

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THEY ARE ENOUGH

3 - PROVEN STEPS TO HELP RAISE YOUR CHILD'S
SELF-ESTEEM



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Understanding Self Esteem and Self Worth

Self-Esteem is how you see yourself.

Self-Worth is how you feel about your self.

Working with children of all ages for many years, I have realized one of the most significant issues or challenges that they face is not feeling good enough. Their self-esteem was so low. When I asked them what do they see when they look in the mirror, many can go on a nonstop rant about all the negative things they see. When I ask them specifically about what they can see about themselves, that's positive they'll just sit there and stare at me and say, "I don't know." I then asked them, "has there ever been a time in your life that you felt so proud of yourself, you just would be smiling ear to ear, and it was more than that it was an emotion you felt within your body that you did not need anyone to tell you they're proud of you because you already felt it." Nine times out of ten, I hear the answer no.

Our children first learn who they are from their parents. It's not about what you tell them; it's about the way you make them feel. If a child does not feel their worth to their parents, how will they feel it within themselves? If a child does not hear about their greatness, how will they know internally how to recognize their greatness? If we can give our children a foundation of knowing their worth and teaching them positive self-talk, imagine the win you set them up for as they go forward into the world of their peer group.

By understanding these three simple steps and opening your mind to the possibility of change, you, as the parent, have the ability to create an entirely new foundation for your children.

If you want better, you have to do better.



STATISTICS

“Low self-esteem is a thinking disorder in which an individual views him/herself as inadequate, unlovable, and/or incompetent. Once formed, this negative view permeates every thought, producing faulty assumptions and ongoing self-defeating behavior.”

Neuman, M.D., Fredric. "Low Self-esteem." Psychology Today. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/fighting-fear/201304/low-self-esteem>.

“Girls’ self-esteem peaks when they are 9 years old, then takes a nosedive.”

Clinical Psychology, Robin F. Goodman writes on the New York University Child Study Center Web Site.

“7 in 10 girls believe that they are not good enough or don’t measure up in some way, including their looks, performance in school, and relationship with friends and family members.”

Shapiro, Hannah. "Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty boosts girls' self-esteem for Back to School." Examiner.com. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.examiner.com/article/dove-s-campaign-for-real-beauty-boosts-girls-self-esteem-for-back-to-school>.

Don't Blame or Shame

What do Blame and Shame Look Like?

The moment when we blame or shame our children, we're taking away their self-esteem and their self-worth. Going into homes for so many years and working with a variety of families with different races and ages of children, I have asked hundreds of kids if they feel like they're enough. When they answer me, "no," I asked them why? They simply tell me that no matter what they do, it is never good enough for their parent.



Being a Single Mom, The Struggle is Real

When I was a single mom raising two boys by myself, working two jobs to support my children, I defined being a good mom as having boundaries and making sure my children knew how to stay within them. I remember one day when one of my boys was in middle school, and he brought home his report card. I was in the kitchen, and he walked in very quietly, and he had this sad look on his face. I simply asked him what is wrong? He said in a very soft, shameful tone, "well, we got report cards today." I said, "ok, let me see it." He hands it to me very timidly, with this look of fear in his face. As I look down at the report card and then up at him again and then back down, I say in a very frustrated tone of voice, "you got Cs, Ds, and one B?" I proceeded to say looking at my 12 years old's face as I see a tear rolled down his cheek And I proceed to say what is wrong with you? You can do better than that. I have talked to you time and time again about your grades. Since you cannot do better,

you may not go outside and play. You will be grounded until your grades come up. He didn't say anything to me after that, and he quietly walked up to his room. As he shut his door, I could hear him sobbing. As a mom, it broke my heart, and yet I continued to do it because I thought I was teaching him how to raise his standards. I thought I was encouraging him by telling him he could do better. I felt that I was telling him he was enough because I knew that he was capable of more. Never once did it cross my mind that every time I did this, I was taking away more and more of this child's self-worth and self-esteem.

Many years later, after I started studying more and more about behavior in regards to children and parent relationships, I realized that I did the exact opposite in what I was trying to do. Instead of building my child up, I was tearing him down. Not only was I blaming and shaming him, but I also wasn't teaching him how to build his self-confidence, for him to want to do better.

If it was possible to go back into time, I believe the scenarios would look more like this. I in the kitchen cooking dinner, and my son walked in with his report card behind his back and a sad look on his face. I would say to him, “why do you look so sad?” He would respond, “I just got my report card, and I do not think you're going to be very happy with it.” I would put my hand out and ask to see it. I would look at it, and I would say, “oh, (in a curious tone), how do you feel about this?” By the look on his face, I could probably guess that he would say, “I'm not happy with it.” I would respond, “are you not happy with it because you're afraid of my reaction or disappointing me? Or are you not happy with this because you didn't do your best?” Because I am aware of the difficulties my son had in school, I know that he would tell me he was not happy about the grades because he thought I would be disappointed in him. Knowing what I do now, I would ask him, "is there anything

you could have done differently to get a better grade?" I do not know that answer, but here is what I would say A) if he said, "no, the classes were tough, and I did the best that I could." I would respond, "great, let's celebrate." B) if he said, "if I had studied more or got extra help in those areas that I did not understand, I probably could have done better." I would say, "is there anything that I can do to support you going forward so we can raise those grades?"

By using this method, it takes away all the shame or blame. It puts you in a situation where you're more curious than you are critical. It takes away the pressure of the child, thinking they are not good enough or smart enough. It also would allow my son to feel that it's a team effort and not all only his.

A lot of times, the reason why kids are afraid to talk to their parents is that they don't want to disappoint us. Somewhere in their mind, be it the way's parents have shown up in the past, or it could be their assumption, but something in their mind tells them that we are not going to be happy or disappointed. The last thing that our kids want us to feel about them is disappointed.





We Thought We Were Showing Him We Believe In Him



It was 3:00 p.m., and I get this phone call from a family that I was working with. They said, “sorry to bother you, but we just got a call from our son’s principle, and we are on our way to his school now because he was caught stealing from another child in his classroom.” I responded, “I am sure you are both shocked and upset.” Mom says, “yes, that is why I am calling. I hate to ask but could you meet us at the school to help us with all this.” Ironically, I had my afternoon open, so I said, “actually I can, I am about 15 minutes from there.” I then started to ask questions, “what specifically was he stealing? Did they give you any information about how he was caught? Do they have facts, or is this someone making an accusation?” Of course, the parents did not have much of the details as they were going there; however, they were calling me because the father who has these high expectations for his son was livid. The mom was hoping that I could support them in helping him not be so angry when he saw his son.

I pull up at the same time the parents do. As soon as I see the parents I validate how they're feeling And I asked them one question before we walk in, "what is your outcome?" the father says, "well obviously I need to find out the facts and then second of all I need to figure out why my son felt compelled to steal. We have not raised him this way, and I will not tolerate having a thief in my home." At that moment, I just

asked them to stop for a second so I can speak to them before we walked in. I told both the parents, "we have two options, you can walk in there and be accusatory where your son feels that he has to defend himself or we can walk in there curious and figure out what has to happen for your son never to do this again. The first way would look like this, "I cannot believe that I was just called to the principal's office because my son stole something. Who are you to steal from another person in your class? We have not raised you this way." (This is blaming) Or it might look like this, "I was so surprised to get a call from your principal telling me that you stole. Out of all of our kids, I would never have imagined it would be you." (That is shame) The second option would look like this, "Are you ok? I have not heard all the details. For me to support you, could you please tell me what happened?" I then looked at both parents and said, please let me know how you want to move forward, and I will support you. The mom immediately says, "definitely the second option, we want to support our son, and we want to be able to guide him in a different direction, so this doesn't happen again." I looked at the dad, and I said, "are you ok with that?" The dad said, "yes." I then said to them, "you both have an amazing opportunity that was just placed before you. You can start to build your child up and let him know that he is worth it. When he feels from you, as his dad and mom, that he's worth it, he, too, will start to learn how to feel and know his self-worth.

The three of us walk into the principal's office, and the parents see their son sitting there looking so disappointed with his head hanging down in the palm of his hands. His dad reaches out to him and puts his hand on his right shoulder and says, "son, are you ok?" His son looks up at his father with pure disappointment in his face, and he said very quietly with a shaky voice, "yes, sir." Then the mom puts her hand on his other shoulder and says, "we have not received all the details; why don't you tell us what happened so we can support you." What happened next was so beautiful. Their son sat up, and with a tone that was very neutral and very caring, he said, "I

know what it looks like to the teacher. There was a boy in my class that forgot his phone on the back counter. Right before we went to lunch, I was the last one to leave the classroom when I saw it there, so I just put it in my desk real quick knowing that we would be back, and I would just give it to him. When we got back from lunch, we started working in math. I forgot about his phone being in my desk. His phone started ringing in my desk, and he recognized the ring tone, he looked at me and said you stole my phone.” Their son started to cry as he looked up at his mom and dad and said, “I promise you I was not trying to steal it. I truly forgot it was in my desk, and I tried to explain to him and the teacher, but nobody would listen to me.” The mom hugged her son, and then I saw the dad hug them both.

The principal and I just stood there, listening to the story. During the family embrace, I just asked the principle, “has he ever been in any trouble like this? Is this out of character for him?” The principal with absolute confidence in his voice said, “no, he has never been in any trouble, and it is definitely out of character for him, and that is why I called the parents here. I heard what the student and the teacher said, and I also know this young man, and he is a leader in his class and grade.” Both parents are looking at me with the look on their face *like what are we supposed to do now?* I looked at the principal, and I said, “what do we need to do to move forward? It's pretty obvious with what you have said about his character, and with the details that he shared, this has been a big misunderstanding.” The principal then said, “I think there's nothing more to say, and he looked at the boy and said, “thank you for being honest and telling your parents and us the truth.”

Once again, when you allow your child to have space not to feel judged or criticized, through blaming and shaming, they will not only speak the truth because the fear is gone; they will also feel heard.

If you don't know better, you can't do better.



REFLECTION:

What Questions to Ask, to not blame or shame:

- 1) I want to support you, help me understand what happened.
- 2) Everyone has a different story, what is yours?
- 3) How do you feel you did?
- 4) Is there anything I can do to support you in reaching your goal?
- 5) If you were to do it over again, would you do anything differently? If so, what?
- 6) I can tell you put a lot of effort into this, what else would you have needed?
- 7) If you want to talk about it, let me know if you're going to vent, or if you need my support.
- 8) You did a great job if you were going to make it look even better, what could you do?

Activity:

List 3 opportunities that have happened in the past, where you blamed or shamed? Knowing questions to ask, write down what it would look like now if the situation occurred.



Being present is the ability to remove all distractions so you can give your undivided attention to what is in front of you. Quality time may be described as giving your child or children your presence. How many parents spend time with their kids, and yet are constantly distracted? As I have my hand raised high, I am aware this is one of my areas, I continue to grow in. Our children do not just need to see us; they need us to be seen and heard.





Do You See Me?

Whether you are a single parent or a married couple finding time with your children can be a difficult task. It comes to understanding, which is more needed quality or quantity. There are many times as a single mom I thought only if I were married, I would have more quality time with my kids. Twenty years later, married with young kids again, and I still struggle to find the quality time that is needed for them. When I see my twins getting rambunctious, not listening, or talking back, my first gut reaction is definitely to get upset. If I were to dissect why I am angry, I would have to say it's because I feel unheard or disrespected. When I examined it further, and I took away the blame, “*they* aren't listening to me, *they* are talking back, or *they* are too rambunctious,” I had to own my accountability in it. I immediately saw that I was not giving them the quality time they were wanting and needing. To meet that need of quality time with me, they have created these behaviors to receive it. So now, when the situation occurs, as it does quite frequently, I will stop what I'm doing, and

I will specifically ask them, “what do you need right now?” If I get an answer filled with any type of emotion, I will then ask them, “what are you feeling right now?” I realized this is what children need. They need us to stop and acknowledge them for what they need and what they feel. It shows them that they are worth it, to be seen and heard at that moment. When a child wants to know their worth the best way to show them is to give him your time. I work with a lot of entrepreneurs, and I am an entrepreneur, I realized the amount of time we put into our work. If you were to ask yourself, why do you put so much time into your work? Your answer would probably be because it's worth it or because of the worth you get from it. If that's your truth, how do your kids know they are worth it if they don't get a similar quality of time the way you give your work the quality of time.





Is She Out Of Control, Or Could It Be Something Else?

There were several years ago; I was called into a family's home to help the family understand their child's behavior. This little girl was beautiful. She was ten years old, and some of the behaviors were described as: throwing dishes on the floor, slamming doors, throwing objects into the wall and creating holes, yelling at her parents, spitting at her parents, very loud vocally and very loud with her emotions when she did not get her way. The first question I asked the parents is when she starts to do any of the behaviors that they listed, what is the need she is trying to meet? To be more specific, I said, do the behaviors happen when you are fully present with her and engaged in a conversation? Or, did the behaviors happen when you are doing something separately from her, and she asks you a question? Perhaps they occur when you have told her to wait a minute, or you ignored her? Both the parents had to take a second and think about that for a minute. The mom then says, "I would like to say it happens regardless, and the truth is I don't know because it has just

become our norm.” I said, let's go back to the original question, what is her need? The dad then says, well, she wants to be in control, and she wants attention. Not knowing all the details, but from what you have shared, I would agree with you. Why do you think she wants control? The parents couldn't answer that. I said to them, is it possible she wants control because she's trying to prove to herself that she is capable of making decisions and choices while succeeding at it? Is it possible she's just trying to figure out that she's worth it? Both the parents looked at me, and they said, “wow, I never thought about it that way.” I asked them how often do you ask her questions about her day? Not just questions that are open-ended but real questions to show that she is worth it for you to spend time with her while being fully present with her and find out what is going great in her life with specific details and what isn't going great in her life so you can support her. Both the parents were candid, and they said before you ask these questions, we never thought about it. We were so in the mode of how do we correct her behavior that we never really thought about the cause of her behavior.

When we see kids having behaviors, we have to remember that all behaviors created to meet a need. If that behavior, whether it's deemed good or bad, meets the need for that child or even an adult, that behavior will persist because it meets the need. In this case, for this girl, it was really about the need to know she was enough.



REFLECTION:

What are ways you can be present with your children.

- 1) Ask them what they want to do?
- 2) Ask them if there is a specific day they want to make "our" day.
- 3) Do an activity that they love to do, whether you are good at it or not.
- 4) Sometimes allowing them to teach you something, helps build their worth, knowing they are good at something.
- 5) Turn off any distractions when engaging
- 6) Ask questions that are not open-ended
- 7) Schedule time for them, the way you schedule times for work
- 8) If you are not listening to them, be honest, and tell them. "I am busy at this second; I want to hear from you, can you give me 2 minutes so that I can be present?"
- 9) If they are having an emotion, "what do you need right now?"

Activity:

List 3 ways you will commit to being present with your children.

Show Them Their Greatness and Celebrate

Children do not remember what we say, they do remember what they've seen. Part of teaching your child about their own greatness is being able to recognize your own. How have you shown them you know your worth? How have you celebrated your wins? One way our worth is developed is by our accomplishments. Think about worth in monetary means. How do you know what you buy is worth it? I am sure there is some type of measurement tool or questions you will ask yourself, such as, will it serve the purpose of buying it? Will it last awhile? Is it of quality? Does the price reflect the return on this investment? When looking at our own worth, we have a similar measurement tool or questions. What makes up your worth? Is it the amount of people who are in your life and engage with you? Is it the amount of money you make? Is it a feeling of accomplishment, knowing you put time into it and produced the quality you were wanting? The 1st step in showing your children their greatness, you must recognize yours. If you are not already, start celebrating with them, the small and big wins.

If You Do Not Teach Them, How Will They Know?

When I was a little girl, I remember getting straight As in elementary school. I remember getting awards for being curious, best handwriting, honor roll, principles list, etc. When I look back, and I see myself standing in front of the class getting the award or sometimes standing in front of the school and getting the award, I felt so proud in that moment until the moment was gone. I would get so excited waiting for my mom to get home from work so that I could tell her and show her the award. Her response was to take it out of my hand, look at it for a second and then give it back to me and say “good job.” I didn't know what it was like to own your greatness. Looking back, I didn't even know I had greatness inside of me.

I wish I could say that when I raised my boys that I was able to give them an entirely different experience. With full transparency, although I did do some things differently, I miss the opportunity to teach them about their greatness that was inside of them. I would show up to all their award ceremonies; I would hug them and tell them how proud I was, which was slightly different, too, because I showed some emotional excitement and physical touch with my hug. Then the moment was just over. I never asked them how they felt about it? I never asked them what did it take for them to get that, so they really could appreciate their journey to creating their success and then honoring the award for it. I never taught them how to celebrate their big wins, let alone their small victories. Even after their sports where they were undefeated in soccer, or they won their game at baseball, it was just for a brief moment that we cheered. It was over with a simple "I'm proud of you."

Part of knowing how to build yourself up is hearing about your greatness. Our children's inner voice comes from their parents. How will they know what it sounds like if they have never heard it before? How will they ever know that their accomplishments make up their worth if they have never understood the worth of their accomplishments?



Give Them Something To Be Proud Of



A family asked me I was working with, "Veenu, how can I help my child feel good about themselves?" I asked the family, "what does he do around the house to feel proud?" Lisa, the mom, stated that they have a cleaning lady and nanny, so he does not need to do much. I explained to Lisa the part of growing into knowing your worth is being able to do a task, and see the result. Think about a time that you did something, like make dinner. When it was done, and it was delicious, everyone is complimenting you, how did it make you feel at that specific moment? Lisa, looked at me with a massive smile on her face. She said, "I never really took time to think about it, but now remembering a specific time, I felt proud of myself." I looked at her and said yes. Now stack the feeling of pride each time throughout your life. How

do you see yourself? How do you feel about yourself? Lisa then asked, what can he do at his age, to start building that feeling of accomplishment and feeling good about himself? There are many things you can do for his age to set him up to win. We then talked about dishes, vacuuming, dusting an area, setting the table, etc. That night, she asked her son, who is seven years old, can you set the table? He responded with so much excitement, "Yes!" After he was done, we all sat down at the table. His father looked at him with a smile on his face and said, "did you set the table all by yourself?" You can see the sense of pride in his face, as he said with a huge grin, "Yes, sir, I did!" His father reciprocated that look of pride and said, "wow, you did a great job." I looked at Lisa, and she, too, had this overwhelming feeling of accomplishment as she was shaking her head while saying, "I am really impressed."

It was that night that Lisa and her husband understood the importance of allowing their children to have chores. I told them both; these are teachable moments that us parents get to use to encourage self-worth and self-esteem. There are not complicated ways to teach our children. It is about being able to know what opportunities present themselves and use them.

With self-worth comes the motivation to want to do more. If you know you are able, you know you can do it right, you know you will be praised for it, you will want to do it more. These will also stack for your child, for him to know he is enough.



REFLECTION:

Teach your child to Celebrate and See their own greatness.

- 1) When you praise your child, be specific, "you did great at..."
"The bathroom looks amazing; you even got the corners."
- 2) If they have an accomplishment at school, sports, etc., match their emotions.
Ask them what they want to do celebrate
- 3) Help them even see baby steps in progress as a reason to celebrate
- 4) Create a daily ritual, where everyone shares one magic moment at dinner, and ask them how they want to celebrate it. (with a high-five, a snap, a clap, etc.)
- 5) Make a big deal out of a situation, Oh boy, should we call grandma and tell her?
- 6) Ask them in the moment of achievement; how does it feel? Ask them to describe the feeling. Notice their body, are they smiling? Tell them, "Wow, look at that smile. I can see that feels so good for you," "own it."
- 7) Create a board, or a jar, where every little or big achievement they write down, and it goes on the board or in the jar. At the end of the month, take the time to look at each one again. Ask your children, "how do you want to celebrate this month's achievements?"

Activity:

List 3 ways you are committed to teaching your child how to celebrate their greatness. What are three ways you will start to celebrate your own or add to your celebration of your greatness?

Conclusion

I believe that no matter how you parent, there is always another level. As long as you are growing and improving, your children will also. As parents, we are given an opportunity to guide our children to be the best version of themselves. When you get the tools to do so, and you practice it daily, you will be amazed how much can shift, not just for you kids but for you. Let us teach our children to build themselves up instead of tear themselves down.



Building Self Esteem

Worksheet

(for 10 and above)

Directions: When filling out the questions below, it is essential you just let the pen flow. Do not judge yourself; there is no right or wrong. To build confidence, you have to develop an inner strength about yourself. I would invite you to get curious instead of critical. This is about creating a new way of seeing yourself and believing in yourself.

I. What Do I like about Myself

a. What are my strong areas (think of school, friends, hobbies, sports)

b. What is at least one thing I like about myself when I look in the mirror
(list as many as you can, but at least 1)

II. How To Create Positive Situations?

a. List a few times that you felt happy. (think of friends, outings, socials, vacations)

- b. If you were going to describe your favorite one, so when you read it, you can see, feel, and hear it again, what would you write?

 - c. If you were to just look at the feeling of happy, list two ways you could feel it again (maybe close your eyes and remember)
- III. What Can I Make or Do Even Better?
- a. What areas in your life would you want to improve on (think of school subject, sports, communication)

 - b. What would have to happen for you to make at least 1 area better?
(think strategy)
- IV. How Can I Turn A Negative Situation Into A Positive Situation
- a. Think of a time that was not so pleasant.

- b. Without writing all the details, briefly describe the scenario.

- c. What was the gift you got from it?

- d. What did you learn because of it?

- e. Did anything unexpected come from it that was great?

- f. Is there anything you could have done differently or controlled to make it a better situation?



About the Author



Photo Credit: Dawn Green Photography

Hi, I'm Veenu. I have had the honor to wear every mom's title: single mom, working mom, stay home, mom, mompreneur, mom of multiples, multi-generation mom, married mom, co-parenting mom, stepmom, and grandma. Being able to go through the journey through each of the "mom" phases in my life has taught me more lessons, then I could ever have imagined. I was the mom that was yelling, making empty threats, not following through, no consistency, and no accountability. The good news, we have survived so far with 2 of the kids in the early and mid-20s.

Through my experience and education/training, I became a certified Coach for parents, families, and kids/teens. It lights me up to see other parents create sustainable changes within their lives to guide and support their children. Being a



Certified Behavior Consultant, I assist parents with understanding their children's behavior at an entirely different level. What do they fear, how could you motivate them, what are their behaviors really communicating, and what do they need to feel successful.

I realized years ago, I could continue to be critical about my parenting and go over where I messed up, or I could get curious and figure out what I could do better. In doing so, in my quest to find out how I could raise my children in a way that was not good or bad, but what they needed, I created a 4-day intensive in your home program. The In-Home TurnAround© was designed to help families create a happy, peaceful home.

On my downtime, you will find me either at dance, gymnastics, cheerleading, or sporting games with my kids. When there is a break in their schedule, we are doing other activities as a family. I love snow skiing, water skiing, riding motorcycles, traveling to different countries, learning about their cultures, supporting live events, as a trainer for my mentor, who is a massive influence in the personal growth industry, cooking, playing with my kids and granddaughter. I am a part of my community as a Rotarian. I love supporting activities in our community and abroad. You can learn more about me and the work I do at www.veenuinspires.com. I love to hear from you. You can reach me directly at veenu@veenuinspires.com

