for* us and not against us by letting our kids know we still love them even when we discipline them. We can speak life over them even when they are mixed up and messed up. Self-worth comes from the value that God saw in us when He sent Jesus to save us because He loved us just the way we were.

No kid should leave home without a strong sense of self-worth. As a parent, you can build your kids' self-worth *by telling them Bible stories* that fill them with hope in God, *by giving them sincere words of affirmation*, and *by loving them unconditionally*. When you do these things, you'll give your kids a tremendous advantage in life.